



NORTH CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR NEUROSCIENCE

NCF SFN 2020-2021 NEWSLETTER

SUMMARIES OF THIS YEAR
FROM OUR EBOARD:

- **Membership**
- **National SFN news**
- **NCF SFN 11th Annual Conference**
- **Outreach Events**
- **Brain Awareness Week**
- **Brain Bee**

A CHALLENGING BUT PRODUCTIVE YEAR

Written by Tristan Williams

The past year has been exceptionally turbulent, leading into uncertain times. However, we are all so extremely proud and amazed at how well our community has come together and responded here at UF. Despite the numerous obstacles, the North Central Florida Chapter for the Society of Neuroscience has had a productive and exciting year!

Attached in this newsletter is summary accounts from our Eboard members on what they have accomplished this year. We look forward to reconnecting to you all in the next!



photo credit: Jackie Hart



MEMBERSHIP

Written by Rebecca Polk

Despite the difficulties of the pandemic and required virtual format, our membership and involvement remain strong! We had **over 60** members for the 2020-2021 academic year including undergraduates, grad students, post-docs, and faculty. If you would like to become a member for the 2021-2022 year, we would love to have you join us! Membership dues can be paid via Venmo (@NCFsfn) or paypal (nflsfnchapter@gmail.com) and are as follows:

- Undergraduate students: 1 year (\$5)
- Graduate students/postdocs/staff: 1 year (\$10) or 3 years (\$25)
- Faculty: 1 year (\$25) or 3 years (\$60)

NATIONAL SFN NEWS

Written by Tristan Williams

SFN's 50th annual meeting is a premier venue for neuroscientists to present innovative science, learn and network with experts, and explore novel technologies and tools.

- Abstract submission will open Tuesday, July 6 and close on Thursday, July 15
- Neuroscience 2021 will take place November 13-17 at McCormick Place Convention Center, in Chicago, Illinois

Neuroscience 2021 Overview



NEUROSCIENCE
2021
50TH ANNUAL MEETING

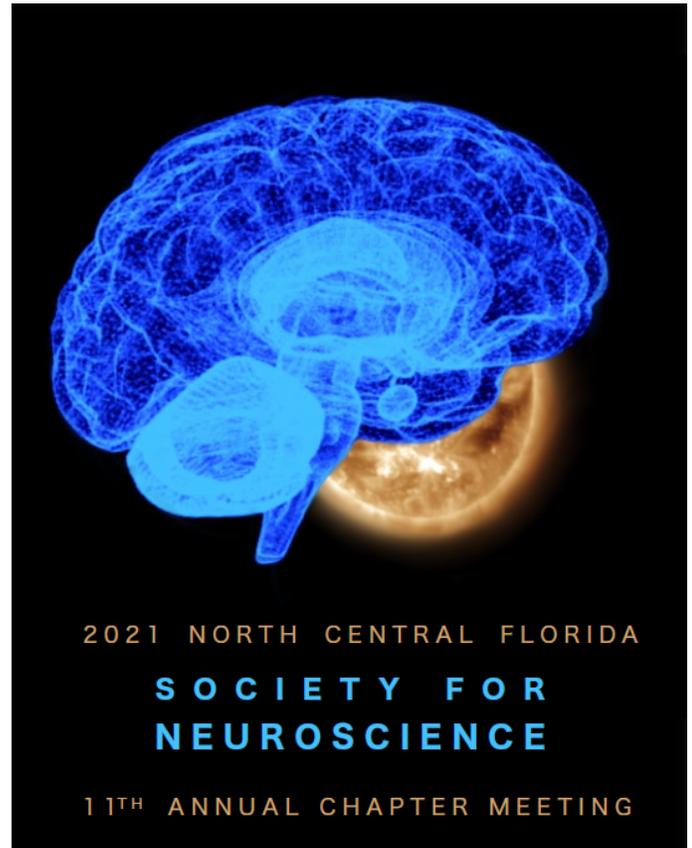
IMAGE CREDIT: UF NEUROSCIENCE & SFN



NCF SFN 11TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Written by Christian Garcia and Courtney Wilkinson

As co-chairs of the NCF SFN 11th Annual Chapter Conference this year, we successfully navigated a virtual conference for the North Central Florida region, where we had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Steven Maier as our Keynote Speaker. Students at each level of training (undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral) had the opportunity to present their current research. Additionally, four diverse scientists in the NCF SFN community shared their current research. Despite the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were able to facilitate scientific discussion and foster networking opportunities for faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate, and undergraduate students, with the same number in attendance as present during our prior in-person conferences.





OUTREACH EVENTS

Written by Andrew Moore

As expected, this year presented us with a large challenge in terms of effectively engaging with the community in a safe yet informative way. That said, we are excited to report that we had a great year of activities with our members being involved in events such as Girls Do Science hosted by the Florida Natural History Museum, volunteering at the Cade Museum, and presentations to local school kids during Brain Awareness Week. We are hoping to build off of these programs as COVID-19 restrictions are lifted to provide more in-person opportunities for our members to directly engage with the community. Of these, we are planning on expanding our involvement with the Cade Museum as well as the Florida Museum of Natural History, branch out into local efforts to bring STEM education to underserved areas of the community, and provide an archive of educational materials by gathering Lab Tour videos from our members to explain the process of research as well as its importance. In addition to these goals, we are eager to continue our involvement with Brain Awareness Week and other MBI and UF neuroscience events.



PHOTO CREDIT: JACKIE HART



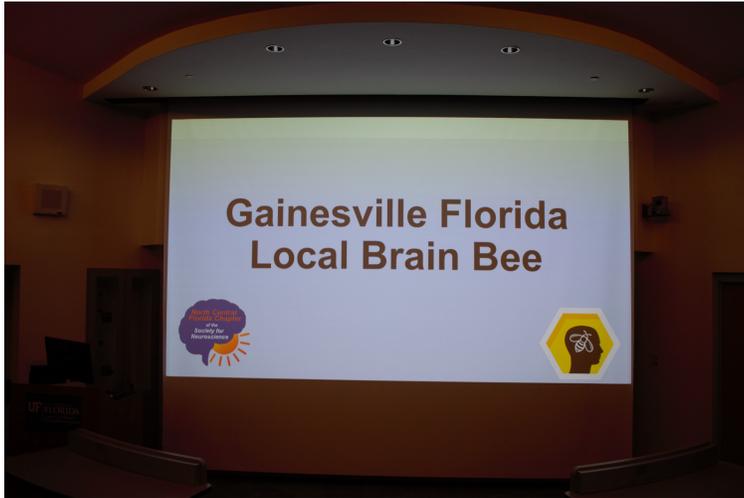
BRAIN AWARENESS WEEK

Written by Kalene Jasso and Eliany Perez

As Chair and co-chair of Brain Awareness Week our role is to facilitate the communication between the Chapter and the Alachua County School District. This communication is key in creating and completing a successful Brain Awareness Week. Together we coordinate the schools and classrooms to participate in BAW. Our BAW team along with the Alachua county school board and a variety of teachers, did everything possible to make this event happen given the obstacles we faced. This year, as BAW was virtual, the BAW team also had to prepare the necessary items for each presentation prior to BAW. As Chair, we had dropped much of these packets off at the schools to ensure the students would have the necessary materials for BAW. Through zoom, we were able to reach students who were online and in school.

Along with a brief overview of the brain and its many functions, our volunteers gave the students an opportunity to create paper brain hats and neurons as well as performing several senses and brain tricks activities. This year was very special in that we teamed up with the BRAIN Center and were funded by the MBI as part of their initiative and as a reminder of how important it is to protect our brains. We were able to give away helmets and we helped in getting those to winners after BAW along with the other members of the BAW team. In other years, the Chair is responsible for the home school field trip and the PK Young visit that we were unable to do this year because of the pandemic. We hope to bring back both of these valuable aspects next year in BAW 2022!





BRAIN BEE

**Written by Cassandra Modrak
and Cherita Clendinen**

Because of the pandemic, we were unable to host the annual Brain Bee as usual in the Fall 2020. While unfortunate, this gave us more time to plan and adjust for the upcoming year's event. Our goal with the Brain Bee is to motivate high school students to pursue careers in neuroscience. We are still unsure of whether or not the event for next year will be held in person or online, but we still were able to brainstorm and restructure the current platform for the event and prepare for study sessions for interested students. The proposed format will feature three different sessions: session 1 - video submission on topic provided to competitors a week prior to competition; session 2 - written exam (15 questions); session 3 - oral exam (15 questions). We also considered a potential tie-breaker should multiple students achieve the top score for the competition, potentially featuring a question provided to each student that they must answer orally.

The undergraduate neuroscience club has been a huge help by creating study videos featuring important test material that will either be posted to an SfN YouTube channel or a Google file available to all participants. We are also developing a plan to provide virtual practice sessions for students, even if it is safe for in-person study groups at that time. They have the deadline of the end of this current semester for upload. Currently, we are finalizing the budget and preparing to recruit students and contact schools to gauge interest. Whether the next competition is in-person or virtual, our Brain Bee participants will receive many opportunities to get connected and get prepared! Also, we are introducing a new format to the competition to make the next Brain Bee experience fun and exciting for our future generation of scientists!

