

Ryan J. Post, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience, Providence College

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EDUCATION

Cornell University, Ithaca, NY	2014 – 2020
Ph.D. in Neurobiology	
Dissertation: Initiation and adaptive termination of goal-directed behavior in mice	
Providence College, Providence, RI	2010 – 2014
B.S. in Biology, B.A. in Psychology	
<i>Magna cum laude</i> , Liberal Arts Honors Certificate, Neuroscience Certificate	

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Providence College, Providence, RI	
Assistant Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience	Aug. 2023 – present
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA	
National Research Service Award Postdoctoral Fellow	Mar. 2022 – July 2023
Postdoctoral Researcher	Aug. 2020 – Mar. 2022
Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA	
Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology & Bi-College Neuroscience Program	Jan. 2022 – Dec. 2022

RESEARCH FUNDING

Current

Summer Student Training and Research Award (Subaward PI), P20 GM103430 (PI: Cho)	May 2024 – Apr. 2026
Rhode Island IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence	<i>Direct funds:</i> \$85,260
Neural pathways of adaptive food intake under competing survival needs	

Completed

Provost's Faculty Fellowship – Early Career Scholar (PI)	Jul. 2024 – Jun. 2025
Providence College Academic Affairs	<i>Direct funds:</i> \$15,000
Neural pathways of adaptive food intake under competing motivations	
Medical Research Grant, 16409_139170 (PI)	Apr. 2024 – Aug. 2025
Rhode Island Foundation	<i>Direct funds:</i> \$23,769
Medial prefrontal cortical circuits in motivation and depression	
National Research Service Award Postdoctoral Fellowship, F32 DK131892 (PI)	March 2022 – July 2023 ¹
National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases	<i>Total amount:</i> \$200,946
The role of ventromedial hypothalamic steroidogenic factor-1 neurons in exercise-related metabolism.	

¹Awarded through Feb. 2025; voluntarily terminated upon starting tenure-track position.

Supporting personnel — current

Basic Instrumentation Grant (Major User), NIH OD 038193 (PI: Miller)	May 2025 – May 2026
Acquisition of a Nikon CSU-W1 spinning disk confocal microscope	<i>Direct funds:</i> \$348,584

PUBLICATIONS

Published

***Post, R.J.**, *Bulkin, D.A., Ebitz, R.B., [†]Lee, V., Han, K., and Warden, M.R. (2022). Tonic activity in lateral habenula neurons acts as a neutral valence brake on reward-seeking behavior. *Current Biology*. 32(20): 4325-4336.e5. [DOI](#).

Post, R.J. and Warden, M.R. (2018). Melancholy, anhedonia, apathy: the search for separable behaviors and neural circuits in depression. *Current Opinion in Neurobiology*. 49: 192-200. [DOI](#)

Guru, A., **Post, R.J.**, Ho, Y.Y., and Warden, M.R. (2015). Making sense of optogenetics. *International Journal of Psychopharmacology*. 18(11): pyv079. [DOI](#)

Post, R.J., Dahlborg, K.M., O'Loughlin, L.E., and Bloom, C.M. (2014). Effects of juvenile exposure to predator odor on adolescent and adult anxiety and pain nociception. *Physiology and Behavior*. 131: 57-61. [DOI](#)

Bloom, C.M., **Post, R.J.**, Mazick, J., Blumenthal, B., Doyle, C., Peters, B., Dyche, J., and Davenport, D.G. (2013). A discriminated conditioned punishment model of phobia. *Neuropsychiatric Disease and Treatment*. 9: 1239-1248. [DOI](#)

Bloom, C.M., **Post, R.J.**, Anch, A.M., and Davenport, D.G. (2013). Behavioral assessment of visual deficits in the *taiep* mutant. *Degenerative Neurological and Neuromuscular Disease*. 3: 15-21. [DOI](#)

In revision/under review, preprint available upon request

***Post, R.J.**, *Kindel, M., *Goldstein, N., *Lieberman, A.G., Blank, N., Smith, N.K., Awh, M., Chin, P.W., Jung, A., Carty, J.R.E., Kruger, K.A., Villari, R., Cho, E., [†]Richie, L., [†]Timoney, M., [†]Kern, H.C., Jaycox, C., [†]Skelly, B., Collins, H.W., [†]Morley, E.N., [†]Kelly, C.O., [†]Moore, E.J., [†]Fernandes, C.A., [†]Kellarakos, T.M., McKnight, A.D., Aguilar, F.S., Alhadeff, A.L., Thaiss, C.A., Machado, T.A., Betley, J.N. Separable streams of hunger and cost information enable behavioral trade-offs.

*Kindel, M., ***Post, R.J.**, Lantier, L., Hwang, E., Carty, J.R.E., Villari, R., Goldstein, N., [†]Kern, H.C., [†]Richie, L., [†]Skelly, B., Dohnlová, L., Rai, M., Fujikawa, T., Ayala, J.E., Elmquist, J.K., Thaiss, C.A., Wasserman, D.H., Williams, K.W., Bloss, E.B., and Betley, J.N. Exercise-induced activation of ventromedial hypothalamic steroidogenic factor-1 neurons mediates improvements in endurance.

Preprint publicly available

Guru, A., Seo, C., **Post, R.J.**, Kullakanda, D.S., Schaffer, J.A., and Warden, M.R. Ramping activity in midbrain dopamine neurons signifies the use of a cognitive map. *bioRxiv*. 2020.5.21, 108886. [Preprint](#)

[†]Undergraduate mentee. *Co-first author

TEACHING

Providence College

Behavioral Neuroscience, PSY/NEU 262	6 sections across 3 semesters
Methods & Analysis: Behavioral Neuroscience with Lab, PSY/NEU 362	1 section
Neuroscience Capstone, NEU 474	3 sections across 2 semesters
Introduction to Neuroscience, NEU 100 (previously NEU 170 as ST)	1 section
New course proposed and approved	
Neuroscience of Motivated Behavior, NEU/PSY 470	1 section
New special topics course	
Independent Study, PSY 490	3 students across 3 semesters
Research in Psychology, PSY 395/495	18 enrollments across 5 semesters

Previous institutions

Advanced Topics in Neuroscience: Neuroscience of Mood Disorders, PSYC B316, Fall 2022

Bryn Mawr College	
Behavioral Neuroscience, PSYC B218, Bryn Mawr College	Spring 2022
Biomedical Research Academy Journal Club: Decoding Dopamine, PSSA 006-920, University of Pennsylvania	Summer 2020
First-year Writing Seminar: The Mind—Biological to Artificial, BIONB 1220, Cornell University	Fall 2018
<u>Guest lectures</u>	
Introduction to Literature, ENG 175, Providence College, Prof. Olga Limnios	Fall 2024

FELLOWSHIPS, AWARDS, & HONORS

Provost's Faculty Fellowship – Early Career Scholar, Providence College	2024 – 2025
Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Postdoctoral (F32) Fellowship	2022 – 2023
Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences	2020
Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation Fellowship	2019 – 2020
John S. Knight Award, Cornell Knight Writing Institute	2019
Stress Neurobiology Workshop Outstanding Poster Award	2018
Cornell Neurotech Mong Junior Fellowship	2017 – 2018
NSF Graduate Research Fellowship Honorable Mention	2015
Cornell Presidential Life Sciences Fellowship	2014 – 2015
<i>Magna cum laude</i> , Providence College	2014
Rev. Charles V. Reichart Award for scholarship in biology, Providence College	2014
Rhode Island INBRE Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship	2012 & 2013
Psi Chi Psychology Honors Society	2012
Alpha Epsilon Delta Pre-health Honors Society, elected to executive board	2012
Providence College St. Catherine of Siena Honors Scholarship	2010 – 2014

UNDERGRADUATE MENTORSHIP

Providence College

Clara Arcand, 2025 – present, Neuroscience
Kelly Walsh, 2025 – present, Neuroscience
Joshua Devia, 2025 – present, Psychology
Joseph Amoroso, 2025 – present, Biology
Gabriella Domgioni, 2025 – present, Neuroscience
Kaelin McCaffrey, 2025 – present, Neuroscience. <i>STAR Fellow, 2025</i>
Alonie Ashley, 2024 – present, Neuroscience. <i>STAR Fellow, 2025</i>
Amelia Mignacca, 2024 – 2025, Neuroscience. <i>Next: Medical assistant, Just Kids RI & preparing medical school application</i>
Madeline McGrath, 2024 – 2025, Neuroscience. <i>STAR Fellow, 2024. Next: M.S. student, Human Physiology, Boston University</i>
Olivia Belt, 2024 – 2025, Biology & Psychology. <i>STAR Fellow, 2024. Undergraduate Research Academic Year Grant, 2025. Next: M.S. student, Neurosciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam</i>
Francesca Schaub, 2024 – present, Biology. Summer Undergraduate Research Grant, 2025: AgRP axonal projections in the periaqueductal gray influence on visual stimulus versus hunger motivation
Noah Ashby, 2024 – present, Neuroscience. <i>STAR Fellow, 2024</i>
Madison Rohr, 2024 – present, Neuroscience. <i>STAR Fellow, 2025</i>

Arianna Gordon, 2023 – 2025, Biology. *Next*: Accelerated B.S.N. student, New York University

Ethan Moore, 2023 – present, Biology & Psychology

Claire Kelly, 2023 – 2025, Neuroscience. **Summer Undergraduate Research Grant, 2024**: Competing motivations in adolescent mice. **Undergraduate Research Academic Year Grant, 2025**. *Next*: Medical assistant, Westchester Medical Center

Emma Morley, 2023 – 2025, Biology & Psychology. **Summer Undergraduate Research Grant, 2024**: Reprioritization of survival needs during pregnancy in mice. **Undergraduate Research Academic Year Grant, 2025**. *Next*: Research assistant, Northwell Health Labs

Madeline Rahilly, 2023 – 2024, Psychology. **Undergraduate Research Academic Year Grant, 2023**. *Next*: Neuropsychology technician, Rhode Island Hospital

University of Pennsylvania (Betley lab)

Xinming (Grace) Zhang, 2023, Neuroscience. *Next*: Research assistant, University of Pennsylvania

Lukas R. Richie, 2022 – 2023, Neuroscience. **Independent Study Thesis**: Ventromedial hypothalamic steroidogenic factor-1 neurons underlie improvements in exercise performance. *Next*: Medical assistant and scribe & preparing medical school application

Bridget Skelly, 2022 – 2023, Neuroscience, *Penn PURM fellow*

Megan Timoney, 2022 – 2023, Biology. **Independent Study Thesis**: Hypothalamic AgRP projections are additive when costs are imposed on food availability. *Next*: Consultant, Beghou Consulting

Hallie C. Kern, 2022 – 2023, Neuroscience. *Next*: Ph.D. student, University of Pennsylvania

Trinity M. Kellarakos, 2021 – 2022, Biology

Christian Fernandes, 2021 – 2022, Neuroscience. **Independent Study Thesis**: The activation of sufficient AgRP neurons outcompetes fear responses. *Next*: Consultant, Simon-Kucher & Partners

Talese A. Evans, 2020 – 2022, Psychology. *PennFERBS fellow*. *Next*: Financial Advisor Analyst, JP Morgan Chase & Co.

Cornell University (Warden lab)

Brittney A. Moncrieffe, 2019 – 2020, Biology & Society. *Next*: M.D. student, SUNY Downstate College of Medicine

Vladlena Lee, 2016 – 2018, Neurobiology & Behavior. **Honors Thesis**: Lateral habenula and dopaminergic ventral tegmental area neurons encode the motivational state of mice. *Next*: M.D. student, SUNY Downstate College of Medicine

Kyle Pellegrino, 2016 – 2018, Neurobiology & Behavior. **Honors Thesis**: Monosynaptic tracing of ventral tegmental area-projecting infralimbic cortex neurons using G-deleted rabies virus. *Next*: M.D.-Ph.D. student, University of North Carolina

Nicholas W. Ringelberg, 2015 – 2016, Neurobiology & Behavior. *Next*: M.D.-Ph.D. student, University of North Carolina

SELECTED ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS

Invited Seminars

University of Pennsylvania Biology Seminar Series · Jan. 26, 2023 · *Title*: Neural circuits for behavioral choice under competing motivations.

Bi-College Neuroscience Club · Bryn Mawr College · Nov. 10, 2022 · *Title*: Hypothalamic circuits for behavioral choice under competing motivations.

St. Mary's College of Maryland Psychology · Nov. 9, 2022 · *Title*: Hypothalamic circuits for behavioral choice under competing motivations.

Providence College Psychology & Neuroscience · Nov. 7, 2022 · *Title*: Hypothalamic circuits for behavioral choice under competing motivations.

Exercise Program Project Grant Symposium · Hypothalamic Research Center, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (*Virtual*) · June 16, 2022 · *Title*: VMH steroidogenic factor-1 neural activity during exercise.

Exercise Program Project Grant Symposium · Hypothalamic Research Center, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (*Virtual*) · May 14, 2021 · *Title*: Ventromedial hypothalamic neural activity during exercise.

Neuroscience Alumni Series · Biology Dept., Providence College · Mar. 31, 2016 · *Title*: Neuromodulatory circuits of depressive behavior.

Conference Presentations

Neuroscience 2025 · Society for Neuroscience · San Diego · Nov. 15-19, 2025 · *Title*: Medial prefrontal cortical ensembles direct behavior in response to competing needs. Student co-presenters: Francesca Schaub & Kaelin McCaffrey

Neuroscience 2024 · Society for Neuroscience · Chicago · Oct. 5-9, 2024 · *Title*: Additive, non-intersectional action of hypothalamic hunger circuits overcomes cost for acquisition of food.

Society for the Study of Ingestive Behavior, 31st Annual Meeting · Chicago · Jul. 9-13, 2024 · *Title*: Additive, non-intersectional action of hypothalamic hunger circuits overcomes cost for acquisition of food.

Neuroscience 2022 · Society for Neuroscience · San Diego · Nov. 12-16, 2022 · *Title*: Ventromedial hypothalamic steroidogenic factor-1 neurons are potentiated by exercise training and underlie improvements in exercise performance.

Neuroscience 2019 · Society for Neuroscience · Chicago · Oct. 19-23, 2019 · *Title*: The prefrontal cortex-ventral tegmental area projection promotes movement initiation in motivated behaviors.

Neuroscience 2018 · Society for Neuroscience · San Diego · Nov. 3-7, 2018 · *Title*: The prefrontal cortex-ventral tegmental area projection modulates helplessness and locomotor activity, but not reward-seeking behavior.

2018 Stress Neurobiology Workshop · Banff, AB · June 8-11, 2018 · *Title*: The prefrontal cortical projection to the ventral tegmental area impacts helplessness- and locomotion-related behaviors, but not hedonic behaviors, in chronically stressed mice. **Outstanding Poster Award**

Student Regional Conference Presentations

2025 RI Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium · RI-INBRE · University of Rhode Island · Madison Rohr · Aug. 1, 2025 · *Title*: Medial prefrontal cortical ensembles direct behavior in response to competing needs.

2025 RI Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium · RI-INBRE · University of Rhode Island · Kaelin McCaffrey · Aug. 1, 2025 · *Title*: The impacts of pregnancy, maternal experience, and prenatal stress on motivated behavior amidst environmental threat.

2025 RI Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium · RI-INBRE · University of Rhode Island · Alonie Ashley · Aug. 1, 2025 · *Title*: Hunger-sensing hypothalamic neurons drive food consumption despite environmental threat.

2025 Northeast Under/graduate Research Organization for Neuroscience Conference · Quinnipiac University · Olivia Belt & Madison Rohr · Apr. 26, 2025 · *Title*: Effect of prefrontal cortical fear engram activation on competing needs: hunger and fear.

2025 Northeast Under/graduate Research Organization for Neuroscience Conference · Quinnipiac University · Claire Kelly · Apr. 26, 2025 · *Title*: Motivated behavior in juvenility and across the lifespan.

2025 Northeast Under/graduate Research Organization for Neuroscience Conference · Quinnipiac University · Emma Morley · Apr. 26, 2025 · *Title*: The effect of pregnancy and maternity on behavioral needs amidst environmental threat.

2025 Big East Research Symposium · Madison Square Garden, New York · Olivia Belt · Mar. 15, 2025 · *Title*: Effect of prefrontal cortical fear engram activation on competing needs: hunger and fear. **Competitive invitation**

2024 RI Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium · RI-INBRE · University of Rhode Island · Emma Morley & Claire Kelly · July 26, 2024 · *Title*: The effect of pregnancy and maternity on behavioral motivations amidst environmental threat.

2024 RI Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium · RI-INBRE · University of Rhode Island · Olivia Belt · July 26, 2024 · *Title*: Understanding competing fear and hunger motivations through correlating neural activity and behavior.

2024 RI Summer Undergraduate Research Symposium · RI-INBRE · University of Rhode Island · Noah Ashby & Madeline McGrath · July 26, 2024 · *Title*: Quantifying the effect of environmental threat on food consumption in mice.

2024 Northeast Under/graduate Research Organization for Neuroscience Conference · Quinnipiac University · Ethan Moore · Apr. 21, 2024 · *Title:* Hunger-sensing hypothalamic neurons drive food consumption despite environmental threat.

2024 Big East Research Symposium · Madison Square Garden, New York · Emma Morley & Madeline Rahilly · Mar. 16, 2024 · *Title:* Hunger-sensing hypothalamic neurons drive food consumption despite environmental threat.
Competitive invitation

SERVICE

Providence College

Member (scientist), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee	2024 – present
Faculty advisor, Brainy Bunch (undergraduate neuroscience club)	2023 – present
Faculty co-advisor, Nu Rho Psi Honor Society, Alpha-RI chapter	2023 – present
Organizer of Careers in Neuroscience, Apr. 9, 2025	
Organizer of inaugural induction ceremony, Apr. 10, 2025	

Scientific community

Member, Education Committee, Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience	2025 – present
Organizing committee, 2026 Faculty for Undergraduate Teaching Workshop, North Central College	
Guest referee, <i>Neuron</i> , <i>Nature Communications</i> , <i>Cell Metabolism</i> , <i>MethodsX</i>	ongoing

MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES

Nu Rho Psi Honor Society, <i>faculty co-advisor</i> , <i>Alpha in Rhode Island Chapter</i>	2024 – present
Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience	2023 – present
Society for Neuroscience	2018 – present
Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society	2012 – present