

“Dr. Basnakian’s Review Streak Continues”

Dr. Alexei Basnakian recently served as a scientific reviewer for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Spring 2026 Nephrology Scientific Review Group (NEPH SRG), a panel within the VA Office of Research and Development dedicated to the etiology, pathogenesis, diagnosis, and treatment of kidney diseases.

This service continues a long-standing tradition of leadership for Dr. Basnakian, who has brought his expertise in proposal evaluation to this specific grant review panel since 2009, including two terms as Study Section Chair. His extensive review experience also spans prominent national panels for the NIH, DoD, NASA, and the American Heart Association (AHA), where he has chaired the Fellowship Study Section for Molecular Signaling & Cell Transport since 2019.

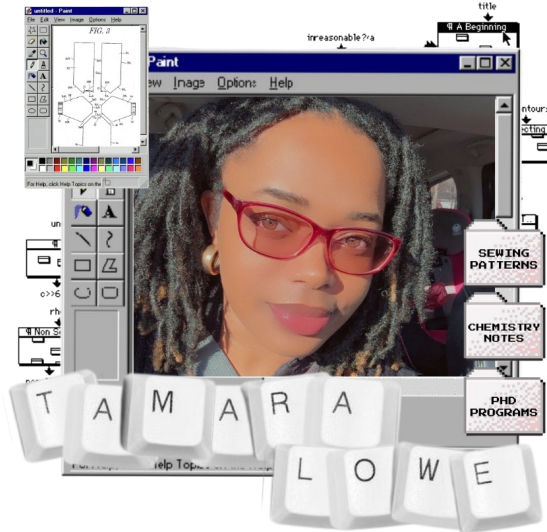
In addition to his national service, Dr. Basnakian has been a Research Career Scientist at the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System for more than 20 years. His distinguished VA-funded research career includes five VA Merit Review grants and two Research Career Scientist awards. He also serves as a key collaborator on campus, having worked as a Co-Investigator on several of Dr. Sudhir Shah’s VA Merit Review grants, and he currently collaborates as a Co-Investigator on two active VA Merit Review grants led by Drs. Robert J. S. Reis and Grover P. Miller.



“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.

We are kicking things off this week with our Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program directed by Dr. Bill Fantegrossi with administrative support from Kayla Machen!



“Tamara Lowe”

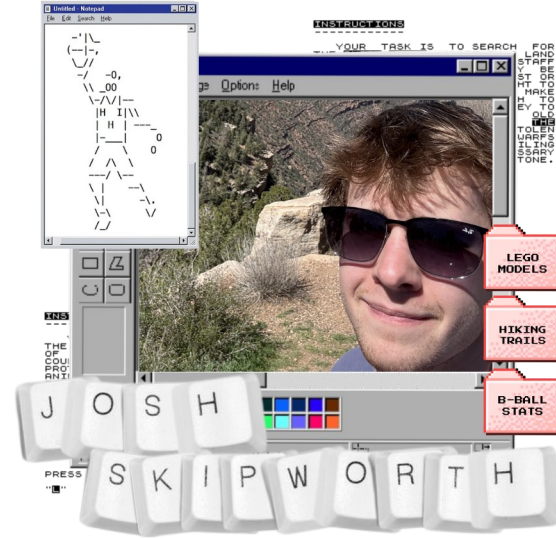
Hi! My name is Tamara Lowe, and I am an upcoming senior majoring in Chemistry at UALR. This summer, I am interning with the Pharmacology and Toxicology Department, where I am excited to explore the connection between chemical and drug synthesis and their effects on the human body. I am passionate about understanding how chemistry can be applied to improve human health, and my long-term goal is to enroll in a PharmD/PhD program. Outside of academics, I enjoy spending time with my daughter and sewing.

We are thrilled to have Tamara’s energy, curiosity, and diverse talents in our department this summer. Tamara will be working in Dr. Leung’s lab, be sure to say hello if you see her around!

“Josh Skipworth”

Hi! My name is Josh Skipworth. I attend UCA in Conway. Some things I enjoy in my free time are hiking, building legos, and basketball. I am very excited to get to see what working full time in a lab is like. I am interested in pursuing a graduate degree in some aspect of pharmacy or pharmaceutical science.

Josh is working with Dr. Jeffery Moran and his team, I am sure we will hear about all the exciting things Josh gets to do over the summer. Please stop and say hello if you see Josh around!



“Bella Sellers ”

Hi! My name is Bella Sellers. I am a junior-year undergraduate studying neuroscience with interests in neuropsychiatry, drug metabolism, and clinical pharmacology. I am particularly interested in the mechanisms behind drug metabolism and how individual responses to drugs can vary. Through this fellowship, I hope to apply what I’ve learned in undergrad classes to hands-on research. I enjoy baking bread, eating fresh fruit, being with friends, and finding random things to learn.

We are incredibly excited to have Bella here this summer. Bella will be working with Dr. Mitch McGill. Be sure to say hello if you see her around!



“Mishel Ocho”

Hi! My name is Mishel Ocho, a neuroscience major from Wake Forest University in North Carolina. Over there I enjoy activities like Ultimate Frisbee, rock climbing, and fencing. I plan on going to graduate school for neuroscience research, and I hope this research program can help me get more experience on what it means to be a researcher!

We are incredibly proud to host Mishel as part of this year's SURF cohort. He will be working close with Drs. Bill Fantegrossi and Brenda Gannon. Be sure to stop and say hello if you see Mishel in the department!

