



September 2019

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### Time for Breakfast!

The second year of Breakfasts with the Dean, a Friday morning tradition for first- and second-year students in the College of Medicine, kicked off last week. Dean **Christopher Westfall, M.D.**, and other academic leaders enjoyed breakfast and conversation with a group of M2s.

"I think I speak for all of us when I say that is definitely a valuable and much-appreciated opportunity," sophomore **Preslie White** said afterward. "The breakfasts are a great chance for our voices to be heard by people who can directly act to make changes for the better. For example, our comments from last year were taken so seriously that I've heard of many specific changes that were made as a result, just within a single year."

Classmate **Paige Jones** agreed: "The breakfasts are a great way to bridge the gap between students and administration, while also giving students a chance to have their concerns addressed."

Students also share praise for faculty and learning experiences during the breakfasts. Approximately 50 faculty members were mentioned by name last year, and the tradition of giving shout-outs to highly appreciated educators will continue in Dr. Westfall's weekly *Accolades* emails, starting this week!

*Pictured above: Students pause for a photo with COM leaders after breakfast. Front row, from left: Zeytun Guyo, Aubrie Hanson, Preslie White, Paige Jones and Nick Wary. Behind them are Richard P. Wheeler, M.D., Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Christopher Westfall, M.D., Dean; and James Graham, M.D., Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education.*

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**New Faculty and Leaders**



### Dr. Teresita Bellido Returning to UAMS as Chair of Physiology & Biophysics in 2020

**Teresita Bellido, Ph.D.**, has been named the next Professor and Chair of the Department of **Physiology and Biophysics**. She will be at UAMS fulltime by July 1, 2020, succeeding **Michael Jennings, Ph.D.**, who is retiring after 25 years of service.

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### Dr. Michael Birrer to Join Faculty as Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute

Internationally recognized medical oncologist **Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D.**, has been named Vice Chancellor and Director of the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. Dr. Birrer specializes in gynecologic cancers and will join the university by the end of the year.

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*Editor's note: This issue features some of the faculty members who have joined us this summer and fall. We will continue to introduce new colleagues in the months ahead.*



**Yasser Salem, M.D.**, has rejoined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Associate Professor.

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**Viviana Suarez, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Family and Preventive Medicine** as an Assistant Professor.

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**Joseph A. Henske, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Associate Professor and Director of the Diabetes Program in the Division of **Endocrinology and Metabolism**.

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**Ragesh Thandassery, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor and transplant hepatologist in the Division of **Gastroenterology and Hepatology**.

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**Ian Crane, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hospital Medicine**.

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**Franklin John Gray Jr., M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hospital Medicine**.

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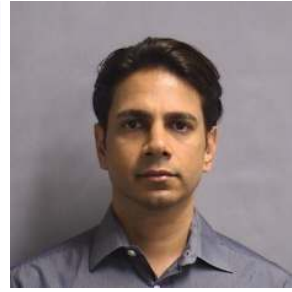
**Bhawna Jha, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Neurology** as an Assistant Professor and pain management specialist in the Neurosciences Service Line.

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**Sean Morell, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery** as an Assistant Professor.

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**Deepak Choudhary, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Emergency Medicine**.

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**Ethan Gillett, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Emergency Medicine**.

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**Farnaz Norozian M.D., M.S.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Emergency Medicine**.

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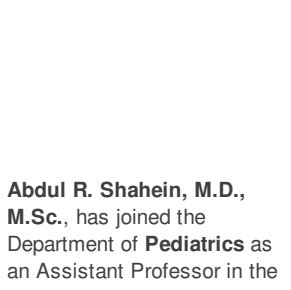
**Samuel Boston, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Gastroenterology**.

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**Megan Butler, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Associate Professor in the Division of **Gastroenterology**.

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**Abdul R. Shahein, M.D., M.Sc.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Gastroenterology**.

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**David Douglass, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hematology and Oncology**.

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**Julia Killingsworth, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Hospital Medicine**.

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**Megan Baber, D.O.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Neonatology**.

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**Paul Manbeck, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Neurology**.

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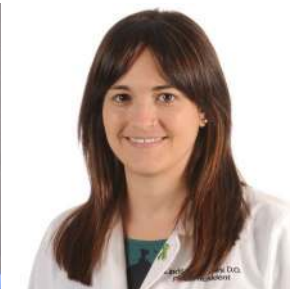
**Zena Ghazala, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pulmonology**.

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**Matthew Pertzborn, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pulmonology**.

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**Lindsay Mohney, D.O.**, has joined the Department of **Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation** as an Assistant Professor.

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**Molly Reeves, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Psychiatry** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**.

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**Melissa Kost, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Surgery** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Trauma/Critical Care Surgery**.

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## Recent Grants

*Congratulations to the College of Medicine faculty members who received new **extramural grants** in August. This monthly list, courtesy of the Office of the Executive Associate Dean for Research, excludes industry trials and awards under \$10,000.*



**Merideth Addicott, Ph.D.**, Department of **Psychiatry**, Distress Tolerance and Smoking Cessation, NIH/Nat. Inst. on Drug Abuse (08/15/2019 – 05/31/2024), \$1,737,101.



**John Arthur, M.D., Ph.D.**, Department of **Internal Medicine**, Development of biomarkers for improved classification of proliferative lupus nephritis, NIH/Nat. Inst. of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases (07/26/2019 – 06/30/2020), \$90,974. Pass through from Arkana Laboratories.



**Joseph Bonner, Ph.D.**, Department of **Biomedical Informatics**, Bonner Fellowship, M2Gen (01/01/2019 – 12/31/2019), \$137,640. Pass through from University of Southern California.



**Xiawei Ou, Ph.D.**, Department of **Radiology**, Effects of Maternal Obesity and Inflammation on Offspring Brain Development, NIH/ Nat. Inst. Child Health and Human Dev., (08/10/2019 – 06/30/2024), \$3,120,876.

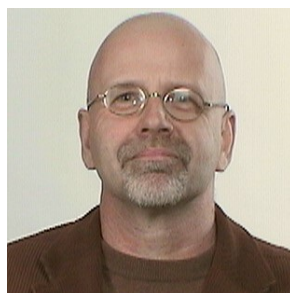


**Latunja Sockwell**, Department of **Family and Preventive Medicine**, Project HEAL, Dept. of Health and Human Services/ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (09/30/2019 – 09/29/2024), 2,499,994.

*Congratulations to College of Medicine faculty members who received **UAMS breast cancer research awards**:*



**Justin Wai Chung Leung, Ph.D.**, Department of **Radiation Oncology**, Mechanistic Characterization of BRCA1 Regulation at Damaged Chromatin (09/01/2019 – 08/31/2020) \$190,950.



**Angus MacNicol, Ph.D.**, Department of **Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences**, Identification of Agents Selectively Active Toward Breast Cancer Stem Cells through Single Cell RNA Sequencing of Organoid Cultures (09/01/2019 – 08/31/2020) \$75,000.



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 and students were named in Accolades this month:**

Antiño Allen	Laura Hutchins	Paige Plumley
Jason Arthur	Diane Jarrett	Charles Matthew Quick
Sirish Bennuri	Donald Johann	Mildred Randolph
Michael Birrer	Stephen Kahler	Bobbie Rhodes-Clark
Jace Bradshaw	Danviona King	Gregory Robinson
Olivia Brasher	Jennifer Kleiner	Jose Romero
Dustin Brown	Daniel Knight	Shannon Rose
Mary Burgess	Shashank Kraleti	Ashley Sanders
Jessica Bursk	Jonathan Laryea	Allison Schneider
Marcia Byers	Jennifer Laudadio	Amy Scott
Heejung Choi	Zachary Lewis	G. Richard Smith
Stuart Cobb	Kate Liebmann	Latunja Sockwell
Drake Cullum	Matthew Lindberg	Jordan Spencer
Ray Dillon	Lea Mabry	Karam Sra
John Dornhoffer	Spyridoula Maraka	Kandi Stallings-Archer
Amber Marshall Fluharty	Alex Marshall	Leslie Stone
Jerad Gardner	Pearl McElfish	Joseph Su
Stephanie Gardner	Joel McGowan	Alan Tackett
Elizabeth Gath	Steppe Mehta	Sara Tariq
Lane Gay	Priya Mendiratta	Billy Thomas
Jennifer Gess	Erick Messiah	Marie Tippet
Johnathan Goree	Rebecca Moreira	Frits van Rhee
Terry Harville	Mayumi Nakagawa	Bill Ventres
Ronda Henry-Tillman	Matthew Nix	George Vilanilam
Caitlin Hirsh	Kalpana Padala	Kent Westbrook
Robert Hopkins	Cameron Parsley	Blake Wiggins
Aubrey Hough	Anjali Patel	Eva Woodward
Robin Howell	Chris Paul	Linda Worley
April Hughes	Suman Peela	Fen Xia
Jennifer Hunt	Erika Petersen	Musa Yilanli

**These COM departments were represented in Accolades this month:**

Anesthesiology	Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery
Biochemistry/Molecular Biology	Pathology
Biomedical Informatics	Pediatrics
Emergency Medicine	Psychiatry
Family/Preventive Medicine	Radiation Oncology
Geriatrics	Radiology
Internal Medicine	Surgery
Neurosurgery	

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## In Memoriam



**May Griebel, M.D.**, a retired longtime Professor of **Pediatrics** who was instrumental in developing the Sleep Disorder Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital, died September 14. Dr. Griebel graduated from the College of Medicine in 1983 and stayed at UAMS and ACH for her residency. She completed a fellowship in neurology with a focus in child neurology, sleep and epilepsy at Duke University. Dr. Griebel returned to Arkansas and joined the faculty in 1990. She served for many years as Medical Director of the Sleep Center, one of the nation's first certified pediatric sleep centers, and also served as Co-Director of the Epilepsy Program. She retired in 2012 and was awarded ACH's Ruth Olive Beall Award.

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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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