

Ryan J. Post, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Psychology & Neuroscience, Providence College

1 Cunningham Sq.
Science Complex LL37
Providence, RI 02918

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

Under review

PUI Early Career Development Award (Subaward PI), P20 GM103430 (PI: Bongsup Cho)	May 2026 – Apr. 2028
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Rhode Island IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence

Direct funds: \$200,000

A prefrontal cortical switchboard for competing motivations

Supporting personnel — current

Basic Instrumentation Grant (**Major User**), NIH OD 038193 (PI: Kristi Miller)

May 2025 – May 2026

Acquisition of a Nikon CSU-W1 spinning disk confocal microscope

Direct funds: \$348,584

Project: Neural mechanisms of motivated behavior

PUBLICATIONS

Published

*Kindel, M., ***Post, R.J.**, Grose, K., Lantier, L., Hwang, E., Carty, J.R.E., Dohnlová, L., Lepeak, L., †Kern, H.C., Villari, R., Goldstein, N., Lo, E., Yeung, A., †Richie, L., †Skelly, B., Golub, J., 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. (2026). Exercise-induced activation of ventromedial hypothalamic steroidogenic factor-1 neurons mediates improvements in endurance. *Neuron*. Online ahead of print. [DOI](#)

***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, 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. *Under second round revision*.

In preparation

†Morley, E.N., †Kelly, C.K., †Belt, O., †McCaffrey, K.M., †Schaub, F.S., †Rohr, M., †Ashley, A., and ***Post, R.J.** The impacts of pregnancy, maternal experience, and prenatal stress on motivated behavior amidst environmental threat.

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](#)

*Co-first author. †Undergraduate mentee. ✨Corresponding senior author.

TEACHING

Providence College

Behavioral Neuroscience, PSY/NEU 262	6 sections across 3 semesters
Methods & Analysis: Behavioral Neuroscience with Lab, PSY/NEU 362	2 sections across 2 semesters
Neuroscience Capstone, NEU 474	3 sections across 2 semesters
Introduction to Neuroscience, NEU 100	2 sections across 2 semesters
New course proposed and approved; previously NEU 170 as ST	
Neuroscience of Motivated Behavior, NEU/PSY 470	1 section
New special topics course; proposed and under review as NEU 371: Neural Circuits of Motivated Behavior	
Independent Study, PSY 490	3 students across 3 semesters
Research in Psychology, PSY 395/495	23 enrollments across 6 semesters

Previous institutions

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

Guest lectures

Introduction to Literature, ENG 175, Providence College, Prof. Olga Limnios	Fall 2024
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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

Brenna Murphy, 2026 – present, Neuroscience
Alexa Luna, 2026 – present, Biology & Psychology
Chloe-Jo Bassim, 2026 – present, Biology

Christopher Theodorou, 2026 – present, Biology

Leah DaSilva, 2026 – present, Neuroscience

Emily Leuenberger, 2025 – present, Neuroscience

Clara Arcand, 2025 – present, Neuroscience

Kelly Walsh, 2025 – present, Neuroscience

Joshua Devia, 2025 – present, Psychology

Joseph Amoruso, 2025 – present, Biology

Gabriella Domgioni, 2025 – present, Neuroscience

Kaelin McCaffrey, 2025 – present, Neuroscience. *STAR Fellow, 2025. Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience SfN Travel Award, 2025*

Alonie Ashley, 2024 – present, Neuroscience. *STAR Fellow, 2025*

Amelia Mignacca, 2024 – 2025, Neuroscience. *Next: Medical assistant, Just Kids RI*

Madeline McGrath, 2024 – 2025, Neuroscience. *STAR Fellow, 2024. Next: M.S. student, Human Physiology, Boston University*

Olivia Belt, 2024 – 2025, Biology & Psychology. *STAR Fellow, 2024. Undergraduate Research Academic Year Grant, 2025. Next: M.S. student, Neurosciences, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*

Francesca Schaub, 2024 – present, Biology. *Summer Undergraduate Research Grant, 2025: AgRP axonal projections in the periaqueductal gray influence on visual stimulus versus hunger motivation. Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience SfN Travel Award, 2025*

Noah Ashby, 2024 – present, Neuroscience. *STAR Fellow, 2024*

Madison Rohr, 2024 – present, Neuroscience. *STAR Fellow, 2025*

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*

Bridget Skelly, 2022 – 2023, Neuroscience, *Penn PURM fellow. Next: Redwoods Leadership Development Program*

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. *Next: Medical assistant, Infinity Dermatology*

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*

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

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. **Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience Travel Award**
- 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

- 2026 Big East Research Symposium · Madison Square Garden, New York · Madison Rohr & Alonie Ashley · Mar. 14, 2026 · *Title*: Hunger-sensing hypothalamic neurons drive food consumption despite environmental threat. **Competitive invitation**
- 2025 NeuroBoston Fall Symposium · NeuroBoston (SfN Boston Chapter) · Tufts University · Kaelin McCaffrey & Francesca Schaub · Dec. 5, 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 · 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**

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.

SERVICE

Providence College

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| 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 |
| Annual organizer of Careers in Neuroscience | 2025 – present |
| Annual organizer of induction ceremony | 2025 – present |

Scientific community

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| Member, Education Committee, Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience | 2025 – present |
| Organizing committee, 2026 Faculty for Undergraduate Summer Workshop, North Central College | |
| Judge, NeuroBoston Fall Symposium | Nov. 2025 |
| Judge, Big East Research Symposium | Mar. 2025 |
| 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, Alpha in Rhode Island Chapter</i>	2024 – present
Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience, <i>Education Committee member</i>	2023 – present
Society for Neuroscience	2018 – present
Council on Undergraduate Research	2023 – present
Sigma Xi Scientific Research Honor Society	2012 – present

FORMAL PEDAGOGICAL & PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & INSTRUCTION

Inclusive Syllabus Design Workshop	August 2025
Council on Undergraduate Research Dialogues	February 2025
Faculty for Undergraduate Neuroscience Mentor Network	2023 – 2024
Inclusive Teaching Reading Groups, Providence College HHMI Inclusive Excellence Group	2023 – present
Alternative Grading Workshop, Providence College HHMI Inclusive Excellence Group	August 2023
Structured, Active, In-class Learning (SAIL) TA Training Program, Penn Center for Teaching and Learning	Fall 2021
<i>Instructor</i> , Incorporating High-Impact Teaching Practices in Your Class, Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation	February 2020
<i>Instructor</i> , Course Design Institute, Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation	November 2019
<i>Instructor</i> , Teaching Inter-Disciplinarity, Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation	November 2019
Future Professors Institute, Cornell University	June 2019
Teaching and Learning in the Diverse Classroom	Spring 2019
Teaching in Higher Education, ALS 6015, Cornell University	Spring 2019
First-year Writing Seminar Peer Collaboration Fellowship	Fall 2018
Assessing Learning & Teaching Certificate, Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation	Fall 2016
Creating an Engaging Classroom Certificate, Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation	Fall 2016
University-wide Teaching Conference, Cornell Center for Teaching Innovation	Fall 2016
Writing in the Majors Seminar, WRIT 7101, Cornell University	Fall 2015