THE BUZZ

UAMS | College of Medicine

Pharmacology & Toxicology

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"Kim Lab Awarded Pilot Grant"

The Center for Molecular Interactions in Cancer (CMIC) at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences has officially awarded a $75,000 pilot grant to Dr. Kyounghyun Kim's laboratory. The funding will support an innovative project titled "*Defining the Bilirubin–NR2E3 Transcriptional Axis in Hepatic Homeostasis and Liver Disease Prevention*", which promises to reshape our understanding of cellular signaling mechanisms in the liver.

The project is based on the discovery that bilirubin, a waste product of heme metabolism, directly activates the orphan nuclear receptor NR2E3 to regulate hepatoprotective gene programs. The proposed studies will define the bilirubin–NR2E3 signaling pathway and determine its role in protecting against liver injury. These findings may establish a previously unrecognized signaling mechanism in which bilirubin functions as an endogenous signaling molecule that preserves liver health through NR2E3-dependent transcriptional regulation.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Kim and his entire research team on this competitive award. We look forward to tracking the progress of this exciting work!

"The Department Welcomes Summer Interns"

School may be out, but the labs are buzzing! We have a fantastic influx of summer talent joining the department this year, and over the next few weeks, we'll be introducing each of the unique summer intern programs and the brilliant students participating in them.

This week we are introducing those in the Summer Undergraduate Research Program (SURP) directed by Dr. Billy Thomas!

"Ian LeCrone"

Hi! My name is Ian LeCrone, and I am incredibly excited to be joining the department and gaining some hands-on experience here in the lab this summer. I am a rising sophomore at the University of the Ozarks, where I am working toward my bachelor's degree with a major in biology. When I am not busy in the lab, I like to keep myself moving and stay active by hitting the gym or heading outside to unwind on a long walk. I am also a big fan of spending my downtime in the kitchen cooking up new recipes.

We are thrilled to have Ian's energy, curiosity, and diverse talents in our department this summer. Ian will be working in Dr. Fouda's lab, be sure to say hello if you see him around!

"Joumana Sanad"

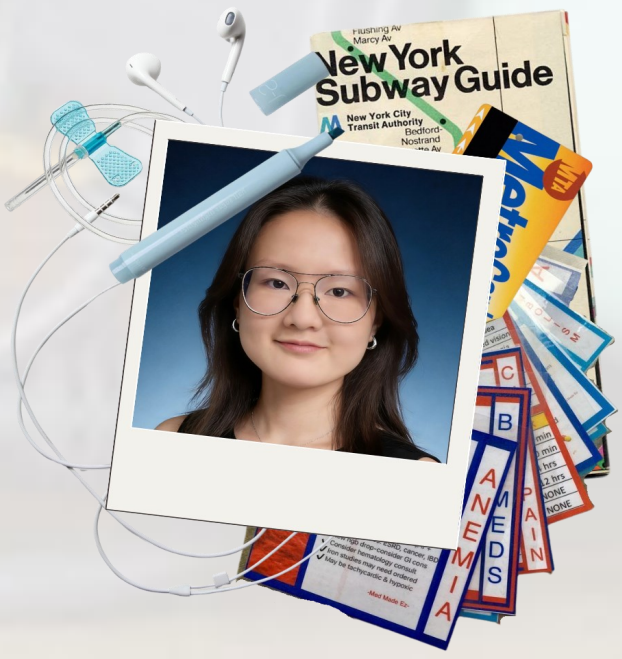
Hi! My name is Joumana Sanad. I'm a rising sophomore at Hendrix College studying biochemistry and molecular biology, hoping to pursue a career in medicine. Outside of academics, I enjoy playing pickleball, swimming, traveling, and spending time with friends and family! I enjoy meeting new people, trying new experiences, and saying yes to opportunities that allow me to learn and grow. I am excited to conduct research this summer with SURP and can't wait to see what the coming months bring!

Joumana is working with Dr. Fouda's lab and they are incredibly happy to welcome her enthusiasm to the team! Say hello if you see Joumana in the hall!

"Kaci Harris"

Hi! My name is Kaci Harris. I am from Houston, Texas and I attend The Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical University, as an upcoming junior majoring in psychology with minors in biology and chemistry. This summer I am a part of the SURP program at UAMS studying in the Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology, where I am excited to study under researchers and gain valuable information and learn more about what it means to be a researcher and all that it includes. In my free time I love to read and paint!

Kacie is working with Dr. Leung and Dr. Tam this summer and gets to be a part of their exciting research. Make sure you say hi to Kaci when you see her!



"Raven Weng"

Hi! My name is Raven Weng. I am a rising junior majoring in biological sciences at CUNY Hunter College in New York City. I want to pursue an MD-PhD dual degree program following my bachelor's degree, with a focus on translational, precision medicine. Outside of academics, I currently work at the Leucht Lab studying bone regeneration and fracture repairs during the school year. I also work as a medical assistant and phlebotomist at a pediatrician's office and volunteer as a college admissions advisor for high school students at Matriculate Inc.

We are thrilled to have Raven's energy and curiosity. Raven will be working in Dr. Kim's lab, so be sure to say hello if you see her around!