

The Friedman Brain Institute

2026 FBI Research Scholars

On behalf of the Philanthropic Leadership Council of The Friedman Brain Institute, we are pleased to announce the 2026 recipients of The FBI Research Scholars Awards.

Jane Martin and Stuart Katz Research Scholar Award



Michael Lazarus, PhD

Associate Professor,
Pharmacological Sciences
& Graduate Education



Yi Shi, PhD

Associate Professor,
Pharmacological Sciences

Discovery of Lipophagy Activators for Neurodegenerative Diseases

New therapeutic strategies are desperately needed for Alzheimer's Disease (AD). One emerging pathway that has recently garnered attention is autophagy, a highly conserved catabolic pathway. One type of autophagy that has been the focus of recent work in autophagy is lipophagy, the recycling of lipid droplets. Neutral lipids are stored in organelles called lipid droplets, which can then be broken down and recycled through autophagic processes. The goal of this project is to identify novel small molecule activators of lipophagy and validate their targets, as a way to develop selective chemical probes to study lipophagy in AD.



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