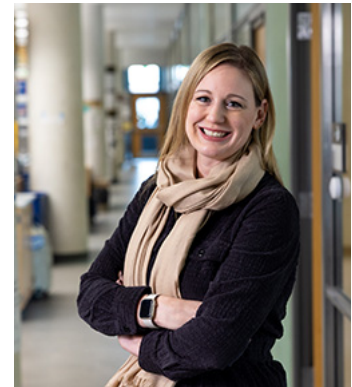


It's more than just the INI T-shirt slogan—the best ideas really do come from collaboration, and this depends critically on the faculty, postdoctoral fellows, students, and research staff in the INI. Since the INI was founded in late 2016, we have worked with seven colleges and 30 departments to recruit 26 new faculty members to the University of Iowa. I could go on for pages about each one and the strengths they bring to our collaborative institute, but this month I'm going to highlight just two, our first hire and a summer 2023 hire, as examples of how we are building for the future.

**Krystal Parker** was the first faculty hire into the new Iowa Neuroscience Institute in 2017, joining me on what was then an empty second floor of PBDB. An Iowa native, she had completed her PhD at Iowa State University and came here for a postdoc under the mentorship of Nancy Andreasen and Kumar Narayanan. Right from the start, Krystal was at the intersection of neurology and psychiatry, pursuing fundamental research on the function of the cerebellum. She built her research program over the course of her postdoc, winning a NARSAD Young Investigator grant in 2013, a K01 from NIMH in 2015, and a series of grants from the Nellie Ball Trust.



We knew she'd laid the foundation for a powerhouse research program, making her a natural fit for our first INI faculty hire in conjunction with the Department of Psychiatry. She continued to grow her career with individual and collaborative projects, focusing on the role of the cerebellum in schizophrenia. She has led formal and informal mentoring groups for women in science. Her first R01 was awarded in 2018. Since Spring 2023, Krystal has led a Research Program of Excellence team of five investigators representing three colleges. I could not have been more proud to see her reach the milestone of tenure this summer.



In addition to supporting our faculty through mentorship and resources, the INI works with departments across the university to attract innovators in neuroscience to the University of Iowa. This summer, the College of Engineering welcomed **Kim "Avrama" Blackwell** as the new chair and DEO in Biomedical Engineering with enthusiastic support from the neuroscience community.

Avrama is a world leader in the computational modeling of calcium dynamics and signaling pathways underlying neuronal plasticity. Her research investigates how spatiotemporal patterns of neuronal activity produce changes in synaptic plasticity and the function of neuronal circuits. Her work spans the campus with a computational lab in the Seamans

Center for Engineering Arts and Sciences and a wet lab in the Pappajohn Biomedical Discovery Building.

It's people who drive community, collaboration, and creativity. The INI faculty represent a multi-disciplinary campuswide community and grow stronger with every new member, from those just starting out to those well-established. In the INI, we know that fundamental advances in our understanding of the brain come each day from our social interactions with our colleagues in the lab and in the clinic.

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