

Juliana M. Navia Pelaez, PhD.



It is my greatest pleasure to inform you that Dr Navia Pelaez will be joining the Department of Pharmacology and Physiology, on February 1, 2024 as Assistant Professor (TT).

Daniela Salvemini, Ph.D

William Beaumont Professor and Chair

Department of Pharmacology and Physiology

Director, Institute for Translational Neuroscience

Juliana Navia Pelaez, Ph.D, completed her graduate studies in vascular biology at UFMG, Brazil, focusing on cellular responses to oxidized lipids. Subsequently, she pursued postdoctoral training in pain and metabolism at the University of California, San Diego, under the dual mentorship of Tony Yaksh (Vice chair for Research in Anesthesiology and Distinguished Professor in Anesthesiology and Pharmacology) and Yury Miller (MD, Ph.D; Professor of Medicine, Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism). As a postdoc, her findings, which revealed increased lipid rafts and intracellular lipid storage in microglia and neurons, contributed to the growing knowledge linking dysregulated lipid metabolism to hypersensitivity and pain states.

Now, she is set to lead a new laboratory at SLU in the Department of Pharmacology and Physiology, dedicated to understanding how lipid metabolism influences pain states and susceptibility to chronic pain. Her research will primarily investigate immuno-metabolic changes and the related transcriptional regulation underlying chronic pain development. Leveraging diverse animal models of chronic pain and advanced omics and biochemistry tools, her lab will explore neuroimmune interactions, cellular reprogramming, and metabolic shifts across various cell types involved in nociceptive pathways, particularly macrophages and microglia. The lab aims to discover early pain biomarkers and uncover new pathways and potential therapeutic targets for treating various chronic pain conditions.