

## NIDA IRP Peer Mentoring Program

Navigating the transition from undergraduate education to graduate/professional studies or from graduate school to postdoctoral research can be complex and daunting. The NIDA IRP Peer Mentoring Program was established to bring “seasoned” postdocs, grad students, and postbacs together with new trainees to develop support networks, provide advice and guidance, and foster a sense of community.

We meet the **1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month at 2:00 p.m.** in the **BRC 5<sup>th</sup> floor conference room (5A508)** for informal discussions. Peer Mentors are also available via e-mail or phone.

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### **Elise Lesage, Ph.D. (coordinator)**

*Postdoctoral Fellow, Neuroimaging Branch*

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My research uses non-invasive neurostimulation techniques in humans to better understand the function of brain areas important in addiction and to modulate these areas with the aim of developing treatment methods. I use Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), and cognitive testing in human participants.

### **Yuzheng Hu, Ph.D.**

*Postdoctoral Fellow, Neuroimaging Branch*

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My research focuses on neurobiological mechanism of drug addiction. In my study, drug (especially cocaine) effects on brain structure and function are examined using multiple magnetic resonance imaging techniques including task-based fMRI, resting-state fMRI, DTI and MRS.

### **F. Javier Rubio, Ph.D.**

*Guest Researcher, Behavioral Neuroscience Branch*

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I study neuronal ensembles and the causal role of drug-related memories involved in animal models of methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin relapse. I use different molecular techniques, including FACS to isolate activated Fos-positive neurons and RNAscope to find molecular alterations in the ensembles involved in relapse.

### **Yasmin Marrero, B.A.**

*Postbaccalaureate Fellow, Cellular Neurobiology Branch*

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My lab focuses on the underlying neural mechanisms of decision making and associative learning. The project I am working on uses electrophysiological recordings in rats to understand how specific neural circuits necessary for decision-making are altered with cocaine self-administration.

**Julia Slocomb, B.S.**

*Predoctoral Fellow, Cellular Neurobiology Branch*

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I am interested in the neuronal circuits that drive natural behaviors such as feeding, drinking and mating. I am using optogenetics and in vivo endomicroscopy to study neuronal circuits in awake behaving animals.

**Frank Soto, B.S.**

*Post-baccalaureate Fellow, Behavioral Neuroscience Branch*

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My lab's research focus is in studying the neuronal ensembles involved in drug-seeking behavior. The project I am currently working focuses on identifying the neuronal ensembles that encode cocaine or heroin relapse using RNAscope in situ hybridization.

**Veronica Wallace, M.S.**

*Postbaccalaureate Fellow, Behavioral Neuroscience Branch*

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My lab is interested in neuronal ensembles involved in drug-related cues and drug-seeking behavior. I am exploring how neuronal ensembles may be further elucidated utilizing nano- and micro-sized particles with modified surface chemistries.