

# Neuroscience Newsletter

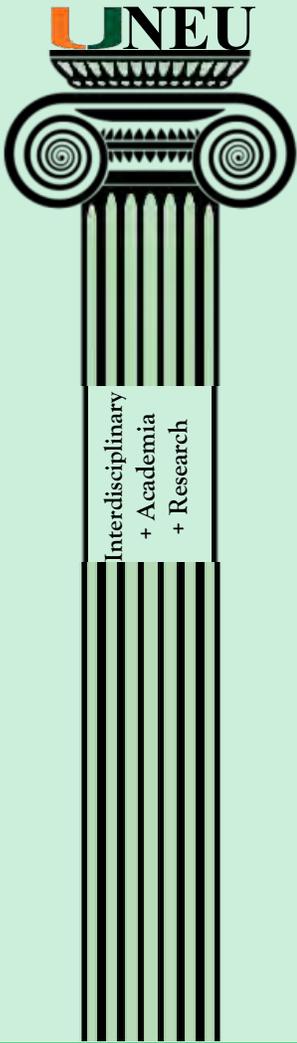
## *νευρο scientia*

A Newsletter for Students, Alumni and Friends of the UM Neuroscience Undergraduate Program

University of Miami

from the Office of Neuroscience Advising

Spring 2026



### *Welcome Neuroscience 2029 Cohort!*

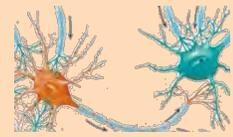


Fall 2025 began with Freshman Orientation for the incoming class. 60 new students expressed their excitement to be part of the NEU community. They learned about requirements, research options, major clubs, among other information. Upperclassman, Lauren Penna talked about her experiences in the NEU program and gave the new students great advice.



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NEU Senior **Nevaeh Kehn** is a research assistant at Dr. Amanda Jensen-Doss' The Child Implementation and Effectiveness Lab (CIELO Lab), assisting to improve mental health care for children and adolescents. Here she has been able to participate in all levels of their research and will be publishing, along with a graduate student, on *"Exploring variability in effectiveness of audit and feedback to support measurement-based care implementation in community mental health: A mixed method multiple case study"*. This past summer, Nevaeh was selected as a JACK's Neonatology Summer Scholar where she had the opportunity to work on a research project on Hypoxic Ischemic Encephalopathy (HIE) and present her findings at their 14<sup>th</sup> Annual JACK's Summer Scholars Program. Nevaeh has leadership experience as a Youth Ambassador for the American Veterans Ball, a division of a non-profit organization, H.O.M.E for the past 9 years. She finds joy and satisfaction of honoring those who serve and have sacrificed for our nation. She also has leadership positions in several other organizations such as Treasurer for Kappa Gamma Delta, Co-Outreach Chair for Nu Rho Psi. She has also been an Orientation Fellow and mentor for AMSA and Nu Rho Psi. Nevaeh volunteers for the Special Olympics, Gift of Life, and Miami Day of Service. She has received several awards and recognitions: JACK Cary Eichenbaum Neonatology Scholar, Jeanne Louis Scheibler Scholarship, President's Scholarship, The Mary B. & Perry A. Thompson Scholarship, The Baron P. "Deuce" Braswell II Memorial Scholarship, and The Christine and Will Dickinson Memorial Scholarship. Nevaeh is the recipient of Dean's list, Provost Honor Roll and President's Honor Roll.



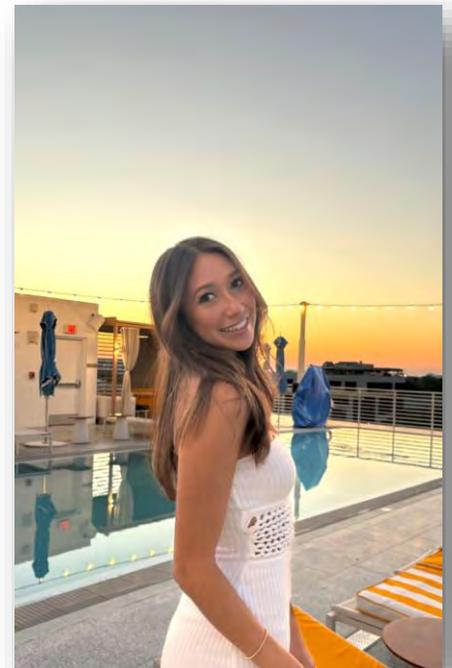
**Pruthvi Shembade**, NEU Senior is currently shadowing Dr. Ricardo J. Komotar, exposing him to neuro-oncological surgeries and Dr. Sethuraman Swaminathan and Dr. Juanita Ann Marie Hunter at Pediatric Cardiology, both at U.M. Miller School of Medicine. Pruthvi took part of the Educational Intervention Research Study at UM, focusing on public health and policy, where he contributed as a research assistant analyzing the effectiveness of an intervention in reducing stigma toward Opioid Use Disorder. He was also a research assistant at the Papanicolaou Research Center Pathology Laboratory at the Miller School for 3 years, where he worked under Dr. Emmanuel Thomas. Here he was able to further develop his laboratory skills such as in vitro cell culture, cellular transfection via viral vectors, viral culture (plated and suspension), Western blotting, PCR, and gel electrophoresis. He also investigated inflammatory mechanisms in hepatocytes, focusing on the JAK/STAT pathway, IRF9 signaling protein, and A20 gene regulation. Pruthvi has volunteered at South Miami Hospital at the Geriatric Primary Care Unit where he assisted in admissions and clinical communication between units. He also finds the time to tutor high school students in math, sciences, history and literature. Pruthvi is also a registered Pharmacy Technician, licensed in Florida. He has leadership experience as the event moderator for the Science Olympiad at UM and the chapter Rituals Chair at his fraternity, Alpha Sigma Phi. He is also part of AMSA and Nu Rho Psi. Pruthvi participated in the 2024 RCIF: Research, Creativity, & Innovation Forum and he has been awarded Dean's list and Provost Honor Roll.





**India Wynter**, NEU Senior, currently an intern at the George Lab at the Miller School of Medicine, focusing on the early events of breast and ovarian cancer. Here she assists Dr. Sophia George with specimen collection pre-op, processing blood samples, logging clinical data, and developing patient consent documents. With this internship India has had the opportunity to present her findings and engage in community outreach. India was also one of the 3 NEU students selected for the SURF (Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship) in summer 2025. In this 10-week program she was able to sharpen her research skills, learn about bioinformatics, and benefit from career development sessions. She has been a research assistant at the UQUEST Lab, an educational research and development project that addresses the needs of underserved and economically disadvantaged minority youth. India has also been involved in university community organizations such as the Pre-College Summer Scholars Program where, as a community assistant, was a role model and provided valuable insight on the transition from high school to college to incoming students, and worked at Housing & Residential Life, Commencement, and as a Teaching Assistant. She is also in leadership positions for many organizations such as the National Council of Negro Women, UM's Jamaican Student Association, African Student Union, and Foote Fellow mentor. India is the recipient of the Isaac Bashevis Singer Scholarship, the UM Black Alumni Society Scholarship, the Howard Hughes Medical Lab experience, Dean list, and is a Foote Fellow.

NEU Senior **Allie Bishop** is currently applying to Dental Schools. She has worked as an Oral Surgery Assistant at Northeast Facial and Oral Surgery Specialist in Florham, New Jersey. She assisted with various dental procedures and surgeries in-office, observed double-jaw surgeries at the hospital and learned about maxillofacial surgeries. She also assisted in documenting the patients' medical history. She is currently a research assistant at the JAM Lab with Dr. Jacob Miller, assistant professor of the Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience division. Here she investigates ways in which fear impacts working memory systems, handles large databases, and collects journal data for meta-analysis. Allie was also a liaison volunteer at the UM Lennar Center's Chemotherapy Unit where she was the link between patients, their families, and the medical team involved in cancer care. She provided support, and ensured patients were comfortable, provided for, and had clear communication throughout their treatment. She volunteers at Caring For Miami a non-profit that delivers essential resources and compassionate care to underserved communities. Allie is the Vice President of Facility Operations at Zeta Tau Alpha sorority and Director of Sisterhood. Here she coordinates and plans activities for 350 members, fundraises for their philanthropy in breast cancer awareness, and oversees the sorority suite. She is also a member of Nu Rho Psi, Neuroscience Honor Society, Pre-Dental Club, and has been on Dean's list, Provost Honor Roll and is a Canes' Achievement Award recipient.





NEU Senior **Matthew Thomas** is working on his honors thesis based on his work at the NeuroMET Laboratory. Since 2024 he has been a research assistant here where he aids in projects involving neuromodulation and spinal cord injury recovery. He has gained practice in brain-computer interface applications and clinical neuroscience research. He has also worked with spinal cord stimulation and motor assessments. Matthew was recently accepted into the Neural Engineering Master of Science program, taking graduate courses concurrent to his final undergrad Neuroscience courses. Matthew took a semester abroad at Monash University in Australia where he fundraised for pediatric neuroblastoma research and childhood education development. He is an avid outdoor enthusiast. He has worked at Outdoor Adventures at the UM Wellness Center as a trip leader, associate and social media manager. He is part of the Rock-Climbing Club, Club Ultimate Frisbee and Peacock Park Ultimate Frisbee League. He is CPR, Wilderness First Aid, and Top-rope belay certified. Matthew has also volunteered with BuildOn, the global organization that provides access to education in rural communities, aiding a school construction in Malawi and fundraising for it. Matthew has received Dean's List, Provost Honor Roll and President's Honor Roll.



**Ruthi Daly**, NEU Senior is a double major with Spanish. She currently works at the Sagen Laboratory at the Miami Project, Miller School with Dr. Jaqueline Sagen. She contributed to a study titled "Cannabinoid-secreting chromaffin cells on neuropathic pain in a rat model". The goal is to explore potential cellular therapies for chronic pain following spinal cord injury. She gained hands-on experience performing immunofluorescent staining, histological analysis, and tissue sectioning with a Cryostat, as well as assisting in rodent surgeries. Ruthi has also worked as a research assistant at the Max Orovitz Laboratory with Dr. Joseph Signorile working on Neuromuscular research and at the Lafayette College Department of Neuroscience with Dr. Luis Schettino in motor cognition. Ruthi has volunteered at Moments Hospice and has certifications in First Aid CPR AED, Bloodborne Pathogens Training, Narcan Training, Stop the Bleed Training (Coral Gables Fire Department) and Medical Terminology. She is the President of Student Together Ending Poverty where she hosts events to distribute meals and hygiene kits to the homeless plus educates the local community on poverty issues to reduce stigma. She is the Treasurer of Sigman Delta Pi, Hispanic Honor Society and finds the time tutor high school students for the SAT as well as K-12 in different subjects. Ruthi is in the Medical Scholar's Program, has received Dean's List, Provost Honor Roll, President's Honor Roll, and is a Foote Fellow.



# SYNAPSE News

## SYNAPSE PROVIDES



### Community

Creating a powerful community for individuals with brain injuries.



### Compassion

Providing resources and support throughout the recovery process.



### Education

Raising awareness and creating advocates for individuals with brain injuries.

The UM chapter of SYNAPSE began Fall 2025. The first president, Clara Ford worked actively to establish this chapter and has succeed thanks to her dedication and care to bring awareness about brain injury. Here is the new executive board of SYNAPSE for 2026:



Clara Ford  
Neuroscience

- U President Victoria Lawreszuk.
- U Treasurer is Julia Delurgio.
- U VP of Events is Sonit Mattoo
- U VPs of Outreach and Marketing are Michelle Zhang and Vanessa Lawreszuk.
- U VPs of Peer Support are Rhea Thakkar and Beatrice Salvoni
- U VP of Internal Communications is Diana Cardenas
- U VP of Buddy Program is Ashley Munkhbavar



Victoria Lawreszuk  
Neuroscience



Diana Cardenas  
Neuroscience



Julia Delurgio  
Biomedical  
Engineering



Vanessa Lawreszuk  
Neuroscience



Michelle Zhang  
Neuroscience



Beatrice Salvoni  
Neuroscience



Sonit Mattoo  
Neuroscience



Rhea Thakkar  
Biochemistry



# SYNAPSE News

**ALL ABILITIES ENDURANCE**  
 X MILLER'S DISABILITY ALLIANCE  
**EVERY SUNDAY AT 8AM**

Everyone is welcome to walk, run or roll with us! Athletes that want a guide will be paired. Choose your own distance and pace!

synapsonational.wixsite.c

**SYNAPSE NATIONAL**



Card Making Event

Hurricanes Help the Hometown

**SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> 2025**  
 JOIN UMIAMI SYNAPSE ON SEPTEMBER 14<sup>TH</sup> AT 3PM FOR A POTLUCK AT THE LYNN REHABILITATION CENTER AT UMIAMI MEDICAL CAMPUS ROOM 2.151! PIZZA AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED, BUT BRING A DISH IF YOU ARE ABLE TO!!

**SYNAPSE X LYNN REHAB CENTER**  
**SUPPORT GROUP POTLUCK: ROOM 2.151**

**WEDNESDAY, OCT. 1 @ 7PM**

Join us on zoom to learn more about the expectations of the buddy program and training needed if you are ever interested in volunteering to run future peer support groups

This training is mandatory for buddy program participants and cover support email: miamisynapse@gmail.com you need any questions or schedule conflicts



**DR. HOTZ**  
 4PM - 5 PM  
**GUEST LECTURE**

COME LISTEN TO DR. HOTZ'S LECTURE ON CONCUSSIONS, CURRENT RESEARCH IN THE FIELD AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT!

LOCATION: LYNN REHAB FOUNDATION ROOM 220

**DIRECTOR OF U/CONCUSSION AND KIDZ NEUROSCIENCE CENTER**

#UMIAMISYNAPSE



**TBI Expressions Café**

**Friday, March 21, 2025 | 3 to 5 p.m.**

Our annual event, hosted by Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center for The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis at UHealth Jackson Memorial, gives our patients the opportunity to share their personal experiences living with a traumatic brain injury.

Join us in person or via Zoom as we celebrate continued recovery, encourage self-expression, and promote brain injury awareness.

Zoom Meeting ID: 848 7887 0123

Lynn Rehabilitation Center  
 1851 N.W. 25th Ave.  
 Miami, FL 33136  
 Room 1.321 on the first floor.

If you have any questions, please call Kelly Messert at 305-985-9402.  
 #MoreThanMyBrainInjury

**THE MIAMI PROJECT TO CURE PARALYSIS**

**Volunteer Opportunity**

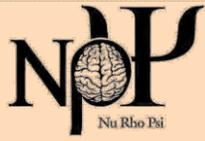
Make a difference via the Office of Education and Outreach at The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis

**Job Description:**

- What You'll Do:** Contact paralyzed people who have registered with The Miami Project. Speak with empathy and professionalism. Handle sensitive conversations with care and clarity. Confirm and document important information using Microsoft Excel.
- What you will gain:** Real-world experience in communication and data handling. The opportunity to make a positive impact. Volunteer hours and resume experience. Training and support from the Miami Project team.

**How to Volunteer**

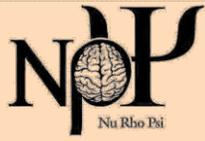
Please scan QR code to schedule a zoom call with the Director of Education and Outreach **Dr. David W. McMillan.**



# Nu Rho Psi Events

## General Body Meeting August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025



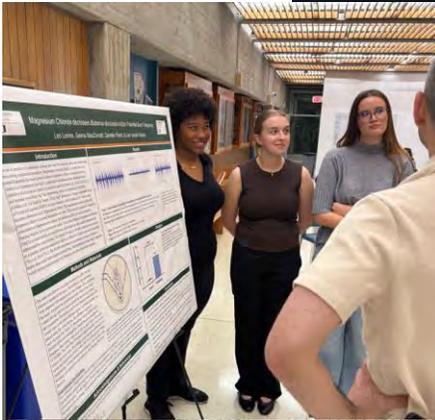
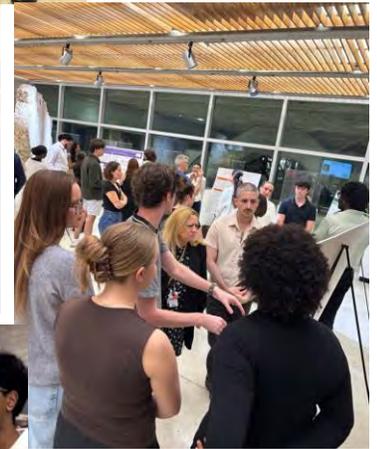
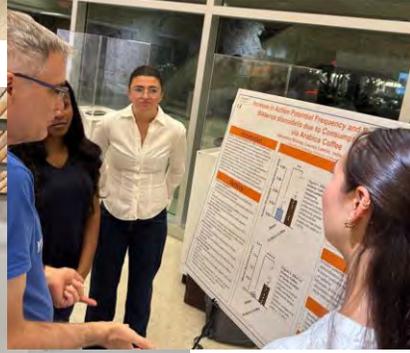
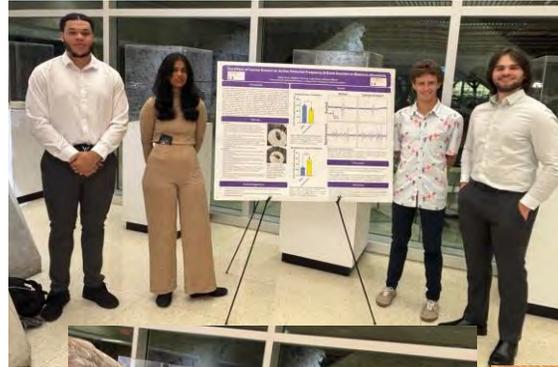
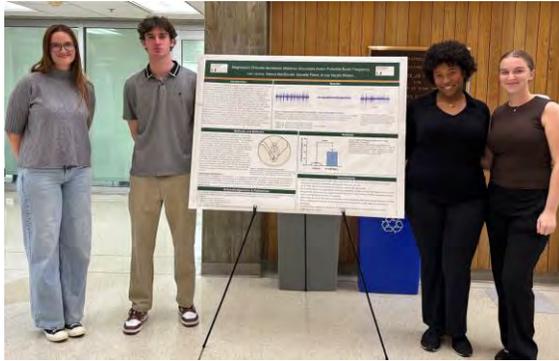


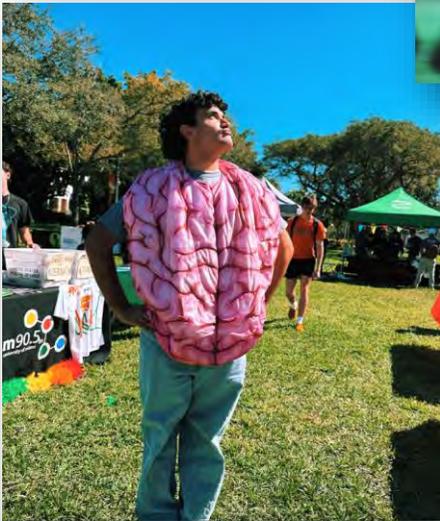
# Nu Rho Psi Events

## Mentorship Mixer September 25<sup>th</sup>, 2025



## Faculty Mixer November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025





**Congratulations  
on your upcoming  
Graduation Joel!  
The Future looks  
Bright!**

Our exemplary student spotlight is on NEU graduating senior **Joel Thame**. Joel is minoring in Chemistry and Philosophy and is a da Vinci Scholar. He has been on Dean's List and Provost Honor Roll. He is a research assistant at the Cognition and Intelligence Lab (Cai Lab) at the UM Department of Psychology where they study the border between human cognition and machine learning. Here he does the video annotation in a project working specifically on children's natural behaviors. Joel has been part of the marching band, Band of the Hour, since Freshman year. For the past 2 years he has been Color Guard Captain. He is an office assistant at the Department of Philosophy, the Co-President of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), UM chapter, and the President of the Neuroscience Honor Society, Nu Rho Psi.

Way To Go Joel!!



# UNEU Student Awards and

## UNEU Alumni Spotlight



**Hannah Bethel**, NEU Spring 2026 graduate, received the *Beyond the Book Summer Undergraduate Research Grant* from the College of Arts and Sciences for pursuing special intensive learning experiences in STEM research beyond the traditional classroom setting. Hannah received another award in 2025, the *Bob Moore Scholarship* from the Office of Academic Enhancement recognizing her academic and leadership accomplishments.



NEU Spring 2025 Alumna, **Cleide Velasquez**, will be attending Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in Fall 2026. While she was at UM she was a research assistant at the LeBlanc Research Group, UM Dept. of Chemistry, She was the co-Founder of Magical Moments Foundation helping children with craniofacial disorders, and was the VP of Nu Rho Psi among other accomplishments. Since graduating she has been participating in a pre-dental program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and recently moved to Spain to teach English at a town near Valencia. She is excited about this experience- "... immersing myself in the local culture has really helped me grow both personally and professionally before starting dental school".



# UNEU Faculty Spotlight



**Dr. Helen Bramlett** is a Professor of Neurological Surgery at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine as well as a Research Health Scientist at the Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. Dr. Bramlett received her bachelor's degree in Psychology at the University of Texas at Austin, her MS in Psychology at the University of Louisiana at Monroe and her MS and PhD degrees in Behavioral Neuroscience from the University of Miami. She completed her postdoctoral work in Neurotrauma at the University of Miami. Dr. Bramlett is an internationally recognized scientist with over 30 years of experience in the field of CNS injury including the pathophysiology and treatment of traumatic brain and spinal cord injury as well as stroke. She has received multiple awards, including WIAM (Women in Academic Medicine) Career Achievement Award and the highest UM distinction, Iron Arrow. Dr. Bramlett is actively involved in undergraduate teaching and serves as Director of the Undergraduate Neuroscience Program at the University of Miami. She is currently funded by National Institutes of Health (NIH), the State of Florida and the VA. Dr. Bramlett serves on several national review boards and is the Editor-in-Chief of Neurotrauma Reports and is on the Editorial Boards of Journal of Neurotrauma and Translational Stroke Research. She is the Managing Editor of Therapeutic Hypothermia and Temperature Management. She is a founding member of InflamaCORE, LLC, a company dedicated to treating and diagnosing inflammatory injury and disease. She currently serves as Chair of the Faculty Senate.

