

Chapter Goal: The goals of the New Orleans Chapter for the Society for Neuroscience (GNOSN) are to serve our local community through outreach activities and to provide opportunities for undergraduate/graduate students and postdoctoral researchers to present their research, to receive training in grant writing and to facilitate interactions among trainees from different institutions and campuses in the Greater New Orleans area.

Description: The GNOSN was established in 1972 by 11 neuroscientists and has grown to 150 members today. GNOSN membership is open to all five Universities in the New Orleans area. One important event that we organize is an annual Neuroscience retreat in the winter where we have poster sessions and invite a Keynote speaker. We extended the invitation to our colleagues at the LSU Baton Rouge campus last year, and also attended their first Chapter conference in March this year.

Over the past 3 years, we have been organizing a graduate student and postdoc research seminar series. We have a seminar committee consisting of two graduate students and two postdocs from Tulane and LSUHSC. The committee is responsible for organizing the seminars, contacting speakers, making announcements, social media posting, organizing refreshments and booking rooms. The seminars are held once a month and at a location that alternates between Tulane and LSUHSC. The speakers are graduate students and postdoctoral researchers, and each give a short 20-minute talk or a 45-minute presentation. This seminar series has provided a platform for students and postdocs to present their research and network with other scientists. We also organized several sessions of grant writing workshops, a faculty panel discussion of fellowship grant writing skills and discussion of Fellowship and K grant applications, which was led by F and K awardees. These monthly events are well attended and have been successful in providing trainees with new networking opportunities.

The GNOSN has been organizing Brain Awareness Week events at the Children's Resource Center for many years, where children from local pre-K, kindergarten, elementary and middle schools attend the half-day event. During these events, we have brain-spinal cord models and animal brains for them to look at, as well as neurons to view using a microscope. The younger children make brains using Play-Doh and color brain drawings. Older children do experiments using the Neuron SpikerBox and controlling Claw box from Backyard Brains, to spark their curiosity in learning how the brain works. The event is well attended by children and parents alike. The outreach activities are coordinated by two faculty members and an organizing committee composed of 4 students and postdocs, in collaboration with the Tulane Brain Institute. Many of the trainees and faculty members participate in outreach activities. Our volunteers explain brain structure and function, do demonstrations, and help kids with experiments and answer all kinds of questions from children and their families.