

The mission of the Beas lab centers on elucidating the neuronal processes that guide Motivation. Indeed, motivation is a concept used to describe a set of complex behaviors that involve multiple interacting functions mediated by various neural circuits and result in the energizing of behaviors in pursuit of a goal. Particularly, the lab is interested in understanding the different components that make up motivational drive and the circuit mechanisms that contribute to each of these components. We seek to address these questions by combining behavior, use of transgenic mice, viral tools, calcium imaging, pharmacology, optogenetics, and electrophysiology. The significance and implications of the research are considerable given that impairments in these two components of motivation are common among individuals who suffer from psychiatric disorders (e.g. drug abuse, compulsive disorders, and major depressive disorder).

Dr. Beas obtained her bachelor's in science degree from the University of Texas at El Paso. She then attained a Ph.D. in Neuroscience from the University of Florida. Dr. Beas performed her postdoctoral work at the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) at the Unit on the Neurobiology of Affective Memory. Her postdoctoral work focused on investigating the cellular and circuit mechanisms by which exteroceptive and interoceptive signals affect the neurocircuitry of the paraventricular nucleus of the thalamus and drive adaptive behavior.

Throughout her research career, Dr. Beas has been the recipient of numerous awards including a K99/R00 BRAIN Initiative Advanced Postdoctoral Career Transition Award, the NIMH Julius Axelrod Memorial Fellowship Training Award for excellence in basic research, the NIGMS Postdoctoral Research Associate Training (PRAT) Program Fellowship Award, the Neuroscience Scholars Program (NSP) Fellow award by SfN, among others.