

# COMmunication

January 2019

**GO TO: New Faculty and Leaders | Accolades | Recent Grants**



## It Takes a BIG Team

In late February, the College of Medicine Admissions staff will wheel a cart of letters to the UAMS mailroom. Some recipients will be overjoyed – learning that they have been accepted as one of 174 members of the next freshman class and are on their way to becoming a physician. Others will be informed they are on the COM's "alternates" list. And many will be saddened to learn that they have not been accepted.

"Ask yourself: When was the last time you received a letter that changed *your* life?" said **Tom South**, Assistant Dean for Medical Student Admissions.

This year, 2,582 applicants submitted American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) applications to the COM, including 353 Arkansas residents, the second highest number of in-state applicants since 1998. Faculty, resident and student volunteers interviewed a total of 374 applicants, including 24 at the UAMS Northwest Regional Campus, during Saturday sessions in October, November and January. The COM Admissions Committee will complete the selection process next month.

"Being actively engaged in this process and meeting bright and motivated applicants makes our job in the Admissions Office a great pleasure," Mr. South said.

He emphasized that the "admissions team" is far larger than his office of three and that the admissions process requires the participation of hundreds of dedicated volunteers. Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean **Christopher T. Westfall, M.D., FACS**, thanked the Admissions Office, faculty members who serve on the Admissions Committee, and everyone who volunteered on interview days in a message earlier this month. Click here for the [message and list of volunteers](#).

**Pictured at top: Tom South** (center) has led the Admissions staff since 1996. **Tammy Henson** (right) joined the team as an Admissions Specialist in 2008 and has also administered the Rural Practice Program since 2012. **Jeanne McLachlin, Ph.D.**, (left) came onboard as Director of Admissions and Recruitment in 2016.

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## Dr. Curtis Lowery to Lead UAMS Institute for Digital Health and Healthcare Innovation

**Curtis Lowery, M.D.**, has been named founding Director of the UAMS Institute for Digital Health and Healthcare Innovation.

UAMS Chancellor **Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA**, announced the initiative and appointment on Jan. 11, emphasizing that under Dr. Lowery's visionary leadership the new institute "will utilize technologies in all three areas of our mission with the aim of improving health and well-being."

**Christopher T. Westfall, M.D., FACS**, Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of the College of Medicine, said after the announcement that Dr. Lowery is the ideal person to lead the new institute.

"As a nationally recognized pioneer in distance health, founder of the UAMS Center for Distance Health and a driving force behind ANGELS, AR Saves and other programs that are transforming health care in Arkansas, Dr. Lowery will bring his vision, expertise and energy to the new institute - for the benefit of patients throughout our state," Dr. Westfall said.

To focus on the new endeavor, Dr. Lowery is stepping down from his post as Chair of the Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology**, which he has held since 2007. Dr. Lowery has served on the faculty since 1992.

Dr. Westfall announced that **C. Lowry Barnes, M.D.**, Professor and Chair of the Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery**, will serve as Interim Chair of OB/GYN during a national search for a permanent Chair. Dr. Barnes and Dr. Lowery will coordinate the leadership transition to ensure the continued high quality of the department's programs.

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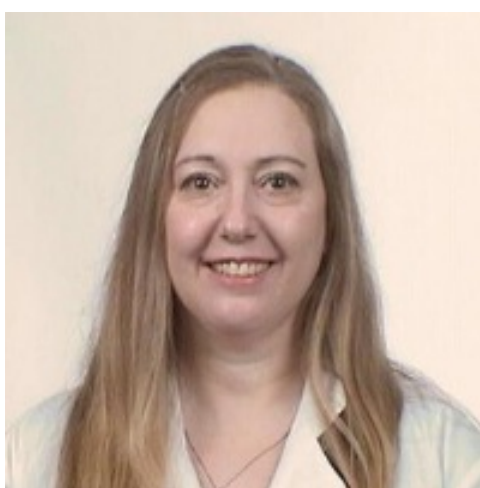
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## New Faculty and Leaders



**David Kelley, D.O.**, has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Assistant Professor.

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**Trina Kleiver, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Assistant Professor.

[READ MORE](#)



**Sisira Yadala, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Neurology** as an Assistant Professor.

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**Kelli Schmitz, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Radiology** as an Associate Professor in the Division of Pediatric Radiology.

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**David Strain, M.D.**, has joined the **Department of Radiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Interventional Radiology.

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Have you read the latest **Accolades** from Dean **Christopher T. Westfall, M.D.**? The weekly email highlights recent honors and accomplishments of COM faculty, staff, residents and students. You can also [read Accolades here](#). If you know someone who deserves a shout-out, send your ideas to Dr. Westfall via [COM Internal Communications!](#)

**These UAMS team members were named in Accolades Jan. 9-23:**

- |                       |                    |                         |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| Aline Andres          | Robert Griffin     | Ryan Oliver             |
| R. Lee Archer         | Sue Griffin        | Alison Oliveto          |
| Britni Ayers          | Florin Grigorian   | T. Glenn Pait           |
| Alicia Baird          | Paula Grigorian    | Cam Patterson           |
| Jordan Ball           | Whit Hall          | Kevin Phelan, Ph.D.     |
| Lowry Barnes          | Breanna Harris     | Matt Quick              |
| Marie Barron          | Larry Hartzell     | Isabella Racine-Miousse |
| Taylor Bennett        | Corey Hayes        | Chase Ransom            |
| Jon Blevins           | Will Henry         | Sung Rhee               |
| Michael Borrelli      | Robert Hopkins Jr. | Ron Robertson           |
| Alicia Bratten        | Daya Jafar         | Ava Rumph               |
| Katie Brown           | Katie Kimbrough    | Ahmed Sallam            |
| Richard Brown         | Marlie Kling       | Malinda Sandlin         |
| Eugenia Carvalho      | Linda Larson-Prior | Sara Shalin             |
| Jason Chang           | Becky Latch        | Sadrina Shaw            |
| Gwen Childs           | Jia Liu            | Bradley Shields         |
| Christina Clark       | Curtis Lowery      | Zia Siddique            |
| Terry Collins         | Issam Makhoul      | Jeffrey Stambough       |
| David Davies          | Caitlin Mallinger  | Laura Stanley           |
| Cornesha Day          | Spyridoula Maraka  | Jake Stover             |
| Eva Carolina Diaz     | Robin McAtee       | James Y. Suen           |
| Alan Diekman          | Shawanda McCoy     | Sara Tariq              |
| Jerad Gardner         | Pearl McElfish     | Esther Teo              |
| Grant Gebhard         | Lorraine McKelvey  | Sami Uwaydat            |
| Amanda George         | Jason Mizell       | Jasna Vuk               |
| Kim Glaze             | John Musser        | David Warner            |
| Srinivasa Gokarakonda | Clare Nesmith      | Amy Wenger              |
| Johnathan Goree       | Angela Odle        |                         |

**These COM departments were represented in Accolades Jan. 9-23:**

- |                                     |                                  |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Anesthesiology                      | Orthopaedic Surgery              |
| Biochemistry/Molecular Biology      | Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery |
| Family and Preventive Medicine      | Pathology                        |
| Geriatrics                          | Pediatrics                       |
| Internal Medicine                   | Pharmacology/Toxicology          |
| Microbiology/Immunology             | Physiology/Biophysics            |
| Neurobiology/Developmental Sciences | Psychiatry                       |
| Neurology                           | Radiation Oncology               |
| Neurosurgery                        | Radiology                        |
| Obstetrics/Gynecology               | Surgery                          |
| Ophthalmology                       |                                  |

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## Recent Grants



## Arkansas Autism Program Receives \$2.17 Million CDC Grant

The Arkansas Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring Program, led by Associate Professor **Maya Lopez, M.D.**, in the Department of **Pediatrics**, was awarded a four-year, \$2.17 million grant by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to expand its work. The program tracks the number and characteristics of 8-year-olds with autism spectrum disorder and/or intellectual disability. The new funding will enable the monitoring program to continue that work while also tracking 4- and 16-year-olds.

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Congratulations to COM faculty researchers who recently received **intramural grants**. The awards included the College of Medicine-administered Barton Foundation Pilot Grants and Sturgis Foundation Grants for diabetes-related research. Six additional faculty members received pilot awards from the UAMS Office of Vice Chancellor for Research and UAMS Translational Research Institute for opioid addiction and pain management studies.

### Barton Foundation Pilot Grants

(\$25,000; 1-1-2019-12-31-2019)



**Jon Blevins, Ph.D.**, Department of **Microbiology and Immunology**, Studying the roles of dinucleotide second messenger molecules in the pathogenesis of the tick-borne relapsing fever spirochete, *Borrelia turicatae*.



**Robert Griffin, Ph.D.**, Department of **Radiation Oncology**, Localized treatment of tumors with radiation triggered liposomes.



**Jia Liu, Ph.D.**, Department of **Microbiology and Immunology**, Studies on the Intrinsic Cellular Barrier Against Poxvirus Infection.



**Isabella Racine-Miousse, Ph.D.**, **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, Methionine and autophagy in metastatic melanoma.

### Sturgis Foundation Grants

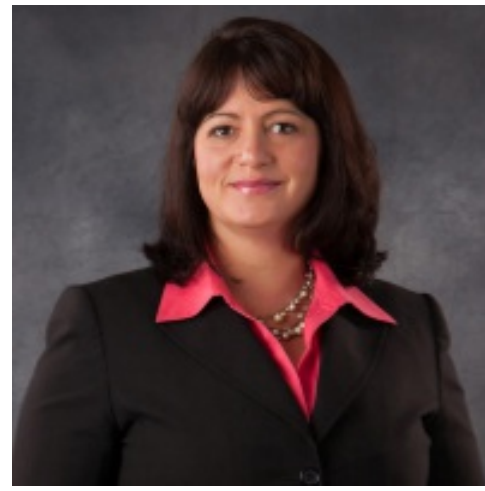
(1-1-2019-12-31-2019)



**Britni Ayers, Ph.D.**, Department of **Internal Medicine**, An Exploratory Study of Gestational Weight Gain and Gestational Diabetes Mellitus, \$72,500.



**Eugenia Carvalho, Ph.D.**, Department of **Geriatrics**, Role of Regulatory T-cells in Obesity-Linked Insulin Resistance and Diabetes, \$26,826.



**Pearl McElfish, Ph.D.**, Department of **Internal Medicine**, Evaluation of the feasibility and effectiveness of Family DSMES in RMI, \$72,500.

**Opioid Addiction/Pain Management Pilot Awards**  
(up to \$25,000; 1-1-2019-12-31-2019)

Read more about the following awards in the [UAMS Newsroom](#) and/or click the links for a video summary of each project.



**Johnathan Goree, M.D.**, Department of **Anesthesiology**, Video-based, Patient-Focused Opioid Education in the Perioperative Period: A Feasibility Study

[VIDEO SUMMARY](#)



**Corey Hayes, Pharm.D., M.P.H.**, Department of **Psychiatry**, Linking the Arkansas Prescription Drug Monitoring Program Data with the Arkansas All-Payer Claims Database.

[VIDEO SUMMARY](#)



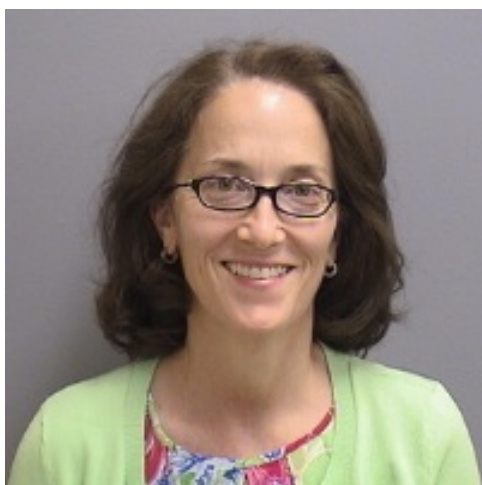
**Linda Larson-Prior, Ph.D.**, Department of **Psychiatry**, Impact of Buprenorphine-Assisted Treatment on Sleep, Mood and Cognition among Opioid Use Disorder Patients.

[VIDEO SUMMARY](#)



**Issam Makhoul, M.D.**, Department of **Internal Medicine**, The Development and Implementation of a Standardized Pain Management Protocol for Adult Sickle Cell Patients.

[VIDEO SUMMARY](#)



**Clare Nesmith, M.D.**, Department of **Pediatrics**, Quantitation of Opioids in Neonates with Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal.

[VIDEO SUMMARY](#)



**Alison Oliveto, Ph.D.**, Department of **Psychiatry**, Gamified Intervention to Prevent Adolescent Opioid Misuse.

[VIDEO SUMMARY](#)

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The *COMmunication* is published monthly to highlight key initiatives and developments in the COM, to introduce new faculty members and leaders, and to celebrate major professional honors and awards. The Dean's Office works in partnership with designated newsletter liaisons throughout the COM. To find your department's contact, read our submission guidelines or view past issues, visit the [COMmunication webpage](#).

**Comments, questions and suggestions for improvements are always welcome.** Call Tamara Robinson, Senior Communications Writer, at 526-5163, or click the red button below to email the *COMmunication*.



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