

UF Center for Smell & Taste (UFCST)

Scientific discovery is being revolutionized by bringing together concepts and technologies from diverse academic disciplines. The University of Florida (UF) with its large, academically diverse faculty, including the health sciences, agriculture, and engineering, all located on a centralized campus, is especially well positioned to ride this wave of progress. The UFCST was established as a University-wide center in order to apply this broad knowledge base to chemical senses research and to create a unique opportunity to advance discovery, application, and education in the chemical senses that can serve the State, the Southeast, and the Nation. We partner in this effort with chemosensory scientists at Florida State University towards the goal of ultimately becoming a State-wide center.

The UFCST closely partners with the McKnight Brain Institute (MBI), which shares the UFCST's University-wide perspective. The MBI is the home of the Center's administrative office. Members of the Center are distributed throughout the University in the academic units where they hold their fiscal appointments. Currently, our membership includes faculty in the Colleges of Engineering, Medicine, Dentistry, Agriculture, and Liberal Arts and Sciences. Our membership includes faculty affiliated with the Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences, the Genetics Institute, the Brain Institute, the Institute of Aging, the Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience, and the Emerging Pathogens Institute.

The UFCST was established as a University-wide Center at UF on October 1, 1998, by the then State University System Board of Regents to provide a forum to coordinate and promote basic and applied research and education in the chemical senses at UF. The UFCST originally reported to the Office of Academic Affairs (Provost). In May, 2008 the reporting structure was changed to the office of the Vice President for Research. The UFCST has always closely partnered with the McKnight Brain Institute, which shared the UFCST's University-wide perspective and which housed the Center's administrative office. This relationship continues today.

The chemical senses is a recognized field of academic endeavor that inherently encompasses a wide variety of disciplines and transcends traditional academic boundaries, making fostering research and training in the chemical senses an especially appropriate mission for a Center that bridges traditional academic boundaries. The Center presently integrates the activities of over 50 faculty together with their postdoctoral associates and graduate students from over 20 different departments spanning 6 different Colleges, the Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences, the Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience, the US Department of Agriculture, and the Veterans Administration. Through integrating the broad expertise at the University of Florida relevant to chemical senses research, the UFCST is positioned to make a unique contribution to the field, the University, Florida's citrus industry (citrus-derived chemicals are a major source of revenue for the flavor and fragrance industry), and the health of Florida's citizens.