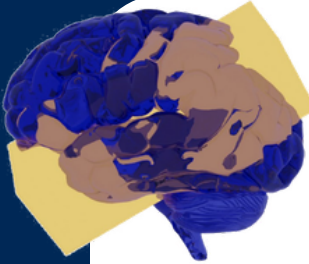


NGP NEURAL RECAP

VOL 33 | AUGUST 2026



A NOTE FROM STUCO...

The start of a new year is approaching and we couldn't be more excited! Catch up on what our amazing students have been up to this summer, sign up to speak at our Monday seminar series, note key dates for upcoming events, and read a welcome from our new director :)

THE LINKS

[Neuroscience Program Master Doc](#)

[Neuroscience Program Calendar](#)

[Slack](#)

[Twitter](#)



Please update us with snaps through email, text, or in person! We want to showcase your accomplishments :)

SAVE THE DATES!

August 25: Neuro/MTB/MID Orientation Social at Valhalla at 5 pm!
Please join us to welcome our incoming 1st years to GSBS!

August 31: First day of the Fall semester!

September 7: Labor Day

September 14: Faculty Seminar Series: Long Jun Wu, PhD, 11 am, MSB 7.037

September 21: Faculty Seminar Series: Andrea Stavoe, PhD, 11 am, MSB B.605

September 28: Faculty Seminar Series: Qingchun Tong, PhD, 11 am, MSB B.605

October 12: Fall symposium at IMM! More details coming soon!



SNAPS 🙌

- 🙌 **Taylor Brinson** (Advisor: Federica Pisaneschi, PhD) for successfully defending her thesis. Looking forward to all the amazing things you do in the future, Taylor!
- 🙌 **Shivi Garg** (Advisor: Louise McCullough, MD, PhD) for successfully defending her Master's thesis! Big congrats, Shivi!
- 🙌 **Damian Gorski** (Advisor: Claudio Soto, PhD) for successfully defending his PhD thesis! We're so proud of you!
- 🙌 **Stephen Farmer** (Advisor: Sheng Zhang, PhD) for successfully defending his PhD thesis! We're so proud of you! Wishing you the best at BCM... you will be missed!
- 🙌 **Lauren Harris** (Advisor: Long-Jun Wu, PhD) for successfully defending her MS thesis! Congrats Lauren! We can't wait to see what great things you'll do as a PhD student!
- 🙌 **Yuqing Cai** (Advisor: Harry Karmouty-Quintana, PhD) for successfully defending her MS thesis! Great job; we are so proud of you!
- 🙌 **Takeese McKenzie** (Advisor: Jian Hu, PhD) for successfully defending her PhD thesis! We look forward to your bright future, Dr. McKenzie!
- 🙌 **Thanh Lam** (Advisor: David Grosshans, MD, PhD) for successfully defending his MS thesis! Wishing you all the best!
- 🙌 **Megan Tarbet** (Advisor: Consuelo Walss-Bass, PhD) for being an inaugural awardee for the GSBS peer review challenge. Read more [here!](#)
- 🙌 **Madison Shyer** (Advisor: Paul Schulz, MD) for winning a best oral presentation award at the HMNI Neuroscience Graduate Student Symposium. Yay, Madison!
- 🙌 **Vicky Chuong** (Advisor: Fabricio Do Monte, PhD) for becoming a SfN 2026-2028 Neuroscience Scholars Program (NSP) Fellow. Congrats, Vicky!
- 🙌 **Sanjay Neerukonda** (Advisor: Louise McCullough, MD, PhD) for becoming a 2026 - 2027 SfN NSP Fellow. Keep it up, Sanjay!
- 🙌 **Stephen Farmer** for winning the 1st place Sino Biological Award at the 39th Annual SCBA Symposium! Congrats, Stephen!!
- 🙌 **Sanjay Neerukonda** for being named the Texas Medical Association Student of the Year! Congrats, Sanjay!
- 🙌 **Paula Bender** (Advisor: Kristin Eckel-Mahan, PhD) for receiving the 1st place McGovern Medical School Dean's Research Award! Yay, Paula!
- 🙌 **Madison Shyer** for receiving the 4th place McGovern Medical School Dean's Research Award! Keep it up, Madison!
- 🙌 **Paula Bender** for receiving the Andrew Sowell-Wade Huggins Fellowship! Keep up the good work, Paula!
- 🙌 **Kathy Guerra** (Advisor: Alexis Bavencoffe, PhD) for being awarded the Schissler Foundation Scholarship! Well deserved!
- 🙌 **Stephen Farmer** for being awarded the NIH Outstanding Scholars in Neuroscience Award Program (OSNAP)!
- 🙌 **Mya Rodriguez** (Advisor: Andrea Stavoe, PhD) for winning 2nd place post-candidacy elevator pitch at GSRD! Well deserved, Mya!
- 🙌 **Julia Zickus** (Advisor: Pratip Bhattacharya, PhD) for winning 1st place post-candidacy oral presentation at GSRD! Great job, Julia!
- 🙌 **Muxin Wang** (Advisor: Pratip Bhattacharya, PhD) for winning 2nd place pre-candidacy oral presentation at GSRD! Yay, Muxin!
- 🙌 **Lisa Abe** (Advisor: Alexis Bavencoffe, PhD) for winning 2nd place pre-candidacy and people's choice elevator pitch at GSRD! You're a star, Lisa!

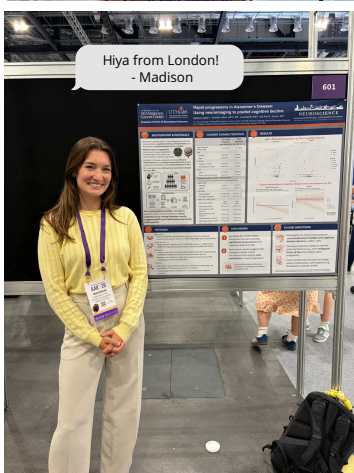
NEUROSCIENCE

Est. 1978

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US AT THE SPRING RETREAT!



NEURO ON THE GO!



RODRIGO'S ROUNDUP



Dear Neuroscience Program,

We are about to begin a new academic year. I hope to see you at our many program activities. We are a great community, and these activities are designed to support your professional and personal growth. Please feel free to share any feedback with me—both positive and constructive. Most importantly, I hope to count on your participation in these events!

I would like to begin by thanking Amanda for her invaluable contributions to the Program. I would also like to thank the Student Council for managing many aspects of our activities. Finally, I would like to thank our new Co-Director, Dr. Moran Amit, who is bringing great enthusiasm and fresh ideas to our Program. He is developing a clinical mentorship initiative that we believe will benefit many of our trainees. He will follow up with an email with details.

As previously discussed, we will begin implementing chalk talks as part of the candidacy exam process. Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions about this. We are also planning to implement several initiatives to the Program. One of these involves our WIPs. Going forward, each session will consist of two 30-minute presentations (20 minutes for the presentation & 10 minutes for questions). This change is motivated by the growing number of students in the Program and will also provide more opportunities for students to practice conference-style talks or present brief research updates. Accordingly, we expect all students in the Program to present a WIP once each year. This will be a requirement for applying for Program Awards, and we are working toward making it an official program requirement in the future. If you believe your presentation warrants two consecutive 30-minute slots, please feel free to reserve them.

Another initiative we would like to introduce is personalized career development mentorship for trainees. This will complement the mentorship already provided by faculty mentors and thesis committees. If you are interested, please let me know, and I will be happy to suggest potential mentors. We expect this initiative to require only a modest time commitment from both mentors and trainees, as meetings could take place once a year (or more frequently if both parties agree). I believe this program will benefit our students by helping shape the thesis process in a productive, milestone-driven, and personalized way.

Finally, this is a special academic year for me, as it is my first serving as Program Director. I look forward to working with all of you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Wishing you all a successful 2026–2027 academic year!

R



MTB | NEURO | MID

Orientation Social



**JOIN US IN WELCOMING
THE NEW GSBS STUDENTS**

WHERE

**VALHALLA
6100 Main St.**

WHEN

**August 25
5 PM**

HOW

**Walk with us!
4:30 PM MSB
Leather Lounge**



PIZZA STARTS AT 5 PM

