



Physiology News



October – December 2019 · Volume 2 · Issue 4

A message from the Chair

Dear All:

Here we are at the start of a new year! 2019 was productive, successful, and rewarding in so many ways! I trust everyone had time to relax and reflect upon the past year and that you feel invigorated and ready to explore what 2020 will bring. I was fortunate to spend time with family and to be sun-kissed at the beach in El Salvador, in Antigua Guatemala, and at Lake Atitlan.



While I enjoyed every minute of the time away, I was excited to come back to work and kick-start the year. We have much to be grateful, and we have all worked hard to create the environment that has been supportive of our success. Each one of you plays a critical role in the wellbeing and success of our faculty, trainees, and staff.

I believe it is appropriate to draw your attention to a notable event last fall. Dr. Steve Nelson, Dean of Medicine, was chosen to receive the 2019 Spirit of Charity Award. The Spirit of Charity Foundation created this award in 1998, to honor a physician whose career began or was nurtured in Charity Hospital and who has made a significant contribution to medicine. Dr. Nelson has been a faculty member of LSU Health since 1984. Through the years, Dr. Nelson has made enormous contributions to the medical community through his clinical practice, research, and administration. Dr. Nelson's ties to Physiology date back to the early 1990s when in collaboration with John Spitzer, MD they developed the Alcohol Research Center. Dr. Nelson has been a true friend of Physiology since that time, holding a joint appointment in our department, and strongly supporting our



growth and development. To date he remains closely involved in the Administrative Core of the CARC. Personally, Dr. Nelson has been a colleague and friend. I am honored to work under his leadership! Congratulations, Dr. Nelson! Well deserved!

In closing, I want to take this opportunity to ask that you do not let the year get ahead of you without making time to reflect and prioritize your efforts. Remember that your health and wellbeing are essential to your ability to focus and achieve your professional goals. I recently came across a pin on Pinterest that I believe is worth sharing (pictured, right). This may not be evidence based, but I believe that abundant anecdotal evidence strongly supports this prescription!

Here is wishing that 2020 exceeds your expectations in every aspect of your lives!

Sincerely,

Patricia

Set goals.
Exercise.
Love yourself.
Focus on fitness.

REST AND RELAX.

Eat right.

SMILE.

Portray positive.

Enjoy Life.

Care for others.

Tell yourself you can do this



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Featured story:
*Finding Success and Sanity in Graduate School:
 A Graduate Student Perspective*

Graduate school is hard, and making an intentional effort to stay mentally healthy is critical for long-term success. Here, I've listed tips and strategies that I have used to find scientific success and maintain my sanity. I hope that they are helpful to others.

-Zachary Stielper

1

Stop and Reflect. Science is a difficult career. Clarifying your own goals and ambitions can help maintain the drive to succeed.

- Decide what's important to you in life
 - Where does your career fit in?
- Define your career goals
 - Work toward YOUR goals, not others' goals for you
- Allow yourself the flexibility to change your mind

2

Communication is Critical. Doing science is only part of the battle, communicating your findings is equally important. Effective communication both to an audience and to others you work with goes a long way.

- Practice your presentations
 - Public speaking is a learned skill
- Be honest
 - ...with your PI
 - ...with your lab mates
- No one can read your mind!



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3

Anticipate failure... but don't dwell on the negative. Failure is inevitable- experiments won't work, hypotheses will be wrong, grants won't get funded. Expecting this reality helps cushion the blow and prompts you to think of backup plans.

- Negative data ≠ Bad data
- Develop alternative hypotheses and strategies
- Don't punish yourself for issues outside of your control

4

Choose your battles wisely- Energy and time are finite resources- carefully allocate these resources to avoid overspending yourself.

- No one person can solve every problem
- Don't bite off more than you can chew

5

Work smarter before working harder - Maximize the effort you are already putting in before making an even greater effort.

- Always look for ways to work more efficiently
- Use existing protocols/techniques when possible
- Read as much of your field's literature as possible
 - <http://pubcrawler.gen.tcd.ie/>
 - Excellent resource to stay up to date new articles

6

Keep things in perspective- I find that 'zooming out' and focusing on the big picture is helpful when I'm having a difficult time. We often hyperfocus on small issues that, in the grand scheme of things, don't really matter

- Resist the urge to catastrophize
- Keep your end goal in mind
- Recognize others' good intentions

7

Be kind ☺ There are no downsides to being well liked

8

Take care of you- 'Doing your best' doesn't mean constantly working yourself to your mental/physical breaking point, it means performing your best when you are at your best. Taking time to take care of yourself helps to keep you at your best!

- Sleep
- Health Diet
- Exercise
- Meditation
- Therapy
- Build a support group
- Cultivate personal hobbies

9

Ask for Help

- Learn from others' experience and expertise
- Admit when you're struggling
- Seek mental health professionals if necessary



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Recognition

Dr. Steve Nelson received the 2019 Spirit of Charity award on October 11, 2019. He is the 20th recipient of this award that honors a physician who treated or taught at Charity Hospital and who has significantly contributed to the medical field.

Dr. Elizabeth Fucich received a Trainee Professional Development Award from the Society for Neuroscience.

Dr. Marcus Weera received an NIH Travel Award to attend the 2020 Volterra Conference on Stress and Alcoholism in Volterra, Italy.

Dr. Michael Levitzky received one of 5 Carol A. Luthman Awards from SACSCOC (the Southern Association of Schools and Colleges Commission on Colleges) for "Meritorious Service" at their Annual Meeting in Houston, TX.

Dr. Nick Gilpin was promoted to Full member of American College of Neuropsychopharmacology (ACNP).

Zach Stielper received the Roheim Award (pictured below).



New Faces

Shealan Cruise joined the department as a research associate in the Gilpin and Molina laboratories. She earned her B.S. in Cognitive and Behavioral Neuroscience at the University of California, San Diego.



Graduate Student Milestones

Taylor Templeton, Brittany Foret, and Nicholas Fried passed their Qualifying Exams!

Zach Stielper passed his Preliminary Exam!

Jessica Cucinello's NIAAA F31 NRSA first submission got scored!

Grants

Krystal Belmonte was awarded a 2020 American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship.

The much-anticipated CARC Notice of Award was received on December 20, 2019! LSUHSC-NO Comprehensive Alcohol-HIV/AIDS Research Center, NIH/NIAAA P60 AA009803 (PI: Molina), 12/1/2019-11/30/2024. The CARC is a multi-institutional, multidisciplinary team of scientists focused on understanding the interaction of alcohol use disorders and HIV disease.

Dr. Nick Gilpin received R13 to support travel to next 3 meetings of the Int'l. Drug Abuse Research Society (IDARS)

Drs. Scott Edwards and Patricia Molina were awarded \$5000 from the APS to sponsor a symposium at the 2020 Volterra Stress and Alcoholism Conference in Volterra, Italy titled "Neuroendocrine Mechanisms of Stress and Alcohol Use Disorder".



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Drs. Scott Edwards and Patricia Molina were part of a multi-PI team including Dr. Allison Augustus-Wallace, Dr. Ham Farris, and Dr. Fern Tsien on a new R25 award from the NINDS titled "Inspiring Diversity to Explore the Brain in the 21st Century: The NINDS/LSUHSC- NO, Undergraduate Diversity in Neuroscience Research Experiences". The ENDURE program will train the next generation of neuroscientists with a focus on individuals from underrepresented backgrounds.

Publications

Avegno, EM, Middleton, JW, and **Gilpin, NW**. (in press) Synaptic GABAergic transmission in the central amygdala (CeA) of rats depends on slice preparation and recording conditions. *Physiological Reports*.

Bivona, BJ, Takai, S, Seth, DM, Satou, R, and **Harrison-Bernard, LM**. Chymase inhibition retards albuminuria in type 2 diabetes. *Physiol Rep*. 7(24):e14302, 2019. PMID: 31872559.

Edwards, S, Vendruscolo, LF, **Gilpin, NW**, Wojnar, M, and Witkiewitz, K. Alcohol and pain: a translational review of preclinical and clinical findings to inform future treatment strategies. *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research*, 2019

Ferguson TF, Rosen E, Carr R, **Brashear M**, **Simon L**, Theall KP, Ronis MJ, Welsh DA, **Molina PE**. Associations of liver disease with alcohol use among people living with HIV and the role of Hepatitis C: The New Orleans Alcohol Use in HIV Study. *Alcohol Alcohol*. Dec 8. pii: agz089, 2019. PMC Journal (in press).

Gaudet DA, El-Desoky D, **Poret JM**, Braymer HD, and **Primeaux SD**. Expression of neural markers of gustatory signaling are differentially altered by continuous and intermittent feeding patterns. *Physiol Behav*. 212:112719, 2019. PMID: 31634524.

Levitt, DE, **Adler, KA**, and **Simon, L**. HEMA 3 staining: A simple alternative for the assessment of myoblast differentiation. *Current Protocols in Stem Cell Biology*, 51: e101, 2019. PMID: 31756292.

Montanari C, Kelley LK, Kerr TM, Cole M, and **Gilpin NW**. Nicotine e-cigarette vapor inhalation effects on nicotine & cotinine plasma levels and somatic withdrawal signs in adult male Wistar rats. *Psychopharmacology (Berl)*. 10.1007/s00213-019-05400-2, 2019. [ahead of print]. doi:10.1007/s00213-019-05400-2.

Selmi, O, Goncalves, B, Ouergui, I, **Levitt, DE**, Sampaio, J, and Bouassida, A. Influence of well-being indices and recovery state on the technical and physiological aspects of play during small-sided games. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 2019. Ahead-of-print. PMID: 31403575.

Presentations

Dr. Lucas Albrechet-Souza gave a talk titled "Sexually dimorphic behavioral and endocannabinoid responses to predator odor stress" in the Neuroscience Datablitz at the National Hispanic Science Network (NHSN) Conference and chaired a panel titled "Co-occurring Alcohol Use Disorder and Post-Traumatic Stress: Vulnerability and Therapeutic Strategies" (October 2019).

Dr. Danielle Levitt presented a talk titled "Chronic alcohol and ovariectomy reduce expression of mitochondrial-related genes in skeletal muscle of SIV-infected female rhesus macaques" as part of the Young Investigators' Panel at the NHSN conference (October 2019). She also presented a talk titled "Alcohol-mediated skeletal muscle mitochondrial dysfunction: Insights from non-human primates" at the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center of Excellence Semiannual Scientific Retreat at LSUHSC (December 2019).

Taylor Templeton presented a poster at Society for Neuroscience in Chicago (October 2019) titled "Effects of central amygdala (CeA) corticotropin releasing factor (CRF) neuron activation & dorsal raphe (DRN) to CeA circuit activation on anxiety and aversion."

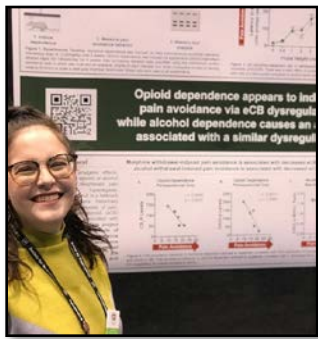
Dr. Elizabeth Avegno gave a talk at Society for Neuroscience meeting (October 2019).



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Dr. Elizabeth Fucich presented a poster titled “Predator odor exposure exacerbates traumatic brain injury outcomes in rats” at the Society for Neuroscience Annual Meeting in Chicago (October 2019). She also presented a poster titled “Predator odor exposure modulates traumatic brain injury outcomes in rats” at the Greater New Orleans Society for Neuroscience Annual Retreat in New Orleans (November 2019).



Jessica Cucinello gave a poster presentation at Society for Neuroscience conference in Chicago (October 2019) titled “Differential effects of opioid versus alcohol dependence on pain avoidance behavior and

regional endocannabinoid system deficiency” (pictured).

PREP Scholars attended the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) in Anaheim, CA, presented research posters, and helped with recruiting. Pictured below: Anita Waye, Shana Littleton, Dr. Fern Tsien, **Diego Vargas**, and **Chelsea Callicoatte**.



Dr. Patricia Molina presented a talk titled “Alcohol and Drug Abuse Center of Excellence: Discovering Neuropathological Mechanisms of Comorbid Conditions” at the 2nd Annual BIO on the Bayou (BotB): An Academic Research Expo hosted by LSU Health, Tulane University, and the New Orleans BioInnovation Center (NOBIC), New Orleans, LA. December 10, 2019. She was also a panelist for the discussion titled “Pathways to Leadership” at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) Mid-Career Women Faculty Leadership Development Seminar in New Orleans on December 10, 2019.

Dr. Scott Edwards presented a talk titled "Why Alcohol Use is so Common in Chronic Pain Patients: A Basic Science Perspective" at the American Society of Regional Anesthesia and Pain Medicine (ASRA) Meeting in November.

Professional Service

Dr. Elizabeth Fucich is serving as Co-Chair for the Professional & Educational Development and Outreach Committee of the Association for Women in Science Southern Louisiana Chapter. She also completed her term as President of the LSUHSC-NO Postdoctoral Association and is now serving as Chair of Career Development Committee for the Postdoctoral Association. On Saturday, November 16, she volunteered as a Workshop Leader for the Girls in STEM at Tulane event at Tulane University.

Dr. Danielle Levitt completed her term as Secretary of the LSUHSC-NO Postdoctoral Association and is now serving as Vice President for the Postdoctoral Association.

Drs. Elizabeth Delery (co-chair & organizer), Danielle Levitt (co-chair & organizer), Elizabeth Fucich, Min Gu, Chelsea Kasten, and Marcus Weera are serving as the selection committee for the very first ADACE Postdoctoral Fellow Seminar Series. Candidate recruitment and selection took place in the fall and invitations were extended to 3 outstanding postdoctoral fellows who will be visiting campus and giving seminar in the upcoming months.



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Dr. Patricia Molina served as organizer for the Association of Chairs of Departments of Physiology (ACDP) Annual Leadership Retreat in Antigua, Guatemala, December 5-8, 2019.

Notable Events

Charles Deckard Avegno was born at 9:31 pm on Dec. 12, 2019. Congratulations to **Dr. Elizabeth Avegno** & family!



Dr. Lisa Harrison-Bernard's daughter, Madeline, was married to Corey Michael Comeaux on Saturday, November 16, 2019 at the Holy Name of Jesus Catholic Church. The couple honeymooned in Banff, Canada and now reside in Metairie.

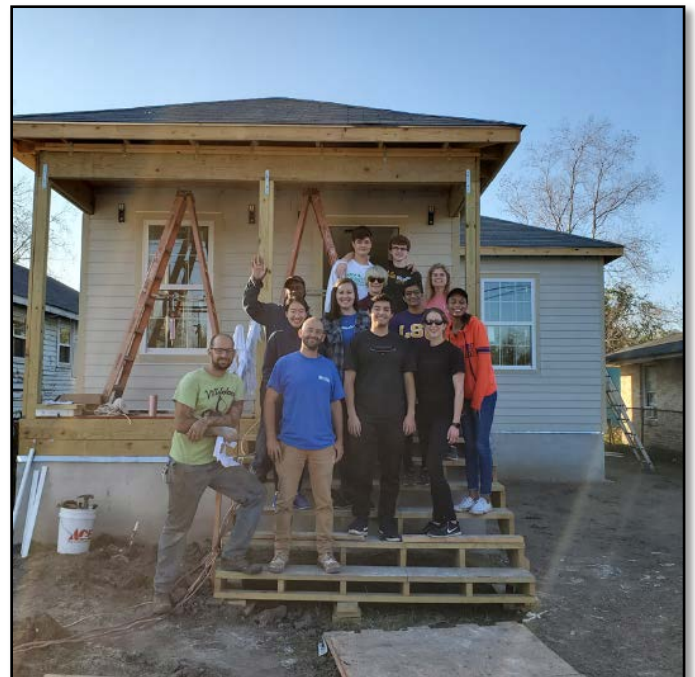


Dr. Scott Edwards repeated as champion of the Mental Hygienists fantasy football league, dominating **Dr. Stephen Ford** in the championship game by a score of 205-121. Congrats to **Dr. Ford** on his \$100 second place prize. March Madness is next!

Members of the Department of Physiology at the Walk to Fight Suicide sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) in New Orleans (October 2019). Pictured: Pedro Neto, **Dr. Lucas Albrechet-Souza**, **Dr. Danielle Levitt**, and **Dr. Elizabeth Delery**.



We spent a day helping to build a home with Habitat for Humanity. Pictured: **Diego Vargas**, **Dr. Danielle Levitt**, **Shana Littleton**, **Alice Yeh**, **Taylor Templeton**, **Dr. Lauri Byerly**, **Dr. Liz Simon**, **Dr. Stefany Primeaux**, Cole Primeaux, and Charlie with site team members and the future homeowner, Mr. Henry.





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Our awesome **graduate students** helped set up for the Physiology holiday party (left) ...



Several members of the department contributed to the Holiday Project of the Southern Louisiana Chapter of AWIS (left). Gifts were donated to a family with three children, two more children, and two Silver Bells.

...and enjoyed the fruits of their labor at the party (right).



Dr. Christian Montanari enjoyed his holiday vacation with family and friends in Italy (below).



Jessica Cucinello married Justin Ragland on December 28, 2019 (pictured below).



Yuki Edwards (below) wanted to wish everyone a happy new year!





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Calling All Crafters! Help Animals Affected in the Australian Bushfires!

Millions of animals have been displaced by the devastating Australian Bushfires that are currently raging. I would like to help these animals by donating much needed materials to various animal care facilities. Below is a graphic of items currently needed; items can be knitted, crocheted or sewn. My goal is to collect 30 items and send them in February. I have patterns available to those who are interested and if you have spare fabric, yarn, thread that can also be donated to be made into these items. Please contact Heather McGarrah at hmcgar@lsuhsc.edu for more information.

WHAT WE NEED THE MOST



● VERY HIGH NEED	● HIGH NEED	● MODERATE NEED	✔ NO NEED
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● JOEY POUCHES XXS-M	● HANGING POUCHES
● JOEY POUCHES M-XXL	● 3D HANGING POUCHES
● BIRD/RODENT NESTS	● BLANKETS
✔ KOALA MITTENS	● ANIMAL BEDS
✔ BAT WRAPS WITH PILLOW	● ANIMAL SWEATERS
● FLAT BAT WRAPS	● POSSUM/BIRD BOXES

● **DONATIONS for supplies & postage**

CHECK FILES SECTION FOR APPROVED PATTERNS

Last Updated: 7 January 2020

