MJFF TARGET DE-RISKING INITIATIVE
PRIORITIZATION & SELECTION WORKSHOP #2

PRIORITIZATION & SELECTION COMMITTEE CO-CHAIRS

STEVEN BRAITHWAITE, PHD

Bayshore Global Management

Dr. Steven Braithwaite is a passionate scientist and executive focused on impacting patients' lives. His career has been in industry where he can bring this to reality, open minded to a range of therapeutic areas. Dr. Braithwaite has had success in founding his own companies, being instrumental in very early stage endeavors that have grown to major acquisitions and in large Pharma. He most recently was CEO of Alkahest, a Silicon Valley based biotech company that was acquired by Grifols, pushing frontiers in understanding aging, leading to the advancement of multiple therapeutic candidates in to the clinic. He also founded MentiNova, a clinical repurposing company, is Adjunct Professor of Neurology at Rutgers University, and has previously led scientific and business efforts at Circuit Therapeutics, Signum Biosciences and Wyeth/Pfizer. He has held a postdoctoral position at Stanford University, gained a PhD from University of Bristol and undergraduate degree from the University of Cambridge. Dr. Braithwaite has always striven to share his knowledge through strong publication, involvement with granting agencies including NIH and The Michael J. Fox Foundation and engagement with the scientific community.

VIRGINIE BUGGIA-PREVOT, PHD

Valo Health

Dr. Virginie Buggia-Prevot is a drug discovery scientist with more than 20 years of experience in neurodegenerative diseases. She is the Senior Director of Drug Discovery at Valo Health, a technology company focused on utilizing large scale data and artificial intelligence (AI)-driven computation to discover and develop therapeutics, having joined the company in 2020. In her role she leads Neurology Discovery, developing human-centric computational approaches to discover and validate new targets for neurodegenerative diseases and leads drug discovery programs leveraging Valo's Opal Computational Platform™, including projects within Valo's partnership with Novo Nordisk. Prior to Valo, Dr. Buggia-Prevot led the novel target discovery and validation group at the Neurodegeneration Consortium embedded in the Therapeutic Division of MD Anderson. The mission of the Neurodegeneration Consortium is to identify targets for neurodegenerative diseases by collaborating with academic leaders of the field and translate the knowledge into therapeutic interventions. Her work on a neuroprotective small molecule program contributed to the launch of Magnolia Neurosciences, a company focused on the development of a new class of neuroprotective medicines and was awarded a grant from MJFF to evaluate its potential in Parkinson's disease. Using data generated by Dr. Buggia-Prevot and her team, a new strategic research agreement was formed with Denali Therapeutics to develop new therapies for Alzheimer's disease. In 2020, Dr. Buggia-Prevot was named as one of Citeline's "In Vivo Rising Leaders" in the list's inaugural year and is now published annually, recognizing talent across the life sciences industry globally for their leadership in driving unique health care initiatives. Dr. Buggia-Prevot trained for five years in the lab of Lasker Award recipient, Professor Alim Louis Benabid, who pioneered deep brain stimulation for Parkinson's disease. She then received her PhD

in cell and molecular biology from the University of Nice Sophia-Antipolis and completed her post-doctoral training at the Neurobiology Department of the University of Chicago.

DARRYL SCHOEPP, PHD

Consultant

Dr. Darryl Schoepp has over thirty years of experience in the discovery and development of innovative Neuroscience therapeutics that includes 20 years at Eli Lilly as a scientist and leader of the Neuroscience department, and 12 years at Merck as the CNS Therapeutic area leader. As a scientist he has over 200 publications and is an inventor of 15 US patents. His bench and leadership roles have led to the discovery and development of over 20 novel first in class agents for psychiatric and neurological diseases. These include the first AMPA/kainate and metabotropic receptor negative and positive modulators (e.g. tezampanel, talampanel, LY354740, LY341595, eglumetad and pomoglumetad) investigated for migraine, pain, cognition, Alzheimers and Parkinson's disease, anxiety disorders and schizophrenia. While at Lilly, he was a co-discoverer of the compound LY246736 (alipimovan/Entereg) a first in class peripherally restricted opioid antagonist for post-operative ileus. At Merck his team developed and launched the first in class orexin receptor antagonist Suvorexant (Belsomra) for insomnia and discovered the novel first in class oral CGRP antagonists ubrogepant (Ubrelvy) and atogepant (Qulipta) for migraine treatment and prevention (commercialized by Allergan/Abbvie). Dr. Schoepp received his bachelor's degree in Pharmacy from North Dakota State University and his doctoral degree in Pharmacology and Toxicology from West Virginia University. Currently Dr. Schoepp is an independent pharmaceutical research and development consultant who serves on advisory boards including Lundbeck (SAB Chair), Lieber Institute, and Pharma Foundation Drug Discovery (advisory committee), and NIH Neurotherapeutics Blueprint (External Oversight Committee).

PRIORITIZATION & SELECTION COMMITTEE MEMBERS

JON BEHR, PHD

Dementia Discovery Fund

Dr. Jon Behr joined SV Health Investors in 2019 as a Partner investing out of the Dementia Discovery Fund (DDF) and brings over 18 years of venture and venture creation experience to the team. He currently manages DDF investments and serves as a Director or observer on the Boards of Nitrase Therapeutics, QurAlis, Ribometrix, Sudo Biosciences, Transposon Therapeutics, and Violet Therapeutics, and had served on the board of Caraway Therapeutics (acquired by MRK). Previously, Dr. Behr was the first Managing Director of the JDRF T1D Fund, where he led investments, and served as a director or observer on the boards, of companies such as Inversago Therapeutics (acquired by NVO), Pandion Therapeutics (PAND, acquired by MRK), Provention Bio (PRVB, acquired by SNY), Semma Tx (acquired by VRTX). He also held roles as Market Sector Leader and Executive in Residence at Partners Healthcare Innovation (now Mass General Brigham Innovation), Principal at PureTech Ventures, and Vice President of New Ventures at Enlight Biosciences where he co-founded and supported seven companies. Outside of DDF, Dr. Behr serves as an unpaid Independent Director for Parkinson's Research Ventures, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the charity Parkinson's UK. Dr. Behr earned a Ph.D. in Biological Engineering from MIT as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute fellow and received his B.S. in Bioengineering summa cum laude from Rice University.

CORNELIS BLAUWENDRAAT, PHD

Subject Matter Expert, Genetics
Coalition for Aligning Science

Dr. Cornelis Blauwendraat is the Chief Data Strategy Officer of the Coalition for Aligning Science (CAS), where he provides strategic guidance on the organization's data strategy and ensures that data assets are used effectively to achieve CAS's goals across the initiatives under the Coalition's management. He also serves as one of the leads for the Global Parkinson's Genetics Program (GP2) which is a resource initiative of the Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP), aiming to dramatically expand our understanding of the genetic basis of PD and to make that knowledge globally relevant. Previously, Dr. Blauwendraat was a Stadtman Investigator at National Institutes of Health, National Institute on Aging on the Bethesda campus. While there, his lab worked on dissecting the genetic basis of neurodegenerative disorders including Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease using large omics datasets with the goal of understanding disease mechanisms and identifying potential future therapeutic targets. Dr. Blauwendraat received his MSc in Biomedical Sciences from VU University, Netherlands and his PhD in Neuroscience from University of Tübingen, Germany. Both his MSc and PhD were focused on dissecting the complex genetic architecture across neurodegenerative diseases.

MARTIN CITRON, PHD

UCB

Dr. Martin Citron joined UCB in 2012 as Vice President Neuroscience Research and is currently SVP and Head of the Research EU in Early Solutions. In his role, he is responsible for UCB's Neurology early pipeline and Global Chemistry Research. He is a member of the Early Solutions Leadership Team reporting to the CSO.

Over the last ten years Dr. Citron's team has revitalized the Neurology early pipeline, added the antibody modality and expanded discovery beyond epilepsy into neurodegeneration, neuroinflammation and gene therapy through internal research, academic partnerships and in-licensing. Dr. Citron is an experienced leader in neurology with more than twenty years of experience building groups and directing programs from earliest discovery stages into clinical proof of concept studies. He is an internationally recognized neurodegeneration researcher with more than 28,000 citations, best known for identification and characterization of beta-secretase, a key enzyme in Alzheimer's disease. Beyond amyloid his AD research has focused on Tau spread, in particular discovery and development of spread blocking antibodies. In Parkinson's disease Dr. Citron was involved in research on GDNF and dopaminergic approaches and is currently focused on targeting alpha-synuclein.

VICTORIA DARDOV, PHD

Subject Matter Expert: Genetics
Technome

Dr. Victoria Dardov is a scientist with over 15 years of research experience in both academia and industry. With a biological focus on neurodegenerative diseases throughout her career, she have gained expertise in proteomics, proteomic data analysis and visualization, disease modeling using iPSCs, automation, high throughput and high content screening and drug discovery. She is passionate about data accessibility and re-use and the impact that could have on propelling research and is excited to utilize her expertise to contribute to the T2T initiative.

FIONA DUCOTTERD, PHD

AD Research, UK

Dr. Fiona Ducotterd is Chief Scientific Officer at the Alzheimer's Research UK UCL Drug Discovery Institute (UDDI) and a drug discovery executive with >20 years of global (incl. UK, USA, Japan, China) experience spanning therapeutics discovery and development, business development and strategic alliances in industry (e.g. MSD, GSK, Eisai, Vertex) and academia (UCL). The UDDI team of multidisciplinary scientists is discovering new medicines for neurodegenerative diseases in a biotech-like setting in partnership with leading academic innovators, industry alliances and spin out companies. Dr. Ducotterd has a BSc in Molecular Biology from the University of Edinburgh and a PhD in Neuroscience from the University of Newcastle and is mum to 3 year old daughter, Isla and fur baby, Yuna.

JONAS HANNESTAD, PHD

Tranquis & Capacity Bio

Dr. Jonas Hannestad has 25 years of experience in the field of neuroscience at both academic and biopharmaceutical organizations with a special emphasis on translational medicine and early clinical development in neurodegeneration. Dr. Hannestad is currently Chief Medical Officer at Gain Therapeutics, and previously held clinical development positions at Tranquis Therapeutics, Capacity Bio, Alkahest, Denali Therapeutics, UCB and BMS. He has worked on multiple Parkinson's programs, including GBA, LRRK2, adenosine 2A, and alpha-synuclein. He received his MD from the University of Oviedo and a PhD from the University of Messina, and completed residency training in internal medicine and psychiatry at Duke University and Yale University.

ROBIN KLEIMAN, PHD*

Alkermes

Dr. Robin J. Kleiman is an experienced drug discovery leader with over two decades of expertise in neuroscience drug discovery across academia, big pharma, and biotech. Currently serving as Vice President of CNS Biology at Alkermes, she spearheads the identification and validation of novel targets, orchestrating multidisciplinary teams through all stages of drug development. Previously, Dr. Kleiman held executive roles at Biogen, where she established cutting-edge research groups focused on human cell and molecular biology, significantly advancing the understanding of neurological diseases. Her extensive career also included several leadership positions at Pfizer for neuroscience discovery programs that targeted phosphodiesterase enzymes and contributed to the development of more than 7 first in class candidate molecules. With a track record of scientific innovation and strategic leadership, she has been instrumental in driving forward preclinical initiatives aimed at pioneering transformative treatments for neurological conditions.

BRUCE LEUCHTER, MD*

Neurvati/Blackstone Life Science

Dr. Bruce Leuchter is a co-founder of Neurvati Neurosciences and was named President, CEO and board member when the company was established in September 2021. His extensive experience in neuroscience spans clinical research and patient care as well as investment banking, equity research and medical technology. He has served as a senior advisor on matters related to clinical research, corporate strategy, M&A transactions, and financings for many leading life sciences companies.

A physician by training and neuropsychiatrist by specialty, Dr. Leuchter brings a depth of understanding of the unmet need and patient experience in the diagnosis and treatment of neuropsychiatric disorders to Neurvati.

He completed his residency training in neurology and psychiatry at New York Presbyterian Hospital and Weill Cornell Medical College and is a diplomate of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. He also served as Director of Clinical Neuropsychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical College, where maintains a voluntary faculty appointment in the Department of Psychiatry.

He has held leadership roles at leading financial services companies including biotechnology equity research analyst at Goldman Sachs, healthcare investment banking at Credit Suisse, and mergers and acquisitions at PJT Partners. He is also a co-founder and founding neuropsychiatrist of Click Therapeutics, a digital therapeutics company that specializes in the treatment of neurological and psychiatric disorders.

Dr. Leuchter is a member of the Scientific Advisory Committee for the Daedalus Fund for Innovation at Weill Cornell Medical College and a member of the Life Science Institute Leadership Council at the University of Michigan. He earned his BA at the University of Michigan and his MD at Wayne State University School of Medicine.

BEN LOGSDON, PHD

Cajal Neuroscience

Dr. Ben Logsdon is Vice President of Computational Biology at Cajal. Dr. Logsdon leads a team of geneticists, computational biologists, and software engineers to employ advanced multi-omics methods to support Cajal's target discovery and validation. His team is also responsible for building scalable data pipelines to process and analyze massive amounts of 3D imaging and sequencing data generated from Cajal's platform.

Previously, Dr. Logsdon was Director of Neurodegenerative Research at Sage Bionetworks, where he led a team of researchers to integrate and analyze large-scale multi-omics data obtained from the AMP-AD (Accelerating Medicine Partnership - Alzheimer's Disease) consortium. He also led Sage's efforts in variant prioritization for generation of new mouse models of late onset Alzheimer's disease and characterization of robust and reproducible transcriptomic signatures of disease.

Dr. Logsdon started his career in research at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and later the University of Washington, developing new computational methods to identify causal rare variants and disease drivers. He received a B.S. in biochemistry from Washington State University and completed his Ph.D. in computational biology from Cornell University.

JULIE MILLER, PHD

University of Arizona

Dr. Julie E. Miller is a tenured Associate Professor with a shared appointment between the Department of Neuroscience and Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences at the University of Arizona. Her research program investigates the impact of normative aging and Parkinson's disease on neurogenetic and circuitry mechanisms underlying vocalizations in pre-clinical animal models. This includes studying alpha-synuclein driven changes in target genes and neuronal firing patterns. She received her B.A. from Wellesley College, Ph.D. in Neuroscience from the University of Arizona, and did her postdoctoral training at UCLA.

AMANDA MITCHELL, PHD

Consultant

Amanda specializes in therapeutic target identification for neuroscience using -omics and genetics data. She received her PhD at Vanderbilt with a dissertation on identifying physical activity neuroprotective transcripts in Parkinson's disease and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in neuroepigenetics in the laboratory of Schahram Akbarian at Mount Sinai. She has previously worked at the Merck, the Allen Institute, and Recursion.

MATTHEW NELSON, PHD

Subject Matter Expert: Genetics

Deerfield / Genscience

Dr. Matthew Nelson is a Vice President, Genetics and Genomics, Deerfield Discovery and Development, and joined the firm in 2019. He is also Chief Executive Officer of Deerfield's affiliate, Genscience, a tech-focused company to improve integration of genetic evidence into drug discovery. Prior to joining Deerfield in 2019, Dr. Nelson spent almost 15 years at GlaxoSmithKline and was most recently the Head of Genetics. Prior to GlaxoSmithKline, Dr. Nelson was the Director of Biostatistics at Sequenom. He is co-author on >80 publications, including several cited >1,000 times. He began his career as an information scientist at Esperion Therapeutics. Dr. Nelson was an Adjunct Associate Professor of Biostatistics at the University of North Carolina from 2010 to 2016. He holds a Ph.D. in Human Genetics and an M.A. in Statistics from the University of Michigan.

TOM OTIS, PHD

Lario Therapeutics

Dr. Tom Otis is the Chief Scientific Officer at Lario Therapeutics and is a Professor of Neuroscience at University College London where he also serves as the Chief Scientific Officer at the Sainsbury Wellcome Centre for Neural Circuits and Behaviour. His background spans 30+ years of experience in both academia and industry. Prior to UCL/SWC, he led a team of 45 scientists conducting early-stage drug development in neurodevelopmental disorders and psychiatry at Roche Pharma R&D in Basel. Before Roche he served as the Edith Agnes Plumb Chair of the Department of Neurobiology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Dr. Otis received his B.S. and M.Sc. degrees in Biological Sciences in 1988 and his Ph.D. degree in Neuroscience in 1993 from Stanford University. His research has focused on cellular and circuit function of the cerebellum and hippocampus, motor systems function and motor learning, and preclinical models of epilepsies, spinocerebellar ataxia, and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

ALASTAIR D REITH, PHD

Breckenfield Consulting Ltd.

Alastair is an independent Advisor and Consultant in Drug Discovery and Development, with over 30 years' experience in pharmaceutical industry, charitable, and academic research sectors in UK and North America. As a former Senior Director – Neurodegeneration, Neuroscience Therapy Area Unit, in a 25 year career at GSK R&D he gained deep subject matter expertise through leadership roles in target identification, preclinical small molecule drug discovery programs, target portfolio progressions, clinical biomarker and experimental medicine studies – blending internal capabilities with a network of long-term external alliances with academic collaborators, platform technology partners and not-for-profit organisations that yielded key scientific breakthroughs to enable and expedite identification of clinical candidate compounds and their progression to clinical trials.

In leading GSK's LRRK2 inhibitors programs for Parkinson's disease for over a decade, from concept to preclinical development, Alastair was responsible for internal teams from hit identification to selection of clinical candidate compounds. In parallel, he established enabling academic collaborations that delivered breakthroughs for the LRRK2 field - including first publications on pS935 as a biomarker of LRRK2 inhibitor activity, identification of a subset of Rabs as endogenous substrates of LRRK2 kinase activity, and functional roles for LRRK2 in regulation of phagosome maturation and mitophagy in vivo.
Prior to this, he served as biology Chair of the Kinase Target Class at GSK where he was accountable for kinase inhibitor drug discovery platform strategy, and operational management, for all therapeutic areas - from target identification to delivery of sustainable lead series – delivering multiple lead series for 17 different targets over three years. He also led teams that pioneered the development of primary human cell assay platforms for high throughput screens, and elucidation of compound mechanism of action, that paved the way to pathway-based drug discovery and phenotypic screening in GSK.

Alastair has served on both Institute and grant review panels for BBSRC, as well as review panels & expert advisory groups for a range of Research funding organisations in the charitable sector and as an Impact Assessor for UK Research Excellence Framework (REF21).
Before joining GSK, Alastair was Assistant Member at Ludwig Institute, University College London and a NATO postdoctoral fellow at Lunenfeld Research Institute Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto. Alastair received his PhD (Biochemistry) from Imperial College London.

LEE RUBIN, PHD

Harvard University

Dr. Lee Rubin is Professor of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology at Harvard University and Co-Director of the Neuroscience Program at the Harvard Stem Cell Institute. His work focuses on neurodegenerative and neuromuscular disorders and has a strong translational focus. Currently, his efforts are focused on producing muscle stem cells to treat muscular and neuromuscular disorders and, importantly, on discovering therapeutics capable of reversing the degenerative changes associated with brain aging.

Dr. Rubin received his PhD in Neuroscience from the Rockefeller University and had postdoctoral training, also in Neuroscience, at Harvard Medical School and Stanford University School of Medicine.

MINA RYTEN, PHD

Subject Matter Expert: Genetics
University College London

Dr. Mina Ryten is a clinician scientist with a long-standing interest in the use of human brain transcriptomics to understand neurological diseases. Dr. Ryten began her medical training in Cambridge University and went on to complete an MBPhD at UCL. While her PhD focused on purinergic signaling in skeletal muscle development, she subsequently trained in bioinformatics through an MRC Post-doctoral Fellowship in Systems Biology focusing on the genetic regulation of gene expression in human brain. This experience led her to become a Clinical Geneticist and formed the basis of her MRC Clinician Scientist Fellowship. Since 2017 Dr. Ryten has led her own research group at the UCL Institute of Neurology, and later the UCL Institute of Child Health. In January 2024 Dr. Ryten's lab moved to Cambridge University, where she also became the Director of the Cambridge Dementia Research Institute. At the core of her group's research is the use of human brain transcriptomic data as a genome-wide functional read-out of an individual's DNA – a read-out which can inform our understanding of the genetic origins of neurodegenerative diseases. For rare neurogenetic diseases this has meant using correlations in transcriptomic data to identify hidden gene-gene relationships. In the context of complex neurological diseases, Dr. Ryten has generated and used regulatory data across the

human brain to link disease risk positions to specific genes. Thus, over the last ten years, she has developed extensive expertise in the generation and use of human brain transcriptomic data with a specific focus on neurodegenerative diseases and particularly Lewy body disorders.

JESSICA SADICK, PHD

Subject Matter Expert, Genetics
Valo Health

Dr. Jessica Sadick is a cell and molecular biologist with 12+ years of experience in the fields of neurodegeneration and big data. She is a Principal Scientist in the Discovery Biology group at Valo Health, a technology company leveraging artificial intelligence-driven methods and large-scale human data sources to improve and accelerate the drug discovery process. Using both her biological and computational background, Dr. Sadick acts as a bridge between Valo's Drug Discovery and Data Science groups to drive innovative strategies for drug discovery programs across various indications, including Parkinson's disease. She and her colleagues have developed novel computational approaches to discover and validate targets using diverse patient data sources from multi-omics profiles to electronic health records and claims. Prior to joining Valo in 2021, Dr. Sadick was a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Shane Liddelow's Lab at NYU School of Medicine where she characterized astrocyte transcriptional heterogeneity in patients diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease as well as in models of neurodegeneration and neuroinflammation. She completed her graduate studies at Brown University as a NSF GRFP recipient and received a Ph.D. in Biotechnology in 2018.

TINA SCHWABE, PHD

Nine Square Therapeutics

Dr. Tina Schwabe is a team leader working in the Biotech industry since 2013. She is currently responsible for preclinical biology efforts at Nine Square Therapeutics, a startup company seeking to develop novel therapies for Parkinson's disease and ALS by finding compounds that improve autophagy and lysosomal function in neurons and glia.

Dr. Schwabe completed her PhD as a visiting graduate student at Rockefeller University, where she discovered a novel GPCR signaling pathway that regulates the development and maintenance of the blood-brain barrier. As a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University, she uncovered how differential adhesion via two cadherin proteins achieves wiring specificity and fidelity in the fly visual system and how differential cadherin expression shapes the organization of a synaptic fascicle in the brain. Thereafter, Dr. Schwabe joined Alector, where she led the development of a Sortilin blocking antibody to elevate protein levels of the Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD) causal gene Progranulin. The clinical antibodies, called AL001 and AL101 are currently in Phase III and II clinical trials in FTD and Alzheimer's patients. Furthermore, she led the research efforts of the Trem2 antibody program. The lead antibody, called AL002, was partnered with Abbvie and is currently in Phase II clinical trial in Alzheimer's Disease patients.

Dr. Schwabe's research both at Alector and Nine Square Therapeutics is aimed at unraveling the complex cellular pathways of aging, as well as neuronal and glial dysfunction to develop novel disease modifying therapies to address the urgent unmet medical need of patients suffering from neurodegenerative diseases.

SARAH SILVERGLEID

Schrödinger

Sarah Silvergleid is the Director of Pipeline Opportunity Assessment & Strategy in the Therapeutics Group at Schrodinger, which she joined in 2018. In this role, Sarah leads a multi-disciplinary team of scientists and analysts to identify, analyze, and prioritize new opportunities for Schrodinger's proprietary pipeline which are ultimately enabled by the company's computational modeling and molecular design platform. Once those programs move into active development, her team tracks mechanism and indication landscapes to provide insights to program teams across a diverse pipeline which includes oncology, immunology, and neurodegeneration. Sarah was a co-founder of Orna Therapeutics and worked at Verge Genomics, holding Strategy & Operations roles at both. Sarah began her career as an analyst in an alternative investments and private equity fund, and received her AB from Princeton University in Neuroscience and Philosophy.

ANDY SINGLETON, PHD

Subject Matter Expert, Genetics

NIH

Dr. Andrew Singleton received his B.Sc. from the University of Sunderland, UK and his Ph.D. from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK. His research initially focused on genetic determinants of Alzheimer's disease and dementia with Lewy bodies. His postdoctoral studies were spent at the Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville, Florida. Dr. Singleton moved to the National Institute on Aging at NIH in 2001, becoming a principal investigator in 2002. In 2007 Andrew became a tenured senior investigator, in 2008 he became the Chief of the Laboratory of Neurogenetics, and in 2016 he was named an NIH Distinguished Investigator. In 2021 Dr. Singleton was named the Director of the new Center for Alzheimer's and Related Dementias at NIH.

Dr. Singleton has published more than 700 articles on a wide variety of topics. His group works on the genetic basis of neurodegenerative disorders. The goal of this research is to identify genetic variability that causes or contributes to disease and to use this knowledge to understand the molecular processes underlying disease.

Dr. Singleton currently is a member of numerous scientific advisory and editorials boards. He was awarded the Boehringer Mannheim Research Award in 2005, the NIH Director's Award in 2008 and again in 2016, and the Annemarie Opprecht Award for Parkinson's disease research in 2008. In 2012 he became the first person to win the Jay van Andel Award for Outstanding Achievement in Parkinson's Disease Research. In 2017 Dr. Singleton was awarded the American Academy of Neurology Movement Disorders Award and an Honorary Doctorate from his alma mater, the University of Sunderland. In 2019 he was awarded the Robert A. Pritzker Prize for Leadership in Parkinson's Research. In 2024 Dr. Singleton was a recipient of the Breakthrough Prize for Life Sciences.

JAN STOEHR, PHD

AbbVie

Dr. Jan Stoehr is currently AbbVie's Head of Parkinson's disease leading the discovery efforts for Parkinson's disease (PD) within AbbVie's Neuroscience therapeutic area, located in Cambridge MA (USA). Dr. Stoehr and his team are researching the foundational mechanisms of PD pathobiology with the goal to identify novel disease modifying, therapeutic approaches.

Dr. Stoehr joined AbbVie following a tenure as Head of non-Alzheimer's disease proteinopathies at AC Immune (Lausanne, CH). Prior to joining industry held a position as assistant professor under Nobel laureate Dr. Stanley Prusiner at the Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases, University of California, San Francisco.

Dr. Stoehr received his PhD in Biophysics from the University of Duesseldorf, Germany and conducted his post-doctoral research at UC San Francisco, USA.

DAVE STONE, PHD*

Cerevel Therapeutics

Dr. Dave Stone has studied neurodegenerative disease for almost 30 years. He held a faculty position at Harvard Medical School until 2000, when he joined the pharmaceutical industry to work on drug development. Since then he has applied genetics and genomics across pipeline stages (including target identification, safety, and clinical trials) to enable the development of novel therapeutics. While at Merck he led the team which ran one of the first-ever genome-wide siRNA screens (amyloid processing) and was a co-discoverer of the KIF5A association with ALS. He led the team which uncovered the functional link between TMEM175 and Parkinson disease. For the past 10 years he has worked on the cellular phenotypes driven by genetic risk factors for PD such as TMEM175 and their connection to disease. In 2019 he joined Cerevel Therapeutics as the Head of Genetics, where he oversees target identification, validation, and program entry into Cerevel's pipeline.

ELISA TINELLI, PHD

Golgi Neuroscience

Dr. Elisa Tinelli has over two decades of expertise in preclinical research and drug discovery, bringing a patient-centric approach to addressing neurodegenerative and rare diseases. She earned her Master's Degree in Pharmaceutical Biotechnology from the "Università Statale di Milano" (Italy) and a joint PhD in Cellular and Molecular Biology from San Raffaele University (Italy) and the Open University (UK). Her postdoc positions include ETH (Zurich-Switzerland) and UCL (London-United Kingdom).

Dr. Tinelli served as Principal Investigator in the Discovery Research department at Axxam, leading cross-functional teams in collaborative drug discovery programs with biotech companies, international research institutes, and universities. This experience laid the foundation for her extensive involvement in the full life-cycle management of collaborative research programs within interdisciplinary and international settings. Currently serving as a Senior Program Manager at Golgi Neurosciences Srl, Dr. Tinelli plays a pivotal role in efficiently overseeing and coordinating proprietary drug discovery programs. Her responsibilities encompass both scientific and operational aspects -- showcasing expertise in target assessment, project management, and collaborative navigation. She has successfully managed collaborations with external partners and Contract Research Organizations (CROs), exhibiting proficiency in handling legal aspects, including CDAs, MTAs, and contracts, with precision and compliance. Beyond the laboratory, she contributes as a Risk Manager for a multi-centric European project. This role not only underscores analytical abilities and budget planning skills but also highlights effective property management expertise. Collaborating with academic, private, charitable, and familial partners, Dr. Tinelli has cultivated meaningful alliances that extend beyond professional realms. Her commitment to impactful communication is evident through my ability to deliver compelling scientific presentations and Investor Pitches. Furthermore, she adeptly manages a LinkedIn Social Media page, contributing to the broader narrative of scientific endeavors.

STEVE WOOD, PHD

Neuron23

Dr. Steve Wood is a pharmaceutical industry veteran with over 30 years of drug discovery experience. He currently serves as EVP of Drug Discovery at Neuron23 where he oversees the preclinical portfolio from target discovery and validation through to development candidate nomination. His team has successfully delivered 3 clinical candidates including a small molecule LRRK2 inhibitor for the treatment of Parkinson's disease, currently approaching a Ph2 proof of concept trial. Prior to joining Neuron23, Dr. Wood spent over 20 years at Amgen in the Neuroscience department where he led Amgen's Neurodegeneration discovery research efforts with an emphasis on Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, and ALS. Early in his career, Dr. Wood worked at SmithKline Beecham where he and colleagues helped elucidate the mechanisms of abnormal protein aggregation, a common pathology across numerous neurodegenerative disorders.

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SONYA DUMANIS, PHD

Coalition for Aligning Science

Dr. Sonya Dumanis is the Executive Vice President of the Coalition for Aligning Science, where she provides strategic guidance on both the design and implementation phases of portfolio programs and mentors scientific staff across the initiatives under the Coalition's management. She also serves as the Deputy Director of Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP), providing operational oversight to the programs under the ASAP umbrella.

Previously, Dr. Dumanis was the Vice President of Research and Innovation at the Epilepsy Foundation. While there, she oversaw the growth of the Epilepsy Therapy Project, an entrepreneurship incubator providing seed funding and mentorship to epilepsy startups and the Epilepsy Innovation Institute, an innovation incubator tackling high risk projects in the epilepsy space. She continues to co-direct the Epilepsy Startup Accelerator Course and serves as an advisor for the Diagnostics & Tracking Research Roundtable for Epilepsy.
Dr. Dumanis completed her postdoctoral training at both the Johns Hopkins University and the Max-Delbrück Center in Berlin, Germany. She earned her Ph.D. in neuroscience from Georgetown University. She has authored numerous scientific articles and received a number of honors, including an Alexander von Humboldt Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, a National Science Foundation fellowship, a national research service award from the National Institutes of Health, the Harold N Glassman Award for best science dissertation at Georgetown University, and the Mark A. Smith prize from the Journal of Neurochemistry.

JOHN DUNLOP, PHD

Aliada Therapeutics

Dr. John Dunlop is Chief Scientific Officer at Aliada Therapeutics bringing extensive neuroscience leadership experience in both the pharmaceutical and biotechnology sectors. Dr. Dunlop most recently served as head of Research and Development at Neumora, a company he helped build to pioneer an innovative approach to precision medicines for brain diseases. Prior to Neumora, Dr. Dunlop was at Amgen, where he led the neuroscience research program responsible for therapeutic discovery activities in neurodegenerative diseases, pain and migraine, and before that he led neuroscience discovery and early development at AstraZeneca and previously held executive leadership roles in neuroscience at Wyeth and Pfizer. Dr. Dunlop is

a board member of Target-ALS, a non-profit enterprise dedicated to accelerating drug discovery and development in ALS and is on the scientific advisory boards of Vigil Neuroscience and the Packard Center for ALS Research at Johns Hopkins.

ADAM KNIGHT, PHD*

NeuroVC

Dr. Adam Knight is a co-founder and Partner at Neuro.VC, focused on accelerating development of therapies for neurodegeneration. Dr. Knight was most recently Founder, CEO, and CBO of Neuron23, a clinical stage precision neurology company. During his 5 years at Neuron23, he raised $214 million from top-ranked biotech investors, grew the company to 50 full-time employees, moved a LRRK2 inhibitor into clinical trials for Parkinson's disease, and co-invented the first companion diagnostic for Parkinson's disease which is now being developed in partnership with Qiagen. Dr. Knight also served as a part-time Advisor for Perceptive Advisors, Soda Health, and Locust Walk. Prior to Neuron23, he worked at Kleiner Perkins, IQVIA, and Miltenyi Biotec. Dr. Knight has a BS and MS from the University of Alabama and a PhD from the University of Cambridge.

ROBERT MALENKA, MD, PHD*

Bayshore Global Management

Dr. Robert Malenka is the Pritzker Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Director of the Nancy Pritzker Laboratory and a founder of Stanford University's Wu Tsai Neurosciences Institute. Currently, he is on leave from Stanford to serve as the Chief Scientific Officer at Bayshore Global Management.

After graduating from Harvard College he received an M.D. and a Ph.D. in neuroscience in 1983 from Stanford. He then completed residency training in psychiatry at Stanford and 4 years of postdoctoral research at UCSF. In 1989, he was appointed Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Physiology at UCSF, at which he reached the rank of Full Professor in 1996. He returned to Stanford in 1999.

He is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine as well as an elected fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American College of Neuropsychopharmacology. He is on the advisory boards of numerous non-profit foundations and biotechs and has received numerous awards for his innovative research findings on the synaptic and circuit mechanisms underlying adaptive and pathological experience-dependent plasticity.

KAROLY NIKOLICH, PHD

Stanford University

Dr. Karoly Nikolich is an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Stanford University. He is also advisor with Nan Fung Life Sciences and owner and director of the Schaller-Nikolich Foundation.

After graduating from Eotvos University in Budapest, Hungary, he worked as postdoctoral fellow at Tulane University Medical School and the University of California, San Francisco. During the 1980s and early 90s, he led Genentech's entry into neuroscience and led and participated in the development of numerous protein therapeutics. From 1995-97 he was Vice President of Research at Lynx Therapeutics, a DNA sequencing company acquired by Illumina. From 1998, Dr. Nikolich co-founded AGY Therapeutics with Bob Swanson, founder of Genentech. Between 2005-2007, he was executive director of the Neuroscience Institute at Stanford University. Later, he founded several companies, including Amnestix, Neurofluidics, Chase

Pharmaceuticals, Hummingbird Diagnostics, Circuit Therapeutics (now MapLight Therapeutics) and Alkahest and helped many other companies by cofounding and serving as board member.

After the acquisition of Alkahest by Grifols, he served as executive advisor with the company and initiated a program based on the largest longitudinal plasma collection (over 100 million samples over two decades) for biomarker and therapeutic target discovery. Dr. Nikolich was also partner with Pivotal BioVentures and advisor with several investment funds. He is co-founder and board member of Engrail Therapeutics and served as scientific advisory board member of a number of neurotherapeutics and biotech companies. In 2014, Dr. Nikolich organized and cochaired the prior Translational Neuroscience conference in Frankfurt, Germany, supported by the Ernst Strungmann Forum.

EKEMINI RILEY, PHD*

Coalition for Aligning Science

Dr. Ekemini A. U. Riley is the Founder and President of the Coalition for Aligning Science (CAS), an organization she founded in 2020 to design and implement large- scale research programs across multiple disease areas. A molecular biologist by training, she is energized by devising creative ways to tackle scientific challenges and facilitating productive collaboration. She has designed and facilitated several multi-sector think tank sessions to inform the strategic deployment of philanthropic capital, crafted research programs, and seeded multi-funder collaboration. As President of CAS, Dr. Riley sets overall strategy across major philanthropic portfolios focused on accelerating discovery and therapeutic development in biomedicine. She serves as Managing Director of Aligning Science Across Parkinson's (ASAP), the flagship initiative under the Coalition's management, which she spearheaded from conception to launch. Dr. Riley is a member of the National Advisory Neurological Disorders and Stroke Council (2020-2024). This body informs institute program planning, concept clearance for NINDS initiatives, policies affecting extramural research programs, and funding decisions of the institute. She led the launch of WastewaterSCAN – a national effort to spread a leading approach for monitoring pathogens through municipal wastewater systems to inform public health responses locally and nationally.

Previously, Dr. Riley was a Director at the Milken Institute Center for Strategic Philanthropy. She helped to shape and co-direct the center's medical research practice, executing directly on workstreams in oncology, circulatory, and neurodegenerative conditions. She earned her BA in Natural Sciences from Johns Hopkins University and Ph.D. in Molecular Medicine from the University of Maryland School of Medicine.

MICHELE CUCULLU

Bayshore Global Management

Michele Cucullu, Managing Director of Private Investments, oversees the family office's private equity investments and the Quests investment programs in CNS and Climate. Michele has two decades of investment experience, and prior to BGM, was Director of Private Equity at the University of California for more than a decade. Earlier, she was on the Investment Team at Caltech and started her career at the Exeter Group. She earned her master's degree from Caltech.

STACIE WENINGER, PHD

F-Prime

Dr. Stacie Weninger is the President of FBRI and a Venture Partner at F-Prime Capital Partners. Dr. Weninger received a Ph.D. in neuroscience from Harvard University, and a B.S. degree in chemistry with highest honors from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She is President of Alzforum; chairs the Collaboration for Alzheimer's Prevention; is Chairman of the Board for Rugen Therapeutics; is a member of the Board of Directors for Aratome, Atalanta, Eikonizo, Sironax, and Target ALS; is a member of the External Advisory Board for Boston Children's Hospital's Rosamund Stone Zander Translational Neuroscience Center; is a member of the Scientific Advisory Boards for the Breuer Foundation, Brown University's Carney Center for Alzheimer's Disease Research, Denali Therapeutics, the Indian Institute of Science's Centre for Brain Research, the MIT Yang-Tan Center for Molecular Therapeutics, and the UK Dementia Research Institute. She served as a founding member of the Board of Directors for both Denali Therapeutics and Neumora Therapeutics.

KEY OPINION LEADERS AND ADVISORS

KALPANA MERCHANT, PHD

TransThera Consulting & Northwestern University

Kalpana Merchant, PhD, is a neurobiologist and translational neuroscientist who has led and contributed to the discovery and development of drugs for neurological and psychiatric disorders for over 30 years. She retired from Eli Lilly where she was the Chief Scientific Officer for Tailored Therapeutics-Neuroscience, a team accountable for personalized therapies and associated biomarkers for the neuroscience portfolio. Kalpana had joined Eli Lilly after 10 years of neuroscience drug discovery research at Pharmacia Corp. She has held Chief Executive/Scientific Officer roles at start-up biopharmaceutical companies, serves on Boards of Directors as well as Scientific Advisory Boards. She is an Adjunct Professor of Neurology at Northwestern University, a senior advisor to the Michael J Fox Foundation, appointed to the Oregon Innovation Council and has served on advisory boards at the National Institutes of Health. Kalpana received her PhD in neuropharmacology from the University of Utah in 1989. Following a postdoctoral fellowship at University of Washington she remained at the institute as Assistant Professor of Psychiatry, later transitioning to pharmaceutical industry in 1993.

BRUCE MORIMOTO, PHD

Consultant

Dr. Morimoto has over 25 years of industry experience in leading project teams in the development of innovative medicines, providing guidance in the design and execution of nonclinical, clinical and regulatory strategies with a therapeutic focus on CNS indications including Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and frontotemporal dementias. Previously, Bruce held leadership roles at Alto Neuroscience, Cerecin, Alkahest, Celerion and Allon Therapeutics. He is currently consulting with several biotech companies helping to move their programs through clinical development and drug registration.

Bruce started his career on the faculty in the Chemistry Department at Purdue University where his independent research focused on neuronal signal transduction. Bruce earned his doctorate in biochemistry from UCLA and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of California Berkeley.

DARIO ALESSI, PHD

University of Dundee

Dario Alessi is a biochemist, director of the Medical Research Council Protein Phosphorylation and Ubiquitylation Unit and professor of signal transduction at the School of Life Sciences, University of Dundee. Dr. Alessi is exploring how the chemical modification of proteins by phosphorylation or ubiquitinylation is linked to human disease and unraveling the roles that poorly characterized components play in regulating these pathways. His current work focuses on understanding how mutations in the LRRK2 protein kinase are linked to Parkinson's disease. He is a strong advocate of advancing the understanding of biology by undertaking open and collaborative science. Dr. Alessi obtained a BSc (1988) and PhD (1991) from the University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. He carried out postdoctoral studies at the University of Dundee from 1991 to 1997. In 1997, Dr. Alessi became a program leader in the MRC Protein Phosphorylation Unit, where he was appointed director in 2012.

SHIVA AMIRI, PHD

Pivotal Life Sciences

Shiva is a Partner and VP - Head of AI and Data Intelligence at Pivotal Life Sciences where she is building the data science team and AI platform for a growing international life sciences investment group. She was formerly the Director of Data Technology and Infrastructure at 23andMe where she built technology for the consumer health and the drug discovery side of the company.

Previous to that, Shiva was the Director of Data Science at Zymergen Inc., a molecular technology company in the Bay Area focused on generating novel chemicals. Prior to Zymergen, she was the CEO of BioSymetrics Inc., a biomedical machine learning startup in New York. She has a Ph.D. (DPhil) in Computational Biophysics from the University of Oxford and a HBSc. in Computer Science and Human Biology from the University of Toronto.

OPHER KORNFELD, PHD

SPARK NS

Dr. Opher Kornfeld is the Director of Translational Research and Development at SPARK NS. At SPARK NS, Dr. Kornfeld oversees the Parkinson's Disease Translational Research Program, which combines research funding alongside education and mentorship to support academic investigators in advancing their discoveries from the bench to the clinic. Previously, he was a scientist at Genentech, where he used genome-wide screens to identify and characterize pharmacological targets in cell death and innate immune pathways. His research at Genentech was at the intersection of drug discovery, gene editing, high-throughput imaging, and computational biology. Dr. Kornfeld received his bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon and his Ph.D. from Stanford University in the lab of Prof. Daria Mochly-Rosen, where he was a Smith Stanford Graduate Fellow. For his PhD, Dr. Kornfeld devised peptide inhibitors of protein-protein interactions to study the role of mitochondrial morphology and function in cellular physiology and neurodegenerative pathology.

JENNIFER KEMP

Stratos

Jennifer Kemp is the Director of Consulting Services at Stratos (Strategies for Open Science) where she works with research funders, libraries, publishers and initiatives on their open science and organizational goals. Jennifer has over 20 years of experience leading initiatives and programs in research infrastructure, libraries, scholarly publishing and open scholarship. Prior to Stratos, she was most recently Head of Partnerships at Crossref, where she led efforts as wide-ranging as business development, a community consultation on accessibility for DOI links and research collaborations on the value of Crossref and the reach and effects of scholarly metadata. Prior to Crossref, Jennifer was Senior Manager of Policy and External Relations, North America for Springer Nature. She is active in the research support community and serves at the Co-chair for the Open Access eBook Usage Data Trust. Previously, Jennifer worked at Stanford University's HighWire Press, which she joined after working as a librarian at IBM Research.

MJFF INTERN TEAM

NANDINI M. NATARAJAN

Research Intern

Nandini Natarajan is a Research Intern with the Translational Team at MJFF. Since she started in August of 2024, she has contributed to analyzing previous MJFF grants data and conducting diligence on NIH funding towards future target validation efforts. She is currently a third year undergraduate at Rutgers University majoring in Biomedical Engineering with interests in Neuroscience and novel therapeutics.

BIOTECH CONNECTION BAY AREA (BCBA) TEAM

POOJA MUKHERJEE, PHD

VP of Consulting

Dr. Pooja Mukherjee is a Postdoctoral Researcher at UC Berkeley's Innovative Genomics Institute, the birthplace of the groundbreaking CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing system. Her research centers on the precise editing of microRNAs in critical T cells, with the ultimate goal of advancing cell therapy effectiveness. Originally from India, Dr. Mukherjee completed her Microbiology education there before pursuing a Ph.D. in Europe. Her passion for bridging research and clinical applications has steered her to the Bay Area, where she currently serves on the executive team of Biotech Connection Bay Area.

YIFEI WANG

Project Manager

Yifei is a driven and dedicated scientist currently pursuing her PhD at UC Berkeley, specializing in aging and age-related diseases. Her academic journey began with her undergraduate studies at McGill University, where her research on deubiquitinases in Parkinson's disease ignited her passion for aging research and set her on her graduate path. At UC Berkeley, Yifei's research focuses on hematopoietic stem cell aging, aiming to reverse inflammaging and mitigate mitochondrial stress to reduce tissue burden and progression into age-related disorders. Her work deepens the scientific understanding of aging while also striving to bridge the gap between scientific innovations and real-world applications in healthcare. Beyond her academic endeavors, Yifei has gained significant experience in life science consulting and venture capital, offering her a nuanced perspective on the intersection of research and business. She is committed to transitioning into consulting, where she can leverage her expertise in aging research to develop impactful solutions that improve the lives of aging populations.

KUSHAN CHOWDHURY, PHD

Team Member/Consultant

Kushan Chowdhury is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. With a Ph.D. in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology from Indiana University, Kushan's research has centered on unraveling the intricacies of liver fibrosis across the spectrum of metabolic dysfunction-associated steatohepatitis (MASH). Prior to this role, Kushan was a Senior Consultant at Guidehouse Inc., an experience that has equipped him with invaluable insights into research methodologies across various therapeutic areas, helping leading pharmaceutical companies in the United States. Beyond his scientific pursuits, Kushan enjoys pickleball, soccer, and volunteering, reflecting a well-rounded individual dedicated to both professional excellence and community engagement.

JOSHUA CRAPSER, PHD

Team Member/Consultant

Josh has over a decade of research experience within the neurodegenerative disease space, with a specialty in neuroinflammation. He obtained his PhD from the University of California, Irvine under the mentorship of Kim Green, where he explored the role of microglia in neurodegeneration and aging. Currently he is working as a postdoc at Stanford, researching the neuroimmunology of Alzheimer's disease with Katrin Andreasson. Concurrently with consulting for BCBA, he is working with the Amaranth Foundation to advance research efforts in the aging and neuroscience spaces. Josh is seeking to transition into venture capital, whereby leveraging his extensive research experience he can help propel ambitious academic projects into next-generation commercial products that can treat brain diseases.

WENDY HUNG

Team Member/Consultant

Wendy Hung is a dedicated PhD candidate at the University of California, San Francisco. She began her academic career in undergrad at UCLA as a research scholar studying genetic therapeutics for HIV cure. Now, with over eight years of research experience spanning multiple fields including virology, gene editing, and mitochondrial biology, she is currently striving to understand how the human immune system matures with aging using a combination of in vitro models and computational analyses. Her work highlights the gap in knowledge of early immune development and emphasizes its potential clinical applications in pediatric healthcare. Beyond academia, she is a firm advocate for mental health and founded the Mental Health

Coalition at UCSF. She is also passionate about exploring the intersection of science and business where she hopes to leverage her extensive research experience to drive biomedical innovations

RITA MARREIROS, PHD

Team Member/Consultant

Rita is a highly ambitious and creative neuroscientist with over a decade of experience in neurobiology, neurodegeneration, and neuropsychiatry. Her background features a strong technical foundation in both *in vitro* and *in vivo* neuroscience, emphasizing cellular and molecular biology of neurodegenerative disorders. Originally from Europe, she moved around the world to pursue their passion for neuroscience, and in 2019 moved to the US as a post-doc at Standley Prusiner's lab. Currently she is a Scientist at Chan Zuckerberg Biohub, where she is exploring the bridge between viral infections and neurodegenerative disorders. Rita has demonstrated ability to lead and execute collaborative projects across diverse international settings in both industry and academia. Her forward-thinking innovation and strong communication skills have led to multiple conference presentations and peer-reviewed publications. Passionate for life, knowledge, and challenges she is aiming to advance her career as a life science consultant, bringing her extensive knowledge and innovative problem-solving skills to new challenges in biotechnology and healthcare.

SHIMA RASTEGAR, PHD

Team Member/Consultant

Shima began her seven-year neuroscience journey at McGill University, using transgenic mouse models to trace the path of sensory information from the environment to the brain. This sparked her curiosity about the intricate workings of brain circuits and the consequences of their dysfunction. Driven by the evidence suggesting communication breakdowns are at the root of neurodegenerative diseases, She pursued a postdoctoral fellowship at UCSF. There, she delves into the molecular language of human brain cells, studying its impairment in conditions like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Viewing neurodegeneration as an avalanche that needs to be stopped before it gains momentum, Shima's ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive diagnostic system that integrates early signs of degeneration across various brain circuits. Her recent research on sleep pattern changes in early-stage neurodegeneration provides a potential tool for achieving this early diagnosis and intervention. Eager to translate her findings into practical tools, Shima seeks collaboration with the venture capital industry to combat neurodegenerative diseases before they take hold.

NICOLÁS WIGGENHAUSER

Team Member/Consultant/MJFF Intern

Nicolás is an advanced Ph.D. Candidate at Stony Brook University. He is passionate about understanding the evolution of intelligence across mammals to discover how and why humans are so cognitively unique. At the intersection of Neuroscience, Evolutionary Biology, and Biological Anthropology, his research is centered on the evolutionary path and selective adaptations of the most complex biological structure ever studied in science: the brain. Originally from Argentina, Nicolás moved to New York for his Ph.D. and also relocated for a year to Germany to study the world's greatest collections of animal brains at the Vogt-Institut für Hirnforschung in Düsseldorf. Nicolás is determined to contribute with his analytical, communication, and leadership skills to the advancement of medical biotechnology, healthcare, and clinical applications of research breakthroughs. His mission is to creatively innovate at the forefront of impactful medical research that challenges dogma and improves the lives of millions across the world, especially in historically marginalized areas.

**Working group members unable to attend Workshop #2*