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March 2021

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## “Creativity Hubs” Established in COM to Boost Research Collaborations in Key Areas

Four interdisciplinary groups of researchers in the College of Medicine have been named as inaugural “Creativity Hubs” in an initiative to develop and expand collaborative, thematic research programs with high potential.

Each hub will receive \$300,000 over the next 18 months to jumpstart efforts to increase research, building on existing expertise of researchers across UAMS, Arkansas Children’s and other partnering institutions. The hubs also will use the funding from the college and UAMS Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation to develop mentorship and pipeline programs to bring new and diverse investigators into the fold. The efforts are expected to position the teams to obtain additional external grant funding to support comprehensive, elite research programs.

“We are incredibly excited to see what these hubs can accomplish in the months and years ahead,” said **Susan Smyth, M.D., Ph.D.**, Executive Vice Chancellor of UAMS and Dean of the College of Medicine. “These are all relevant and timely areas for expanding research to support our mission to improve health in Arkansas and beyond.”

The hubs and their leaders are:

**Neurodegenerative Diseases** – Co-led by **Steven Barger, Ph.D.**, professor in the Department of **Geriatrics**; and **Paul Drew, Ph.D.**, professor in the Department of **Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences**.

**Musculoskeletal Health and Disease** – Led by **Teresita Bellido, Ph.D.**, professor and chair of the Department of **Physiology and Cell Biology**.

**Lifespan Research to Improve Cardiometabolic Health** – Led by **Elisabet Borsheim, Ph.D.**, professor in the departments of **Pediatrics** and **Geriatrics** and associate director and research leader in the Arkansas Children’s Nutrition Center.

**Artificial Intelligence for Health** – Led by **Fred Prior, Ph.D.**, Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of **Biomedical Informatics**.

[READ THE FULL STORY](#)

**Q&As WITH THE HUB LEADERS** |

In addition to our main story, you can learn more about the hubs in our interviews with hub leaders. Click [here](#) to read all of the Q&As, or click on the hub title or portrait to go directly to each Q&A.



**Steven Barger, Ph.D.**, and **Paul Drew, Ph.D.**  
[Neurodegenerative Diseases Hub](#).



**Teresita Bellido, Ph.D.**  
[Musculoskeletal Health and Disease Hub](#).



**Elisabet Borsheim, Ph.D.** [Lifespan Research to Improve Cardiometabolic Health Hub](#).



**Fred Prior, Ph.D.**  
[Artificial Intelligence for Health Hub](#).

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**In the Spotlight**



Above: COM senior **Tia'Asia James** will train in Emergency Medicine at Vanderbilt University in Nashville -- one of many exciting revelations at Match Day 2022.

**MARVELOUS MATCH DAY** | Congratulations to the Class of 2022 on their great results in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP), and to UAMS residency programs on their very successful Match! Read more in the [UAMS Newsroom](#); watch the [ceremony video](#); and see [where our seniors are headed](#).

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## New Faculty



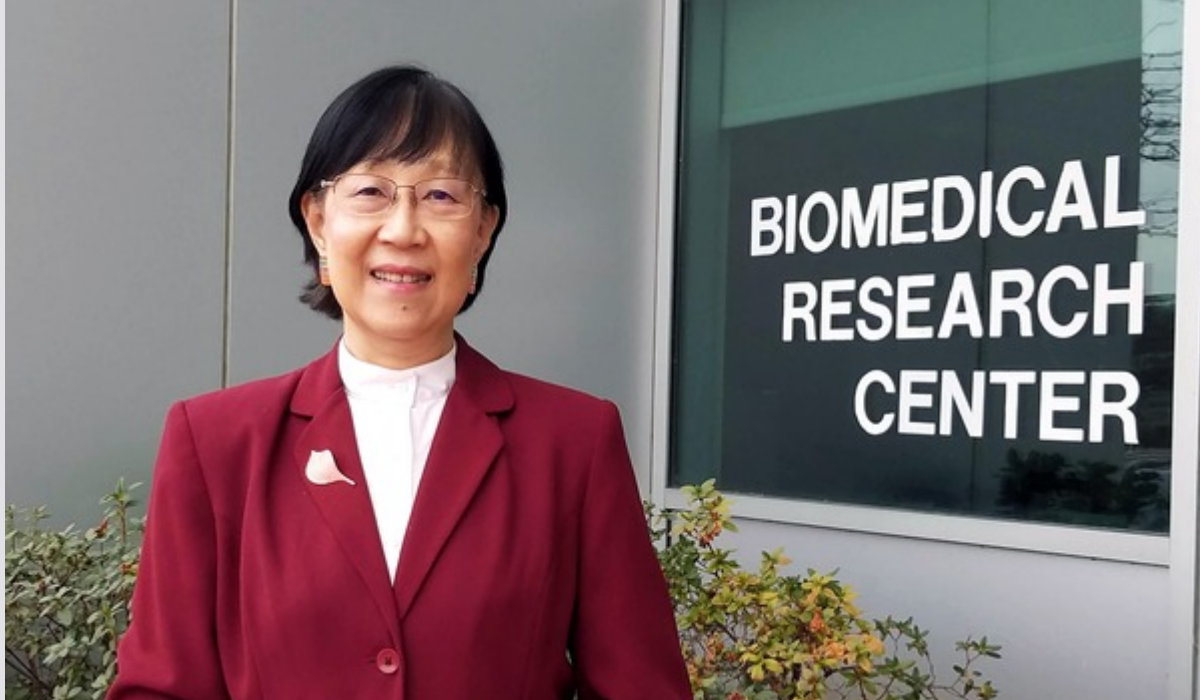
**Shi-Ming Tu, M.D.**, has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine**, Division of **Hematology/Oncology**, and the **Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute** as a Professor and medical oncologist specializing in the treatment and research of genitourinary cancer.

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## Recent Grants & Research





**MOST INFLUENTIAL RESEARCHERS** | More than 50 current and retired UAMS faculty were listed among the top 2% of most influential researchers in a study by Stanford University. "Our strong and supportive research environment is what allows investigators to achieve this kind of distinction and excellence," noted **Shuk-Mei Ho, Ph.D.**, UAMS Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation (pictured above).

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## Extramural Awards

*Congratulations to College of Medicine faculty who received new extramural grants in February. This list, courtesy of the Office of the Executive Associate Dean for Research, excludes clinical trials and awards under \$10,000, as well as grants we have previously reported.*

**Peter Mourani, M.D.**, Department of **Pediatrics**, Integrated Host/Microbe Metagenomics to Improve Lower Respiratory Tract Infection Diagnosis in Critically Ill Children, NIH/NIGMS, (12/1/2021-11/30/2022), \$24,670.

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## Accolades



Have you read the latest *Accolades* from Dean Smyth? 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 [COM Internal Communications](#).

**UAMS team members and students named in Accolades this month:**

Antino Allen	Michael Held	Shana Owens
Omar Atiq	Shuk-Mei Ho	Paul Phillips
Steven Barger	Micah Huckabee	Lauren Poindexter
Lowry Barnes	Tom Kelly	Christian Ponder
Teresita Bellido	Samantha Kendrick	Steven Post
Lance Benson	Clark Kennedy	Fred Prior
Anna Blach	Josh Kennedy	Zhiqiang Qin
Karl Boehme	Chandler Kern	Matt Quick
Elisabet Borsheim	Jennifer Laudadio	Meghan Repp
Bobby Boyanton	Kanna Lewis	Eric Rosenbaum
Heather Broyles	Brianna Long	Nancy Rusch
Katherine Caid	Jeff Lynch	Suzanne Saccente
Rebecca Cantu	Melanie MacNicol	Husam Salah
Jungang Chen	Everett "Pat" Magann	Joseph Sanford
Marybeth Curtis	Spyridoula Maraka	Rawle "Tony" Seupaul
Lu Dai	Katy Marino	Kevin Sexton
Kacee Daniels	Azin Mashayekhi	Muhammad Shamim
Bharat Dhanireddy	Pearl McElfish	Jessica Snowden
Elizabeth Draper	Bobby McGehee	Olivia Speed
Paul Drew	James Meek	James Suen
Abdelrahman Elhousseiny	Franscesca Miquel-Verges	Sara Tariq
Craig Forrest	Arun Modi	Joseph Thompson
Maryam Garza	Zeel Modi	Julia Townsley
Murat Gokden	Austin Morgan	Matthew Tran
Franklin John Gray	Jackson Mosley	Srikanth Vallurupalli
Paige Jones-Brooks	Shengyu Mu	Amy Widner
Luis Juncos	Cindy Nguyen	Margaret Woodruff
Sarah Hall	Eddie Ochoa	Feliciano "Pele" Yu
Mark Harriman	ChrisTina Okolo	Xiaomin Zhang
Terry Harville	Meredith Ott	

### COM departments represented in Accolades this month:

Anesthesiology	Ophthalmology
Biochemistry/Molecular Biology	Orthopaedic Surgery
Biomedical Informatics	Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery
Emergency Medicine	Pathology
Family/Preventive Medicine	Pediatrics
Geriatrics	Pharmacology/Toxicology
Internal Medicine	Physiology/Cell Biology
Microbiology/Immunology	Radiology
Neurobiology/Developmental Sciences	Surgery
Obstetrics/Gynecology	

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The *COMmunication* is published monthly to highlight key events, initiatives and developments in the COM, introduce new faculty members and leaders, and shine a spotlight on our work in education, research, clinical care and service to Arkansas. To 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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