

The Monthly Newsletter for
Faculty, Staff and Friends of the
UAMS College of Medicine

UAMS
College of Medicine

COMmunication

January 2020

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P&T Perfection - Faculty Promotions Set Records

It's a brand new year, and 2020 is already a record-setter for faculty in the College of Medicine. An all-time high of 76 faculty members requested promotion in academic rank, and 100% of the requests were approved – a first since the COM began tracking promotion and tenure (P&T) metrics many years ago.

On July 1, a record 31 faculty members will become full Professors. Another 45 will be promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor.

“Several factors contributed to this unprecedented success rate,” said **Erick Messias, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H.**, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. “First, the faculty members applying for P&T not only worked for years and demonstrated excellence in our core missions, but also did a great job of documenting this excellence.”

Dr. Messias commended departmental P&T committees for their work to vet initial requests and ensure that their department presented faculty for promotion at the right time. “Our department chairs also were key, not only for creating the environment for faculty to flourish, but also by supporting P&T requests with very strong and detailed chair letters,” he said. He also thanked the COM P&T Committee, which includes 16 tenured professors, for their hard work and thoughtful review of applicants.

“Congratulations to all of our superb faculty members receiving promotion this year,” said Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean **Christopher T. Westfall, M.D.** “And thanks as well to the many faculty and staff members across the college who worked very hard to make this year’s P&T such a great success.”

AT A GLANCE:

76 Total Promotions

46% Female (35)

54% Male (41)

To Professor

42% Female (13)

58% Male (18)

To Associate Professor

49% Female (22)

51% Male (23)

SEE WHO'S BEING PROMOTED | [Click here](#) or on a department link below.

[Anesthesiology](#)
[Biochemistry/Molecular Biology](#)
[Biostatistics](#)
[Dentistry](#)
[Emergency Medicine](#)
[Family/Preventive Medicine](#)
[Geriatrics](#)
[Internal Medicine](#)
[Medical Humanities](#)
[Microbiology/Immunology](#)
[Neurobiology/Developmental Sciences](#)
[Neurology](#)

[Neurosurgery](#)
[Obstetrics/Gynecology](#)
[Ophthalmology](#)
[Orthopaedic Surgery](#)
[Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery](#)
[Pathology](#)
[Pediatrics](#)
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[Surgery](#)
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Editor's note: We will highlight faculty members receiving Professor Emeritus status in a future publication.

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In the Spotlight



UAMS honored Department of **Geriatrics** colleagues **AmyLeigh Overton-McCoy, Ph.D., APRN**, and **Priya Mendiratta, M.D., M.P.H.**, at a double investiture ceremony on January 16.

Dr. Overton-McCoy was invested in the Murphy Endowed Chair for Rural Aging Leadership and Policy. [READ MORE](#)

Dr. Mendiratta was invested in the Alexa L. & William T. Dillard Distinguished Chair in Geriatrics. [READ MORE](#)



Thomas Frazier, M.D., Assistant Professor of **Orthopaedic Surgery**, was invested as the inaugural recipient of the G. Thomas Frazier, M.D., Chair in Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery on December 19.

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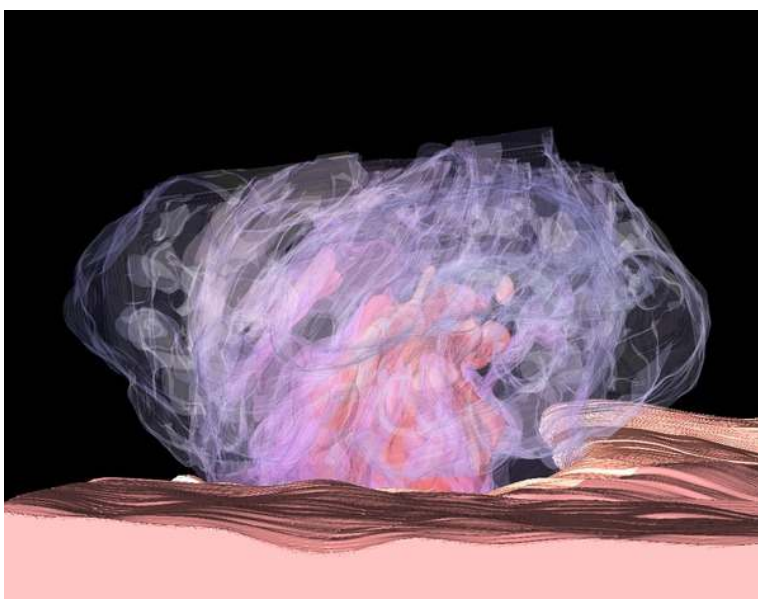


Image by Brian Storrie, Ph.D. and Irina Pokrovskaya, M.S.

Science as Art

It looks like something conjured by the imagination, or perhaps an other-worldly landscape. But this award-winning artistic image actually has roots in the laboratory and creative minds of researchers at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

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Leadership Appointments



Paul H. Phillips, M.D., has been appointed Chair of the Department of **Ophthalmology** and Director of the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute.

"Dr. Phillips brings exceptional strengths to his new post as a highly respected leader in pediatric ophthalmology, strabismus and neuro-ophthalmology, and as a member of our faculty for the past 22 years," said UAMS Executive Vice Chancellor and College of Medicine Dean **Christopher T. Westfall, M.D.**

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Daniel Voth, Ph.D., has been appointed Chair of the Department of **Microbiology and Immunology**.

"Dr. Voth has done an excellent job serving as Interim Chair since the retirement of former chair Kevin Young, Ph.D., last July and will bring his strong leadership skills, scientific expertise, collegiality and institutional dedication to his post as Chair," said UAMS Executive Vice Chancellor and College of Medicine Dean **Christopher T. Westfall, M.D.**

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Beatrice Boateng, Ph.D., a leader in program evaluation and faculty assessment at UAMS, has been named Assistant Dean for Faculty Assessment and Evaluation in the College of Medicine.

"Dr. Boateng brings incredible expertise to her new role," said **Erick Messias, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H.**, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

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Rawle A. "Tony" Seupaul, M.D., has been named Chief Clinical Officer for UAMS Medical Center.

"Dr. Seupaul has been an exemplary head of our Emergency Medicine program for the past six years," said **Steppe Mette, M.D.**, senior vice chancellor for UAMS Health and UAMS Medical Center CEO. "This promotion allows us to leverage his medical expertise and leadership skills across our inpatient and outpatient operations."

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Anjali Patwardhan, M.D., M.Sc., M.B.A., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as Professor and Director of the Division of **Pediatric Rheumatology**.

Dr. Patwardhan was recruited from the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Columbia, where she served most recently as Associate Professor and Director of Pediatric Rheumatology. Among other leadership posts, she served as Director of Operational Quality in the Division of Child Health.

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Jay K. Bhama, M.D., has joined the Department of **Surgery** as Professor and Chief of the Division of **Cardiovascular Surgery**.

Dr. Bhama, a nationally recognized heart surgeon and leader in cardiovascular health care, will lead the cardiovascular program at UAMS by working alongside **Paul Mounsey, M.D.**, Director of the Division of **Cardiovascular Medicine**.

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New Faculty



Destiny Chau, M.D., has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as a Professor in the Division of **Pediatric Cardiovascular Anesthesia**.

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Meera Gangadharan, M.D., has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pediatric Cardiovascular Anesthesia**.

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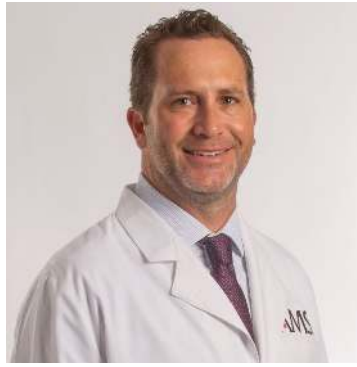
Neeraj Kumar, M.D., has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Assistant Professor.

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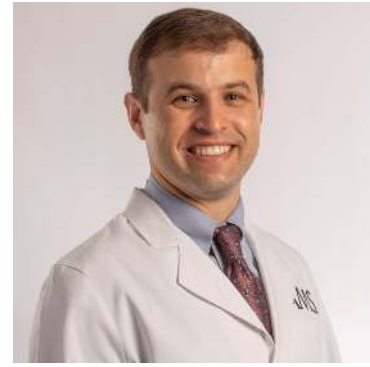
Regina Gibson, Ph.D., has joined the Department of **Geriatrics** as an Assistant Professor.

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Wesley Cox, M.D., has joined the Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery** as an Assistant Professor and leader of the Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine team in Fayetteville.

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Chad Songy, M.D., has joined the Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery** as an Assistant Professor practicing with the Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine team in Fayetteville.

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David Spiro, M.D., M.P.H., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as a Professor in the Division of **Emergency Medicine**.

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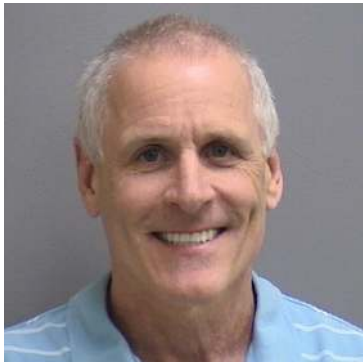
Recent Grants

Extramural Awards

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



Robert Blasier, M.D., Department of **Orthopedic Surgery**, AO Basic Trauma Course – Interns 2020, Medical Business Services, Inc. (01/16/2020 – 03/31/2020), \$10,000.



Arny Ferrando, Ph.D., Department of **Geriatrics**, Optimizing Performance for Soldiers II (OPS II) Pennington/USARIEM, U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine (07/11/2019 – 07/10/2020), \$161,082. Pass through from Pennington Biomedical Research Center.



Melda Onal, Ph.D., Department of **Physiology and Biophysics**, CRISPR inhibition as an alternate for Cre-loxP, NIH/Nat. Inst. of Arthritis & Musculoskeletal & Skin Diseases (01/01/2020 – 12/31/2021), \$367,180.



AmyLeigh Overton-McCoy, Ph.D., APRN, Department of **Geriatrics**, Ft. Smith 1st Methodist Church Outreach, Fort Smith First United Methodist Church (11/01/2019 – 10/31/2020), \$16,000.

Intramural Awards

*Congratulations to the College of Medicine faculty members who received new **intramural grants** in December. This list, courtesy of the Office of the Executive Associate Dean for Research, includes awards of \$10,000 or more.*

(01/01/2020 – 12/31/2020)

Roger Pechous, Ph.D., Department of **Microbiology and Immunology**, Characterizing the Role of the Novel Yersinia Pestis Virulence Factor BipA During Primary Pneumonic Plague, \$15,000.

Analiz Rodriguez, M.D., Ph.D., Department of **Neurosurgery**, \$14,000

Aravindhan Veerapandiyan, M.D., Department of **Pediatrics**, Blood Neurofilaments as Biomarkers of Spinal Muscular Atrophy Disease Activity in Neonates, \$15,700.

Michael Wilson, M.D., Ph.D., Department of **Emergency Medicine**, \$11,500.

COM Intramural Awards

(01/01/2020 – 12/31/2020)

Hornick Endowment Award:

Kevin Raney, Ph.D., Department of **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, Elucidating a novel signaling mechanism for cellular damage during stroke, \$50,000.

Barton Pilot Award:

Erin Mannen, Ph.D., Department of **Orthopedic Surgery**, Biomechanical implications of long cervical fusions: where should they end?, \$25,000.

Angela Odle, Ph.D., Department of **Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences**, Metabolic programming of female reproduction: Leptin regulation of gonadotrope maturation and function, \$24,365.

Craig Porter, Ph.D., Department of **Pediatrics**, Development and Characterization of a Rodent Model of Muscle Carnitine Deficiency, \$25,000.

Sturgis Foundation Award:

Hari Eswaran, Ph.D., Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology**, Effect of maternal pre-gestational diabetes on fetal brain development, \$25,000.

Christopher Long, Ph.D., Department of **Psychiatry**, Healthy Food Pilot to Improve Glycemic Control with Food Pantry Clients, \$60,938.

Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., Department of **Internal Medicine**, Evaluation of the feasibility and effectiveness of diabetes self-management education and support delivered by community health workers in the RMI, \$60,000.

Rosalia Simmen, Ph.D., Department of **Physiology and Biophysics**, Co-Morbidity of Diabetes and Endometriosis, \$25,000.

ACRI Internal Awards

Eva Diaz Fuentes, Ph.D., Department of **Pediatrics**, Effects of Wild Blueberry Supplementation on Immune Responses of Children With Low Fruit and Vegetable Consumption, (12/01/2019 - 8/31/2020), \$37,360.

Graham Strub, M.D., Ph.D., Department of **Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery**,

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Accolades



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:

Noor Akhter
Paul Bucolo
Rebecca Cantu
Karina Clemmons
Alice Faye Crowder
Ryan Dare
Mari Davidson
David Davies
Erica Dewey
Alan Diekman
Breyanna Dulaney
Andrea Easom
Ashley Elser
Stanley Ellis
Robert Eoff
Diana Escalona-Vargas
Lauren Evans
Jacob Filipek
Eudice Fontenot
Rachael Freeze-Ramsey
Edgar Garcia-Rill
Laura James
Sarah Johnson
Jerrilyn Jones
Heather Highsmith
Antonio Howard
Laura Hutchins

Thomas Kiser
Jennifer Kleiner
Anuradha Kunthur
Becky Latch
Rani Lindberg
Nirvana Manning
Spyridoula Maraka
Bobby McGehee
Joel McGowan
Anna Mears
Jay Mehta
Priya Mendiratta
Cynthia Mercado
Erick Messias
Jill Mhyre
Amir Mian
AmyLeigh Overton-McCoy
Prasad Padala
Paul Parcon
Tamara Perry
Kevin Phelan
Irina Pokrovskaya
Naga Venkata K. Pothineni
Jeanne Rabalais
Sung Rhee
Gresham Richter
Jose Romero

Marwan Saad
Stephanie Scheffler
Angie Scott
Rohan Sharma
Laney Sideroff
Manisha Singh
Emily Smith
Casey Smolarz
Jessica Snowden
Olivia Speed
John Spollen
Brendan Stack
Brian Storrie
David Straub
Lindsey Sward
Mohsin Syed
Sara Tariq
Sarah Tingle
Valentina Todorova
Meredith Von Dohlen
Laura Werline
Danielle West
Richard Wheeler
Harrison Winslow
Linda Worley
Amanda Young

These COM departments were represented in Accolades this month:

Anesthesiology
Biochemistry/Mol. Biology
Emergency Medicine
Family Medicine/Regional Programs
Geriatrics
Internal Medicine
Medical Humanities
Neurobiology/Dev. Sciences

Neurology
Obstetrics/Gynecology
Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery
Pediatrics
Pharmacology/Toxicology
Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation
Physiology/Biophysics
Psychiatry

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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*.

Comments? Ideas? Email Us!



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