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

UAMS
College of Medicine

COMmunication

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Back with a Bang! Academic House Olympics



After a two-year hiatus due to the pandemic, the Academic House Olympics drew more than 220 College of Medicine students, faculty and family members to Murray Park on Oct. 1 for food, fun and camaraderie. Vying for the coveted Academic House Cup, students faced off for slip-and-slide races, hula hoop, Baggo, volleyball and more. Dean **Susan Smyth, M.D., Ph.D.**, presided over the final tug-of-war match. Congratulations to members of the Northwest Arkansas-based Compton House on winning the House Cup for the third consecutive year!

The Academic House program was established in 2016 to help students connect and mentor one another and develop meaningful relationships with faculty. The program is designed to help students cope with the stress of medical school. The COM is grateful to the Pulaski County Medical Society for supporting the event.



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In the Spotlight



Ron Robertson, M.D., Professor and Chair of the Department of **Surgery**, was invested as the inaugural holder of the Gilbert S. "Gil" Campbell, M.D., Ph.D., Chair in Surgical Leadership and Innovation on Oct. 5. Dr. Robertson has devoted his 28-year career to UAMS and Arkansas, where among many contributions he was instrumental in developing the statewide trauma system.

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Leadership Appointments

Leadership Transition for COM in Northwest Arkansas



John Spollen, M.D., Professor and Vice Chair for Education in the Department of **Psychiatry**, will begin serving as Associate Dean for the College of Medicine at the **UAMS Northwest Regional Campus** on Jan. 1.

Linda L.M. Worley, M.D., a Professor of **Psychiatry** who has served as Associate Dean at the Northwest Campus since 2018, will assume a new physician wellness-focused leadership role as Chief Wellness Officer for the COM.

"As an award-winning educational leader and excellent clinician, Dr. Spollen will provide strong leadership for our growing, robust medical education programs in Northwest Arkansas," **Susan S. Smyth, M.D., Ph.D.**, Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean, said in an Oct. 24 [announcement](#) to faculty.

"Dr. Worley brings extensive experience in mental health care and wellness leadership, as well as expertise and a passion to alleviate physician distress, to her new role," Dr. Smyth said.



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New Faculty



Sarah Assem, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **General Internal Medicine** and Program Director for the **Northwest Internal Medicine Residency Program**.

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Ioannis Anastasiou, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Gastroenterology**.

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Natalie "Brooke" Peeples, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Palliative Medicine**.

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Hisham Elkhider, M.D., has joined the Department of **Neurology** as an Assistant Professor specializing in epilepsy.

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Mausam Patel, M.D., has joined the Department of **Radiation Oncology** as an Assistant Professor.

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Santanu Samanta, M.D., has joined the Department of **Radiation Oncology** as an Assistant Professor.

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Joe Jose, M.D., has joined the Department of **Radiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Body Imaging**.

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Alexis Danielle Tashima, M.D., has joined the Department of **Surgery** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pediatric Plastic Surgery**.

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Recent Grants



NIH GRANT TO EXPAND RESEARCH CAPACITY | UAMS will use a \$7.9 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to expand infectious disease research capacity and establish a Pandemic Response and Public Health Laboratory by renovating existing research space. The renovation will create an additional 9,900 square feet of research space in the Biomedical Research Center Building One.

Dan Voht, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of **Microbiology and Immunology**, is the Principal Investigator on the grant. [READ MORE](#)



REDUCING DISPARITIES IN MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH | UAMS has received a five-year, \$5 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to improve maternal health care in Arkansas. The PeRinatal IMPROvement of Outcomes and Safety for Everyone (PRIMROSE) project is led by **Jennifer Callaghan-Koru, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of **Internal Medicine** and **Obstetrics and Gynecology** in the **Division of Community Health & Research** at the **UAMS Northwest Regional Campus**. The team will address critical gaps in data systems, health services availability and the quality of care to improve maternal health outcomes and reduce disparities. [READ MORE](#)



**Arkansas
Children's**
Research Institute



CHILDHOOD LEUKEMIA & NEUROCOGNITIVE CHANGES | **Ellen van der Plas, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of **Pediatrics** in the Division of **Hematology/Oncology**, has received a \$2.5 million NIH MERIT R37 award for a five-year study, "Identifying Markers of Abnormal Neurocognitive Trajectories during Chemotherapy Treatment of Childhood Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL)." Survival rates for childhood ALL now approach 95%, and there has been a shift in research to focus on life after cancer. Dr. van der Plas and colleagues will assess neurodevelopmental changes in patients during chemotherapy treatment to help pinpoint the timing and extent of neurotoxic exposures and reveal opportunities for prevention and remediation. [READ MORE](#)



CLOSING GAPS IN TRAUMA OUTCOMES |

UAMS researchers led by **Mathias Brochhausen, Ph.D.**, and **Kevin Sexton, M.D.**, are hoping to help close wide gaps in trauma patient outcomes across the United States by harnessing new data to help trauma center leaders improve outcomes. A four-year, \$1.8 million grant renewal from the NIH's National Institute of General Medical Sciences is funding the project. [READ MORE](#)

Extramural Awards

Congratulations to College of Medicine faculty members who recently received extramural grants. This list, courtesy of the College of Medicine Research Office, excludes clinical trials and awards under \$10,000, as well as grants we have previously reported and those highlighted above.

Britni Ayers, Ph.D., Internal Medicine/Northwest Campus, Exploring the Preliminary Efficacy of Centering Pregnancy with Care Navigation to Reduce Maternal Health Disparities among Marshallese Women, NIH/National Institute of Nursing Research, (9/22/2022-7/31/2024), \$382,500.

Andrew Brown, Ph.D., Biostatistics, Removing Barriers to Better Data Practices through Capacity Opportunity and Motivation, NIH, (7/1/2022-6/30/2024), \$164,962.

Jennifer Callaghan-Koru, Ph.D., Internal Medicine/Northwest Campus, The Arkansas Perinatal Quality Collaborative, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, (9/30/2022-9/29/2027), \$1,374,655.

Samantha Kendrick, Ph.D., Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Targeting unique DNA structures to repress oncogenic signaling in lymphoma, U.S. Department of Defense, (9/15/2022-9/14/2025), \$760,000.

Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., Internal Medicine/Northwest Campus, Transforming Health Outreach for Infants and Children (P-5) through Vital Community Engagement (THRIVE P-5), Health Resources & Services Administration, (9/30/2022-9/29/2026), \$999,998.

Eduardo Ochoa, M.D., Pediatrics, ARPA Sustainability Grant, U.S. Department of the Treasury, (9/1/2022-8/31/2023), \$580,000. Pass Through from Arkansas Department of Health & Human Services.

Amy Overton-McCoy, Ph.D., APRN, Geriatrics, Enhancement Project to Improve Access to Food Services and Mental Well-Being, Administration for Community Living, (8/1/2022-7/31/2025), \$230,773.

Fred Prior, Ph.D., Biomedical Informatics, Robust and Trusted Data Analytics, National Science Foundation, (7/1/2022-6/30/2023), \$300,651. Pass Through from Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

Yasir Rahmatallah, Ph.D., Biomedical Informatics, LP: Machine Learning Approaches for Remote Pathological Speech Assessment for Parkinson's Disease, National Science Foundation, (9/1/2022-8/31/2024), \$100,919. Pass Through from Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

Ronald Robertson, M.D., Surgery, FY2023 Hospital Trauma Grant, Arkansas Department of Health, (9/2/2022-6/30/2023), \$1,018,000.

David Ussery, Ph.D., Biomedical Informatics, DART GRA Year 3, National Science Foundation, (7/1/2022-6/30/2023), \$188,214. Pass Through from Arkansas Economic Development Commission.

Intramural Grants



MSK Creativity Hub Awards Pilot Grants

Congratulations to the inaugural recipients of pilot grants awarded by the **College of Medicine Musculoskeletal (MSK) Creativity Hub**. These researchers and teams will receive one-year grants of \$20,000:

Ryan Porter, Ph.D., and Maria Almeida, Ph.D., Internal Medicine/

Endocrinology: The role of the NAD salvage pathway in articular chondrocyte metabolic homeostasis

Neha Dole, Ph.D., Physiology and Cell Biology: TGF β as a regulator of Lipocalin 2 in mediating osteocyte-intrinsic and -extrinsic energy metabolism

Jesús Delgado-Calle, Ph.D., Physiology and Cell Biology; and **Intawat Nookaew, Ph.D., Biomedical Informatics:** Role of Extrachromosomal Circular DNA in Bone

TRI Announces Pilot Awards



Three College of Medicine faculty members are among the recipients of pilot grants from the **UAMS Translational Research Institute** for studies that impact rural health. The one-year awards are for up to \$50,000. Congratulations to [all of the UAMS recipients](#), including these from the College of Medicine:

Stanley K. Ellis, Ed.D., M.S., Obstetrics and Gynecology/Institute for Digital Health & Innovation: School-Based Tele-counseling Feasibility Pilot

Susan Emmett, M.D., M.P.H., Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery/Center for Hearing Health Equity: Achieving Hearing Health Equity for Rural Children: Optimization of a Novel Mobile Health Tympanometer for Community-Based Hearing Screening

Lindsey Wolf, M.D., Surgery/Pediatric Surgery: A Pilot Program to Evaluate the Feasibility of Telemedicine Pediatric Surgical Consultations in Referring Emergency Departments

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](#).

Team members and students named in Accolades this month:

Gregory Albert	Jennifer Gess	Joy Pemberton
Mike Anders	Mackinzie Goeke	Lauren Poindexter
Kimberly Arnold	Srinivasa Gokarakonda	Ryan Pohlkamp
Shahrukh Arif	Murat Gokden	Fred Prior
Zainab Atiq	Carlton Gragg	Charles Matthew Quick
Nathan Avaritt	Laura Hobart-Porter	Deepa Raghavan
Lowry Barnes	Christine Hsu	Ramona Rhodes
Anna Bareiss	Supriya Jambhekar	Ron Robertson
Thaddeus Barter	Andrew James	Analiz Rodriguez
Katie Beaton	Diane Jarrett	Michael Rutherford
William Bennett	Donald Johann	Robert Saadi
Eric Braden	Sufna John	Viridiana Saenz
Lindsey Brent	Nathan Johnson	Tariq Salem
R. Dale Blasier	Manish Joshi	Prachi Saluja
Mary Bollinger	Se-Ran Jun	Kevin Sexton
Jonathan Bona	Behjatolah Karbassi	Amy Sherrill
Jennie Burns	Madison Kelly	Jacob Siebenmorgen
Jennifer Callaghan-Koru	Thomas Kelly	Rosalia C.M. Simmen
Donald Callan	Samantha Kendrick	Kirk Smith
Maegan Calvert	Philip Kenney	Vikki Stefans
Martin Cannon	Shashank Kraleti	Alan Tackett
John Carroll	Erica Liebelt	Lawrence Tarbox
Mattison Cato	Brianna Long	Purushottam Thapa
Angie Chambers	Diorella López-González	Ronald Thompson Jr.
Faizan Cheema	Michael Mancino	Carol Thrush
Ethan Chernivec	Nirvana Manning	Morgan Tripod
Germán Corrales	Spyridoula Maraka	Olivia Tzeng
Richard Crownover	Katy Marino	David Ussery
Ashly Cummings	Sacha McBain	Angie Waliski
Darynne Dahlem	Steve McKee	Visanu Wanchai
Zachary Dawes	Diane McKinstry	Conner Webb
J.D. Day	Glenn Mesman	Jeanne Wei
Tisha Deen	Angel Mitma	Kazandra Wilson
Jesús Delgado-Calle	Jason Mizell	Michael Wilson
Milena Dimori	Roy Morello	Adam Wolfe
John Dornhoffer	Mohammed Moursi	Odette Woods
Laura Dunn	Marius Nagalo	Eva Woodward
Dinesh Edem	Bachkhoa Nguyen	Henry Wong
Susan Emmett	Richard Nicholas	Fen Xia
Lisa Evans	Tracy Nolan	Taher Yusufali
Macey Feimster	Sam Overlay	Angie Zaki-Sabet
Monica Ferrero	Prasad Padala	Melissa Zielinski
Tanmay Gandhi	Pankaj Patyal	Fenghuang Zhan
Valandra German		

COM departments represented in Accolades this month:

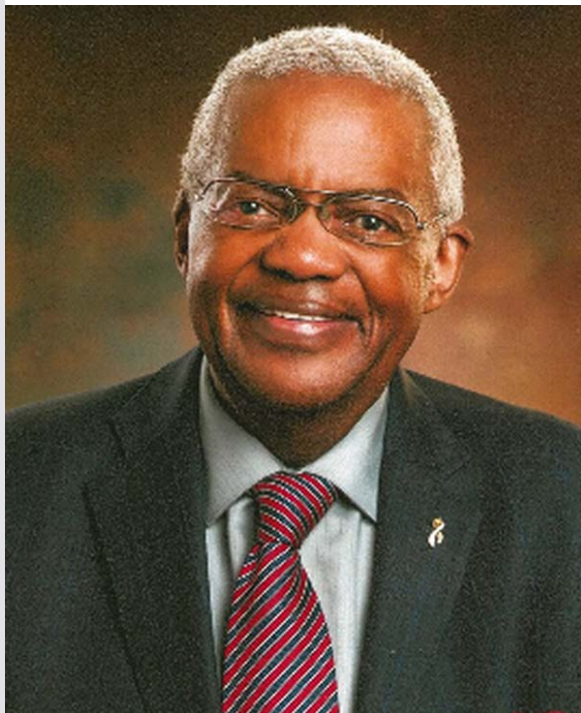
Biochemistry/Molecular Biology
Biomedical Informatics
Dermatology
Emergency Medicine
Family/Preventive Medicine
Geriatrics
Internal Medicine
Microbiology/Immunology
Neurosurgery
Obstetrics/Gynecology
Orthopaedic Surgery

Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery
Pathology
Pediatric/Special Needs Dentistry
Pediatrics
Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation
Radiology
Physiology/Cell Biology
Psychiatry
Radiation Oncology
Surgery

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In Memoriam

Henry W. Foster, Jr., M.D. '58



Henry W. Foster Jr., M.D., a 1958 UAMS College of Medicine graduate, COM Hall of Fame member and preeminent African American physician, died Sept. 25. Among many leadership posts, Dr. Foster served as Chair of Obstetrics and Gynecology and then Dean of the School of Medicine and Vice President for Health Services at Meharry Medical College in Nashville. He founded the acclaimed "I Have a Future" program for disadvantaged Nashville teens, which was recognized by President George H.W. Bush as one of his "Thousand Points of Light."

In 1995, President Bill Clinton nominated Dr. Foster for the post of U.S. Surgeon General. He received a favorable recommendation from the nominating committee, but his nomination did not receive a Senate vote. He continued to serve with the Clinton administration as its Senior Advisory on Teen Pregnancy. Dr. Foster received countless honors during his illustrious career, including his 1972 induction into the Institute of Medicine (now the National Academy of Medicine). When the UAMS College of Medicine celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2004 with the establishment of the Hall of Fame, Dr. Foster was inducted as an inaugural member.

[Read Dr. Foster's obituary here.](#)

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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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