



# Newsletter

October 2023

## President's Message

I have been greatly honored to serve as the president for the Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience over the past two years, as it has provided me with the opportunity to give back to an organization that has been an integral part of my professional life over the past decade. During my time as president, I have learned a great deal about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead of us as an organization.

As the primary non-profit organization focused specifically on undergraduate Neuroscience education, FUN has grown and evolved in many ways since its inception nearly 30 years ago. While COVID made the past several years especially challenging to navigate financially and otherwise, FUN remains committed to supporting neuroscience faculty research and professional development, to enhancing participation in undergraduate neuroscience and to disseminating innovations in undergraduate neuroscience education.

Over the past decade there has been a steady and momentous growth in the number of undergraduate neuroscience programs, a broadening and diversification of the neuroscience student population, and a widening array of the types of professionals responsible for educating undergraduate neuroscience students. Therefore, the leadership engaged in a strategic planning process this year, which you can read more about below. We look forward to modernizing how FUN functions to ensure that it continues to be a vibrant and valuable organization well into the future.

I deeply appreciate having the opportunity to serve as the President of FUN, and I hope that I will be leaving the organization a little better off. I am looking forward to being in community with those that can join, in person, at the Society for Neuroscience Meeting next month.

Sincerely, Erin Rhinehart 

## Strategic Planning Update

Since early summer, FUN leadership has been working on strategic planning to determine what is necessary to modernize how FUN functions and where improvements and strategies are needed to best serve our current and future members. Using a data-driven process that included many voices (in person and through surveys), the committee conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis, workshop during the summer meeting, survey of the general membership, and overall assessment of the organization's bylaws and committee structures.

FUN's mission to support neuroscience faculty, enhance undergraduate participation in neuroscience research, disseminate innovations and recognize excellence in undergraduate neuroscience education, and develop national and regional networks to enhance undergraduate neuroscience education, research, and faculty development are continued keys to our success.

Inside of these strengths, the working group has identified key areas that would benefit from restructuring and/or additional focus. These include but are not limited to:

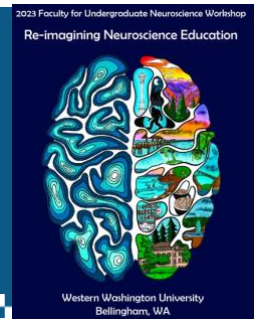
- Creating an inclusive sense of belonging, opportunities for building relationships, better welcoming and onboarding of members,
- Ensuring coordinated, uniform, and pervasive communication strategies to foster a sense of belonging in the group,
- Optimizing the organization's governance structure and improving transparency of committees and executive committee work,
- Better supporting neuroscience instructors across different university structures and faculty positions,
- Continuing our work toward diversity, equity and inclusion both in FUN and in our efforts to improve evidence based inclusive teaching practices.



We plan to create a Communication Committee, update JUNE and Membership categories of the Bylaws-please keep an eye out for the Business Meeting agenda for that information. In addition, we are (as you can see!) reinstating a Newsletter, have sent a Welcome letter to all members that will continue with all new members, and have other ideas for future revitalization. **All are welcome to the FUN Business meeting, Monday Nov 13, 6:30-8:30 pm, Marriott Marquis, Cherry Blossom Room ([or here](#) [virtually](#)), to learn more about this developing plan, the Bylaw updates, and let FUN Exec committee know how you would like to plug into these exciting updates and developing changes to support FUN!**

# FUN Summer Workshop Recap

From July 27-30, 2023, over 80 FUN members and friends, from ages almost 2 to way more than 2, joined together for four beautiful, engaging days at Western Washington University!



On July 26 several conference attendees took advantage of a preconference tour and session with staff from the *Allen Institute*. The actual conference kicked off the next day with 17 posters, 23 talks, 2 keynote addresses, and a colorful sunset. One keynote address by Dr. Oliver Rollins was titled *Towards an Anti-racist Neuroscience: Education as a Foundation for Social Justice*. In addition, earlier in the day there were book discussions on his recent release *Convicted: The making and unmaking of the violent brain*. The other keynote featured Dr. Joyce Balls-Berry who discussed *Inclusive Mentorship of Trainees*.

The short teaching demos, hands-on workshops and mini symposia ranged across a wide variety of topics, allowing participants to curate a meaningful and relevant experience. Participants had the opportunity to consider flipped classrooms, what is preferred in graduate school applications, strategies to facilitate racial justice conversations, how we might re-humanize STEM education, microPublications Biology, integrating programming into neuroscience courses, and so much more.

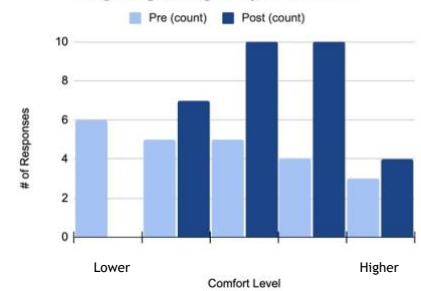


The upcoming special issue of JUNE will highlight the meeting with a series of articles from presenters and an editorial overview from Education committee co-chairs, Jackie Rose and David Donley. Keep your eye out for that later this fall!

We asked participants and participant/presenters to share thoughts and pictures of their experiences at WWU. Here is an abbreviated synopsis from a few:

*Ashely Juavinett, Associate Teaching Professor of Neurobiology at UC San Diego* shares, “At the FUN workshop, I presented a hands-on coding workshop for educators. The goal was to lower the barrier to entry to incorporating coding into neuroscience courses by providing tools and examples for doing so. It was really fun to be physically in a room with everyone and watching them pushing their comfort zones! There are things I’ll change the next time I offer this workshop, but I am really happy that overall, our self-reported comfort with integrating coding increased (see figure).”

How comfortable are you with the possibility of integrating coding into your courses?

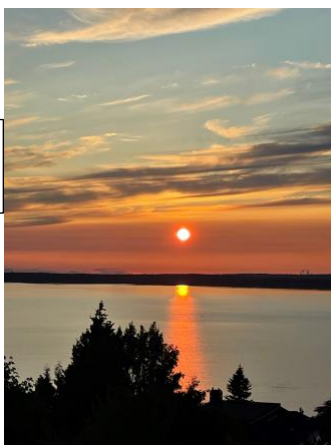


I also collected responses to the question “What is one way you might integrate coding into your courses?” and folks had a lot to say (see wordcloud)!



*Zhou “April” Fu, Instructor of Neuroscience at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University* commented, “I am so amazed and impressed by the programming workshops that Ashley Juavinett did. I had no idea that people were doing that. I think it is a great idea to teach neuroscience and programming together. It was awesome!!!”

Sunset over Bellingham Bay





*Ashley Nemes-Baran, Assistant Professor of Neurosciences at Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine was a presenter/participant. She states, “The 2023 FUN Workshop surpassed my hopes by far! I was able to attend the Allen Institute Satellite Workshop where I met other educators from across the country that shared ways they have used Allen Institute data in the classroom and received a lot of help from the education team on how to use their website in my courses. They also gave us a tour of the gorgeous Allen Institute building, showed us the laboratories and talked about their experiments and how they are working hard every day to selflessly provide open datasets to the scientific community. It was an unforgettable experience, and I am very jealous of anyone who gets to work there!”*

I was thrilled to have been given the chance to present my teaching demonstration on a board game that I developed called "You're Getting on my Nerves! A Race to the Axon Terminal." I made the board game using dollar store supplies and tested it informally in the classroom. Thanks to participants' input, I was able to save \$10 per game when designing the board game online, have finalized it and created a [shop](#). I also received brilliant insights into how to improve my research design, my IRB, and better prepare my data for publication. My hope is to publish the game as my first pedagogical research paper in the Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience Education (JUNE), and I was delighted to have the opportunity to speak to the editor of JUNE.

Throughout the conference on the gorgeous Western Washington University campus which is quite literally situated in the woods on a mountain (I'm from Ohio). I was able to connect with other educators to learn about neuroscience teaching tools, get ideas on how to be more involved in FUN and even learned a bit of coding! I made some great friends and discussed collaborations with other neuroscience educators. I am thrilled to have been able to attend and present at a FUN workshop and even get a little bit of exposure to the mountains and hiking in Washington!”

*Claire Weichselbaum, Maddy Meuler, and Kaitlyn Casimo, Allen Institute’s Education & Engagement team provide the following insights. “The Allen Institute Education & Engagement team was delighted to host both a pre-conference satellite event in Seattle and hands-on sessions during the FUN summer workshop, where we had the opportunity to connect passionate neuroscience educators with Allen Institute open data, analytical tools, and educational resources.*



The view of Bellingham Bay from campus

During the satellite event, FUN attendees had a chance to tour the Allen Institute’s Seattle headquarters including several neuroscience labs, take a deep dive into one of our curriculum units exploring neuron morphology, and learn about the breadth of our resources freely available to educators. At WWU, we shared an overview of how educators, students, and researchers can access the vast array of open neuroscience datasets available at [brain-map.org](http://brain-map.org) and featured several new and upcoming lesson plans exploring socio-scientific issues and computational skills. The feedback we received from attendees was very helpful as we continue striving to create resources that will be as useful as possible to educators.

We were also excited to see fellow FUN presenters highlight some ways they have used Allen Institute open data in their own classrooms, from Ashley Juavinett’s session on integrating Python programming into neuroscience courses with our electrophysiology data, to the “Sleepy Mice Case Study” created by Monica Gaudier-Diaz and colleagues. We are always eager to hear from educators using our data and provide as much support as possible to help make this happen. Please contact us at [education@alleninstitute.org](mailto:education@alleninstitute.org) with questions, feedback, ideas, or to share your own work using Allen Institute resources. We hope to see many of you at SfN this November (visit us at exhibit hall booth #901!), visit [alleninstitute.org/education](http://alleninstitute.org/education) to explore our resources and [subscribe to our newsletter!](#)”

***The FUN membership sends a big thanks to the Education committee and the WWU organizing committee whose hard work and time made this conference a success!***

*The FUN Education committee: Jackie Rose, David Donley, Tari Tan, Monica Gaudier-Diaz, Alo Basu, and Brinda Bradaric, and the WWU team: Jackie Rose, Jeff Grimm, Josh Kaplan, Jeff Cantle, and Andrea Swanson.*



See - almost 2 to more than 2! Lora Becker, Grace, Maggie Gill, and Beth Wee at the Poster session - gotta start them young!



## NEUROSCIENCE 2023

### Events you don't want to miss!

#### FUN UNDERGRADUATE POSTER SESSION

Saturday Nov 11, 6:30-8:30 pm,  
Washington Convention Center

In conjunction with SfN's Trainee Night, the FUN Undergraduate Poster Session will feature 130 undergraduate posters on the main floor of the Washington Convention Center. Come celebrate the work of our student colleagues!

#### FUN SOCIAL

Sunday Nov 12, 6:45-8:45 pm,  
Renaiss. Rock Creek Ballroom B

Take a short walk from the convention center and mingle with your FUN colleagues! Drinks (for purchase) and hors d'oeuvres will be served. All are welcome and Faculty Awards will be presented!

#### FUN BUSINESS MEETING

Monday Nov 13, 6:30-8:30 pm,  
Marriott Marquis, Cherry Blossom Room. [Virtual Registration Link.](#)

All members are welcome. Bylaw revisions and committee reports will be presented.

**The FUN exhibitor Booth  
will be selling T-shirts,  
squishy brains, pins, and  
more from Nov 12-15, 9:30  
am - 5:00 pm!**

## A preview of FUN at SfN

Washington, DC  
November 11-15, 2023

Visit FUN at  
booth  
#3334

Join us at the FUN booth for informal programming, just show up if the topic interests you:

#### SUNDAY, Nov 12

10am-Noon: Pathways to education-focused careers in academia (Tari Tan, Harvard Medical School).

2-3pm: Learn about Nu Rho Psi, Neuro national honor society

3-5pm: Joining FUN committees (Connie Kang, University of Houston-Downtown)

#### MONDAY, Nov 13

10-11am: BIPOC faculty meet-up (Michelle Tong, Macalester College)

11am-Noon: Antiracist Neuroscience (Michelle Tong, Macalester College)

2-3pm: Learn about Nu Rho Psi, Neuro national honor society

3-5pm: Publishing in Journal of Undergraduate Neuroscience (Elaine Reynolds, JUNE Editor-in-chief)

#### TUESDAY, Nov 14

10am-Noon: Landing a job at a teaching-focused institution (Marc Nahmani, University of Washington-Tacoma)

1-2pm: Data management made easy: online resources to help you make your data open, FAIR, and citable (Mathew Abrams, Karolinska Institutet, International Neuroinformatics Coordinating Facility)

2-3pm: Learn about Nu Rho Psi, Neuro national honor society

3-5pm: Non-disposable assignments in inclusive teaching (Sally Seraphin, Trinity College)

#### WEDNESDAY, Nov 15

2-3pm: Learn about Nu Rho Psi, Neuro national honor society

### Check out these Professional Development Workshops led by FUN members and friends:

Escape From Academia  
Alternative Careers: Is There Life After the PhD?

Saturday Nov 11, 3pm - 5pm

How I Survived Graduate School: Perspectives From Black in Neuro  
Sunday, Nov 12, 12pm - 2pm

Ensuring All Your Students Know They Belong In Neuroscience  
Monday, Nov 13, 9am - 11am

Teaching Neuroscience: New Approaches to Electrophysiology Labs

Monday, Nov 13, 12pm - 2pm

Inclusion in Higher Education: Designing Training Environments to Serve All Students

Monday, Nov 13, 3pm - 5pm

Neuroscience Departments and Programs Workshop: Skills and Best Practices for Transition

Periods for Trainees and Junior  
Monday, Nov 13, 3pm - 5pm

Follow [this link](#) for more details.

### Want more after SfN?

Join us for FUN Final Friday Professional Development Sessions (register with embedded links):

[December 8, 4 pm \(ET\)](#): Crowd Source Your Problem.

[January 26, 4 pm \(ET\)](#): Learn how others are implementing the [Neuroscience Core Concepts](#) with Audrey Chen-Lew and Jennifer Schaefer.



Announcing the **Fall 2023 Student Travel Award Winners**. For each student we list their name, affiliation (FUN sponsor), and corporate sponsor (send some thanks for their support!). Come visit these students and 120 more at the FUN Poster Session on Saturday starting at 6:30 pm in Section A of poster boards.

- Hussain Asgarali, Loyola University Chicago (Stephanie Grella), [International Brain Research Organization](#)
- Katelyn Caldarone, Bryant University (Kristin Scaplen), [International Brain Research Organization](#)
- Lily Cao, University of Florida (Barry Setlow), [Med Associates](#)
- India Carter, Ohio State University (Elizabeth Kirby), [International Brain Research Organization](#)
- Sej Cho, Lafayette College (Elaine Reynolds), [International Brain Research Organization](#)
- Liesl Co, Rutgers University (Kasia Bieszczad), [ADInstruments](#)
- Michael Dew, Brigham Young University (Jeffrey Edwards), [Noldus](#)
- Angelina Gentilin, Baldwin Wallace University (Jeffrey Zahratka), [Grass Foundation](#)
- Ada Glynn, Skidmore College (Sara Lagalwar), [Backyard Brains](#)
- Elizabeth Hawkins, Millsaps College (Amy Kohtz), [Grass Foundation](#)
- Gavin Nolan, Emmanuel College (Elizabeth Crofton), [FUN](#)
- Roshni Ray, Brandeis University (Suzanne Paradis), [International Brain Research Organization](#)
- Zack Reynolds, Bowdin College (Jennifer Honeycutt), [San Diego Instruments](#)
- Jordan Robbins, Harvard University (Laura Magnotti), [Grass Foundation](#)
- Addyson Siegle, Indiana University (Frederic Hopf), [International Brain Research Organization](#)
- Vincent Truong, Arizona State University (Jessica Verpeut), [International Brain Research Organization](#)
- Genelle Walker, University of Massachusetts Boston (Lisa Maeng), [David Hubel Memorial Fund](#)
- Melody Wunch, Western New England University (Michael Jarvinen), [International Brain Research Organization](#) and [Nanoscale Labs](#)
- Zoe Wynter, University of San Diego (Jena Hales), [Kent Scientific](#) and [FUN](#)

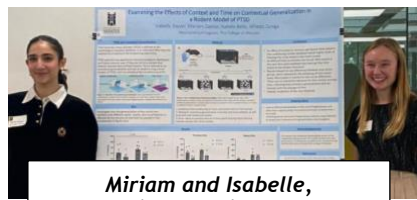


Former Travel Award winners with their sponsors

Do you know about the [Equipment Loan Program](#)? FUN members can submit a competitive proposal to “borrow” (*free of charge*) equipment for two years thanks to generous donations from *ADInstruments, Noldus Information Technology, Nikon Instruments, San Diego Instruments, Enzo Life Sciences, Med-Associates, Elements-ic, iMotions, Stoelting, Kent Scientific, and ConductScience*. The tentative application submission deadline 2024 is February 15<sup>th</sup>. Keep an eye out for the formal call on the webpage, around the end of November 2023, and in the meantime, [go see](#) what great equipment you could use!

### HIGHLIGHTS FROM REGIONAL MEETINGS

[mGluRs](#) - the Midwest Great Lakes Undergraduate Research Symposium in Neuroscience took place on Saturday, October 7. Over 70 students, faculty and graduate school sponsors gathered at Baldwin Wallace University for a great day of science! Twenty posters, three students talks, a keynote and a professional development panel filled the day.



Miriam and Isabelle, Neuroscience Majors from the College of Wooster, co-presenting at mGluRs.

*Isabelle shared, “This was the first conference I have ever attended, and I had the opportunity to co-present my research. The environment for presenting was warm and welcoming. This felt like a very constructive atmosphere, and I am grateful to have experienced it! I would say the panel was my favorite part. It was advantageous to hear the different paths the participants took, and it was comforting to see how despite the curveballs life throws at you, success is very much still achievable.”*

Miriam shared, “As a first-time attendee and presenter, I was filled with both nervous anticipation and excitement. Stepping into the realm of cutting-edge neuroscience research was like entering a world I had only previously read about, and it felt like a significant milestone in my academic and professional life. It was heartening to see that despite the competitive nature of academia, there was a spirit of collaboration and shared commitment to solving complex issues. The nervousness I initially felt evolved into a sense of belonging in the scientific community and I left with a greater appreciation for the incredible work being done in the field of neuroscience.”

[MidBrains](#) - the Upper Midwest Regional meeting took place on Saturday, October 21 in partnership with the Upper Midwest Chapter of the SfN. They featured a keynote, student poster sessions, graduate school sponsors, and a graduate school panel.

Be well FUN friends!

