THE BUZZ

UAMS | College of Medicine

Pharmacology & Toxicology

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"Dr. Ho Serves on NIH Cancer Review Panel !"

Dr. Ho recently served as a scientific reviewer for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) study section on *Basic Mechanisms in Cancer Health Disparities*, within the Division of Basic and Integrative Biological Sciences.

Dr. Ho brings immense evaluation experience and an established legacy of leadership to the panel. Over her career, she has participated in more than 200 scientific grant proposal study sections for major federal funding agencies—including the NIH, CDC, Department of Defense, and NSF—as well as international organizations. She has also frequently served as chairperson for multiple review panels, helping shape the direction of funding for high-impact research nationwide.

As college leadership once noted, peer review is absolutely critical to ensuring that the most rigorous and impactful science receives funding, and Dr. Ho's decades of dedicated service perfectly reflect both her scientific expertise and a profound commitment to advancing biomedical research. Dr. Ho's research focuses on cancer, hormone actions, endocrine disruption, environmental epigenetics, and the Developmental Origins of Health and Disease (DOHaD). Her ongoing work continues to play a vital role in informing and mitigating cancer disparities.

"Postdocs Take Top Awards!"

We are proud to congratulate two outstanding postdoctoral fellows, Dr. Sergio Cortes and Dr. Alberto Losada, for their exceptional achievements at this year's Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute Research Retreat. The annual event, which showcases groundbreaking oncology research across the institution, recognized both scholars for their rigorous science and impactful presentations during the competitive poster sessions.

Dr. Cortes was awarded First Place in the Best Poster (Postdoctoral Category) for his project titled *"Heavy Metal Exposure Induces a Carcinogenic Transcriptomic Response in Prostate Epithelial Stem Cells at Single-Cell Resolution."* Utilizing advanced single-cell sequencing techniques, his work highlights innovative approaches to understanding how environmental toxins trigger cellular changes, offering critical new insights into how early exposures drive cancer development.

Dr. Losada earned Second Place in the same highly competitive category for his poster, *"GPER1 Activation Suppresses Therapy-Induced Stemness in Castration-Resistant Prostate Cancer."* His research demonstrates crucial advances in translational oncology, uncovering targeted mechanisms that could prevent treatment resistance and ultimately improve therapeutic outcomes for patients fighting advanced stages of disease.

These impressive honors underscore the excellence, innovation, and dedication that our postdoctoral scholars bring to the laboratory every day. Their success reflects the department's commitment to fostering high-impact research and training the next generation of scientific leaders. Please join us in celebrating Drs. Cortes and Losada for their remarkable accomplishments as they continue to advance vital discoveries in the fight against cancer.

"Fun at APSET 2026"

Members of our department recently traveled to Minneapolis, Minnesota, to attend the American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET) 2026 Annual Meeting, which took place from May 17–20. The prestigious conference brought together top researchers and professionals from across the country to share cutting-edge scientific insights, and our department was incredibly well-represented by Dr. Galen Wenger, Dr. Paul Fantegrossi, Dr. Gannon, and Toxicology Graduate Student Henry Westphal.

The meeting was a historic milestone for Dr. Galen Wenger, who was formally honored with a Lifetime Achievement Plaque. This outstanding distinction recognizes a career dedicated to exceptional scientific discovery, impactful mentorship, and lasting contributions to the pharmacological community.

Adding to the excitement, Toxicology Graduate Student Henry Westphal took home the first-place ribbon for his poster presentation. Competing among an impressive field of early-career scientists and trainees, Henry's breakthrough research and presentation excellence thoroughly impressed the ASPET judges. Please join us in sending a huge congratulations to Dr. Wenger and Henry for their well-deserved honors, and a warm welcome back to the entire group after a highly successful week representing our institution.