Christopher D. Morrison, Ph.D.
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1) PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Strategic scientific leader with 20+ years driving metabolic disease research, particularly focused on the neural regulation of food intake, energy expenditure, and metabolism. Proven expertise in metabolic phenotyping, *in vivo* systems physiology, and mechanistic validation of therapeutic targets. Senior executive leadership experience at a biomedical research center, leadership of a major metabolic phenotyping core, and leadership of a research team with substantial NIH funding and high-impact research programs (H-index 52, ~130 publications). Annual aggregated budget responsibility (Division Director, Core Director, Lab Director) exceeding 12 million..

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Pennington Biomedical Research Center, Baton Rouge, LA
Associate Executive Director for Basic Science (2021 – Present)

- Strategic and operational leadership for the Division of Basic Science, comprising ~22 faculty members and their research laboratories focused on metabolic disease.
- Aggregated operational budget of over 12 million.
- Oversee resource allocation, physical infrastructure, and strategic planning to foster a collaborative, innovative, and productive research environment.
- Recruit, mentor, and retain top-tier scientific talent, building world-class research teams and fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration.
- Mentor faculty in grant writing, career development, and research program management.

Director, Animal Metabolism and Behavior Core (AMBC) (2016 – Present)

- Direct a state-of-the-art facility providing comprehensive preclinical metabolic and behavioral phenotyping services, supporting ~27 research groups and accounting for over 19,000 hours of annual use.
- Led substantial growth of core funding and infrastructure, including facility renovations and equipment acquisition (respirometry systems, stable isotope gas analyzer, DSI telemetry, 7T preclinical MRI)
- Led a team of 4 technicians, surgeons, and specialists, ensuring high-quality data generation and investigator support.

John S. McIlhenny Professor of Nutritional Neuroscience (2020 – Present) *(Previously Professor, 2017-2020; Associate Professor, 2011-2017; Assistant Professor, 2008-2011; Research Assistant Professor, 2003-2008)*

- Principal Investigator for ~22 years focusing on the neural mechanisms of nutritional status detection and the regulation of behavior and metabolism.
- Pioneered research identifying FGF21 as a liver to brain signal coordinating adaptive changes in lifespan, body weight, energy expenditure, glucose homeostasis, and macronutrient preference.
- Secured multiple funding awards totaling over $11M in direct funding as PI, over $1.3M in funding for trainees, and served in a leadership role in institutional center awards totaling over $21M.
- Mentored over 25 junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students, as well as numerous research staff and undergraduate students.

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

- **Therapeutic Area Expertise:** Obesity, Type 2 Diabetes, Metabolic Syndrome, Neural Control of Feeding Behavior and Metabolism, Hormone and Neuropeptide Action in the Brain, Gut-Brain Communication.
- **Preclinical, *In Vivo* Physiology and Wet Lab Molecular Biology Expertise:**
    - Rodent Genetic and Dietary Models of Metabolic Disease (obesity, diabetes, dietary interventions, Cre/Lox, Intersectional Genetics).
    - Stereotaxic Surgery & CNS Cannulation/Injection, AAV Injection and Gene Delivery, Optogenetics, Chemogenetics, Fiber Photometry, Neuroanatomical Tracing.
    - Metabolic Phenotyping: Indirect Calorimetry, Body Composition, Food Intake & Meal Pattern Analysis, Glucose/Insulin Tolerance, Preclinical Imaging.
    - Behavioral Assays: Conditioned Taste Aversion, Operant Responding, Macronutrient Choice, Conditioned Place Preference.
    - Tissue Collection & Processing for Molecular/Biochemical Analysis.
    - Western Blot, qPCR, ELISA, Immunohistochemistry, Radioimmunoassay.
    - Data Analysis & Statistical Software (GraphPad Prism, SAS, JMP).
- **Leadership & Management:** Executive Leadership, Strategic Planning, Scientific Leadership, Team Building & Mentorship (~35 Direct Reports including faculty, core staff, lab staff, trainees), Core Facility Management, Budget Oversight, Project Management, Grant Writing, Cross-Functional Collaboration.
- **Publications & Presentations**
    - Extensive publication record: ~130 peer-reviewed articles, H-index 52, >8500 total citations.
    - Invited speaker at national and international conferences
    - Extensive experience with research and program review, including NIH Study Section Review
    - Full Publication List and Profile
        - https://www.webofscience.com/wos/author/record/A-6093-2010
        - https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5492-102X
- **AI/Digital Transformation Leadership**: Institutional champion of AI adoption: Institutional AI taskforce advising AI implementation. Technology early adopter throughout personal and professional life. Exploring applications in literature analysis, hypothesis generation, vibe coding/context engineering, and research productivity. Seeking to accelerate AI integration for research and discovery.

EDUCATION

T32 Postdoctoral Fellowship - Dept. of Medicine, Div. of Metabolism, Endocrinology and Nutrition, University of Washington and Harborview Medical Center (2001 – 2003). Advisor: Dr. Michael W. Schwartz

- Conducted postdoctoral research focusing on hypothalamic circuits and signaling molecules mediating the convergent effects of leptin and insulin on food intake and neuropeptide gene expression.
- Contributed to the discovery of PI3K as a common mediator of leptin and insulin action for the regulation of NPY and POMC neural activity and gene expression.

Ph.D., Animal Science – Reproductive Physiology & Neuroendocrinology (2001) University of Missouri – Columbia, MO. Advisor: Dr. Duane Keisler

- Dissertation: *Leptin and Neuropeptide Y as a Link between Body Fat, Fertility, and Appetite in Ruminants*
- Conducted mechanistic research using large animal models to assess the CNS regulation of reproduction in response to changes in nutritional status.

B.S., Animal Science, Science and Technology Focus (1997) Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA

- *Summa Cum Laude, University Medal, Goldwater Research Scholar*