



Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer *JM*

Gloria Waters, Vice President and Associate Provost for Research *G.W.*

DATE: May 13, 2014

SUBJECT: Establishment of the Center for Systems Neuroscience

It is with great pleasure that we announce the establishment of the Boston University Center for Systems Neuroscience. Systems Neuroscience – a field that furthers understanding of how brain systems mediate behaviors, such as perception and attention, learning and memory, and speech and hearing – is a major strength of BU’s research portfolio and is an area where we are uniquely positioned to lead. The Center is being established to capitalize on our many strengths in this area.

The Center for Systems Neuroscience (CSN) will be interdisciplinary and interdepartmental in nature and University-wide in scope. The Center’s mission will be to advance research in Systems Neuroscience at Boston University with the specific goals of:

1. Establishing an internationally recognized academic center of excellence that will attract talented investigators for training in experimental techniques and mathematical modeling in Systems Neuroscience;
2. Fostering collaborative research;
3. Generating and providing access to technical innovations that will enhance our understanding of neural systems; and
4. Fostering collaborative research linking human behavior to neural mechanisms by improving access to imaging techniques through a new Center for Cognitive Neuroimaging.

CSN will bring together exceptional scientists from across our Schools and Colleges through a unique collaborative and administrative structure designed to further enhance research, promote collaboration and bolster recruitment of new researchers on both the Charles River and Medical campuses in the field of Systems Neuroscience.

We are pleased to announce that Professor Michael Hasselmo has been named the inaugural Director of CSN. A scholar of international reputation, Dr. Hasselmo is Professor of Psychological & Brain Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences, Director of the BU

Computational Neurophysiology Laboratory, and Associate Director of the BU Center for Memory & Brain. Dr. Hasselmo arrived at BU in 1998 from Harvard University, where he was the John L. Loeb Professor of Psychology. With more than 15,000 citations of his work, his research uses computer modeling to link cortical function to memory-guided behavior – a field that addresses physiological effects relevant to Alzheimer’s disease, schizophrenia and depression. Dr. Hasselmo is a member of numerous scientific journal editorial boards, including *Science*, is an Associate Editor of the *Journal of Neuroscience*, and in 2012 published a new book on episodic memory. He is Principal Investigator on several major grants, including a \$7.5 million Office of Naval Research Multi-disciplinary University Research Initiative Award. A former Rhodes Scholar, Dr. Hasselmo received his A.B. from Harvard and his Ph.D. from Oxford University.

As Director, Dr. Hasselmo – alongside a subset of other CSN members – will be housed in the new Center for Integrated Life Sciences and Engineering (CILSE) building to be located at 610 Commonwealth Avenue and due for completion in December 2017. Until that time, CSN members will remain housed in their current spaces. Administrative offices for the CSN will also be located in the new building when completed.

Over the next few months, Dr. Hasselmo will be meeting with members of the neuroscience community to gather input on how the Center can best foster collaboration and enhance research in Systems Neuroscience at Boston University. It is expected that the activities of CSN will include opportunities to convene students, researchers and faculty for weekly seminars or colloquia and more extensive workshops and conferences; the development of large-scale collaborative projects that gather faculty across Schools and Colleges with the goal of obtaining external funding; and the development of a seed funding program to help underwrite future collaborative efforts.

We look forward to working with Professor Hasselmo and the CSN community to promote continued excellence in this critically important area of research. Please join us in congratulating him on his appointment as the new Director.

cc: Robert A. Brown
Academic Deans
Provost’s Cabinet