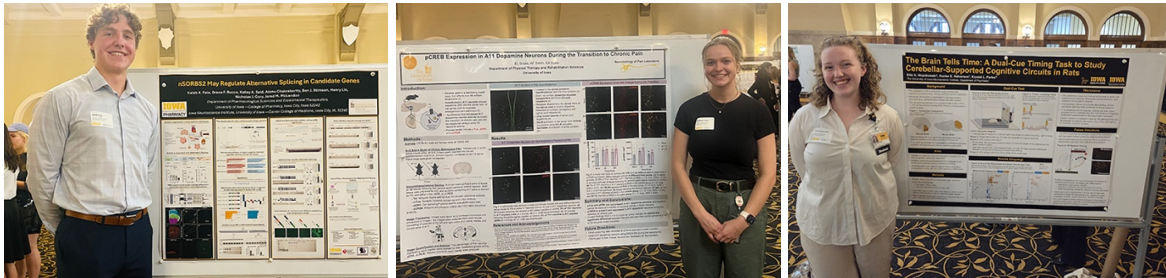


@UlowaNeuro Notes

August 2025

Undergraduates are important members of our labs year-round, but the summer can be a period of tremendous growth as they have more time to focus on the day-to-day flow of lab life. We started the INI Summer Scholar Awards in 2018 to support this development by giving undergraduates a chance to be fully immersed in a lab setting. Since May, our 2025 scholars, **Kaleb Feia, Elizabeth Gross, and Ellie Wojcikowski**, have learned to work both independently and collaboratively, ask questions, troubleshoot setbacks, and present their work.



Reflecting on the summer, Elizabeth noted the importance of communication and collaboration: “I used to think that scientists worked mainly alone, but my time in research has opened my eyes to the many ways that labs and individual researchers cooperate with each other.”

Ellie came away with a new appreciation for translational work. “Studying our lab's interval timing task challenged me to think translationally about how neural circuitry shapes human cognition and behavior. I am grateful for this experience as it strengthened my interests and abilities to explore clinically relevant questions.

For Kaleb, the experience offered a new perspective on the path ahead. “I now think about science less as a search for the ‘right answer’ and more as a process of testing ideas and building knowledge step by step.”

I vividly remember experiencing similar revelations during my first summer as an undergraduate research assistant, as I began to understand that science is something you do collaboratively with other people, not just something that you read about in textbooks. I often share this with our philanthropic partners who are interested in how scientists get started. Supporting undergraduate research, as INI donor Don Timm has done with the Summer Scholars program, is the first step to building a pipeline of future neuroscience scholars and leaders.

Over the years our [summer scholars](#) have been successful in applying to graduate and medical school and in securing jobs in industry. I have no doubt that Kaleb, Elizabeth and Ellie are on track for success in whatever they pursue.

As Kaleb's mentor, **Jared McLendon** said, “These research experiences teach much more than just how to do a research project. It's an opportunity to sharpen the skills and attributes one needs in any professional career: hard work, teamwork, effective communication, perseverance,

problem solving, and critical analysis of one's performance. Regardless of a mentee's future career, I think these lessons are translatable, and lead to a better workforce and society."

I encourage everyone to join us to hear Kaleb, Elizabeth, and Ellie share their summer work at our first INI Collaboration meeting of the semester on Friday, Sept 26, noon, 1289 CBRB.

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