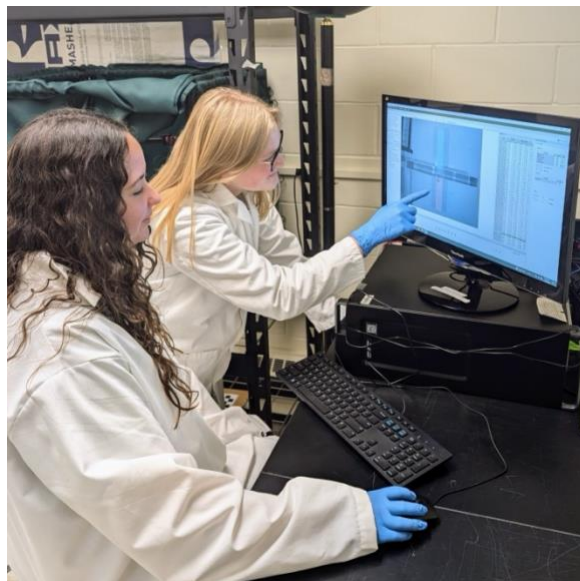


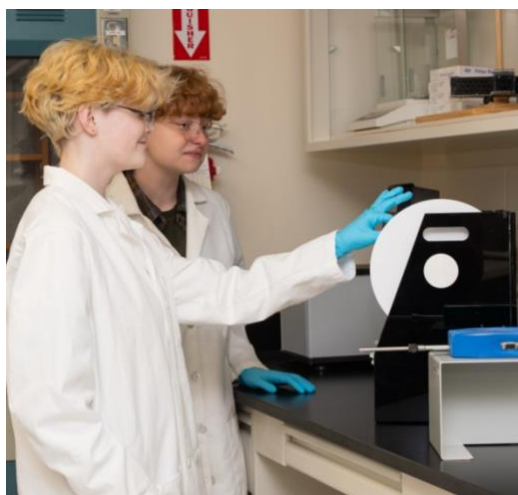
## UNEs Behavior Core: Cultivating Future Researchers

The University of New England's [Behavior Core](#) (BC) is taking initiative in training future scientists within the field of research. UNE's Behavior Core developed the [Rodent Behavior Skills](#) Badge Program and has provided this opportunity to over 16 aspiring researchers in just the past year. The program connects student researchers with in-person training and resources to develop hands-on research skills. Students ultimately earn a Credly Badge that can be displayed on their resume. The goal of this program is to contribute to the University's mission of preparing students to thrive in a rapidly changing world and, in doing so, improving the health of people, communities, and our planet.

The Behavior core is currently funded by a COBRE grant (PI, Ian Meng) by the National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) grant #P30GM145497 (Core Director, Tamara King). The overall mission of the BC is dedicated to advancing the field of behavioral analysis through unparalleled expertise, state-of-the-art instrumentation, and innovative training. A key part of the BC mission is to empower the next generation of researchers with the skills and knowledge they need to excel. This aligns perfectly with the University's mission



The Badge program is taught and facilitated by Core Manager Denise Giuvelis, Research Associate Jared Zuke, and Research Technician Abigail Felix. They worked together to create an engaging semester-long (13 week) in-person program that meets weekly in the BC. The first six weeks prioritize hands-on laboratory training. In addition, students engage in the generation of a testable hypotheses. BC prompt and help the students, making certain that they are prepared for experiments to begin. Once the students have a testable hypothesis and are equipped with critical benchtop skills required to perform experiments, they dedicate the following weeks to performing well designed studies, collecting data testing their own hypothesis. In the final weeks, students analyze their data, discuss interpretation with the BC, and ultimately creating a poster presentation to be presented at the CAS Undergraduate Research Symposium.



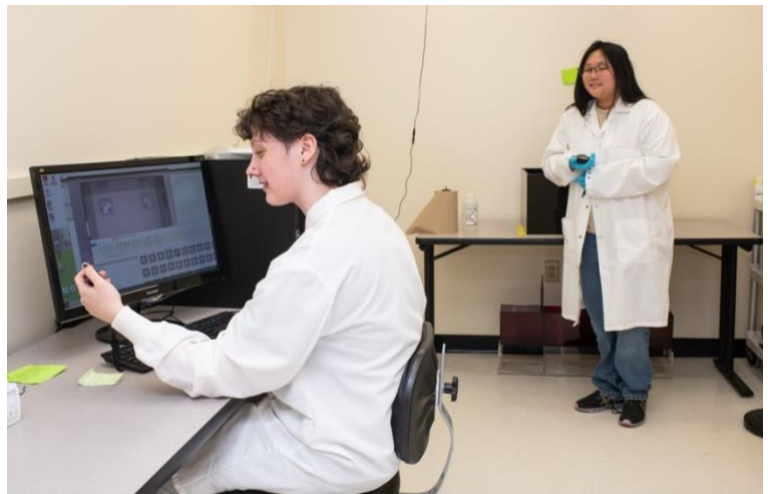
There have been three cohorts of students to complete the program thus far. The inaugural cohort consisted of 5 undergraduate students during the Spring 2024 semester. The students conducted research on a few areas, including the "Effect of an unfamiliar environment on behavior", "Effect of enrichment on behavior", and the "Effect of caffeine on memory retention".

The fall 2024 semester brought the second cohort of students eager to gain hands-on experience in a research laboratory. This cohort was interested in studying the effects of isolation. Their projects were titled the "Effect of isolation on anxiety behaviors" and the "Effect of isolation on learning and memory".

The BC currently has 7 undergraduate students and 1 professional staff member partaking in the program during the Spring 2025 semester. The projects are aimed at studying the “Effect of caffeine on anxiety”, “Effect of energy surge on activity and blood glucose level”, and “Differences in treat consumption in open vs contained spaces”.

The program has received wonderful feedback from the students that have participated to-date. Some of the anonymously received feedback are below.

- “I learned many skills that I will be able to use in the future”
- “I truly gained a lot...from basic techniques to learning how to create a scientific poster, I feel like I gained a lot of experience and knowledge that will be valuable and applicable for my future endeavors.”
- “I loved my experience, and I appreciated everyone who helped us along with our projects!”



#### Spring 2024 – Badge Recipients

- Cody Keilbach, Animal Behavior ‘27
- Finley Morrison, Animal Behavior ‘27
- Evan Faulkner, Animal Behavior & Criminology ‘26
- Jasmin Townsend-Ng, Marine Biology ‘26
- Katie Kimball, Animal Behavior ‘26

#### Fall 2024 – Badge Recipients

- Claire Isabelle, Animal Behavior ‘27
- Kristen Leite, Animal Behavior ‘27
- Caitlyn Gogan, Animal Behavior ‘27
- Emma Morin, Neuroscience ‘26

#### Current Badge Participants

- Mariyalee Delgado, Animal Behavior ‘27
- Gavin Gillian, Animal Behavior ‘27
- Keelin Lienkamp, Neuroscience ‘28
- Babia Prakash, Neuroscience ‘26
- Caitlyn Mayo, Med Bio/Pre-PA ‘26
- Caitlin Miguel, Med Bio/Pre-PA ‘27
- Sydney Jenisch, Medical Biology ‘27

