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December 2022

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COM Honors Dr. Stacie Jones for Research, Mentorship

The College of Medicine honored **Stacie M. Jones, M.D.**, as the 2022 Distinguished Faculty Scholar for her groundbreaking research into food allergies, her leading role in the development of the first FDA-approved oral immunotherapy drug for life-threatening peanut allergy in children, and her dedication to mentorship.

Dr. Jones, a Professor in the Department of **Pediatrics**, delivered the annual Dean's Distinguished Faculty Scholar Lecture Dec. 8 in an auditorium filled with research team members and other faculty from the Department of Pediatrics and Division of **Pediatric Allergy and Immunology**, and colleagues from throughout the college and Arkansas Children's. Dr. Jones has served in the division since 1994 and was Division Director in 2003-2019.



Above: Colleagues celebrate with Dr. Jones after the lecture.



“I want to recognize you for all of the things you have done in your field and for UAMS and Arkansas Children’s, and for mentoring so many people here in the audience and across the college,” said **Susan Smyth, M.D., Ph.D.**, Executive Vice Chancellor of UAMS and Dean of the college. “You truly have had a distinguished career, and we are so pleased that you are part of our college and cannot wait to see where you and your team are going next in your work.”

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In the Spotlight: 2022 MVPs

The College of Medicine hosted multiple celebrations this fall as seven outstanding team members were presented the **Most Valuable Player (MVP)** Award by Dean **Susan Smyth, M.D., Ph.D.** The MVPs received UAMS goodie bags and swag. We are delighted to share photos from the presentations and excerpts from their nominations.

The MVP Award is the college’s way of saying thank you to exceptional people who go above and beyond. MVPs inspire, love what they do, don’t hesitate to share knowledge, and help others around them. These MVPs exemplify UAMS Core Values: **Integrity, Respect, Diversity & Health Equity, Teamwork, Creativity, Excellence and Safety**. In short, they are **great** team members.

Congratulations to all of our 2022 MVPs!



ANGELA BAUER

GME Program Manager

Neurology

*Nominated by Hira Zafar, M.D.,
resident*

“Angela is deserving of the MVP Award for all the hard work she does and the way she cares for people. She is a **kind and compassionate** person who takes care of the residents and makes time for them no matter how many projects she is juggling. Angela helps them with the transition to the residency program and keeps everyone on track. She is truly the definition of a team player.”



SURESH KANNAN

Department Administrator
Physiology & Cell Biology
*Nominated by Teresita Bellido,
Ph.D., Chair*

“Suresh’s unique training, first as a scientist and then as an administrator, makes him a superb Department Administrator. He understands the ins and outs of the research enterprise, of submitting and administrating grants and writing reports, and he understands the idiosyncrasies of faculty and the needs of students. He **inspires others to be better** and always finds and values fellows’ strengths.”



DIANE MCKINSTRY

Physiology & Cell Biology
*Nominated by Caroline Miller
Robinson, Financial Manager*

“Diane’s work is exemplified most by the relationships she has built with students who participate in the Arkansas INBRE Undergraduate Research Summer Program and the medical students in the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute Partnership in Cancer Research (PCAR) Program. Diane becomes the student’s **mentor, coach and cheerleader** ... Every day, she exemplifies the UAMS core values in her efforts to give students a memorable and impactful research experience at UAMS.”



NATALIE MOORE

Program Manager
Internal Medicine
*Nominated by Mariah Camp,
Assist. Service Line Manager;
and Edward T.H. Yeh, M.D.,
Chair*

“Natalie has been **a rock star at her job** – supporting all IM faculty, coordinators and division administrators. She is always up for a challenge and has been a mentor to new coordinators who have started in the department. When she learns valuable information, she is proactive about sharing it widely and educating her peers.”

“Natalie is the most dedicated and talented staff I have ever worked with ... I have not worked with anyone so capable and dedicated.”



CORINNE MORPHEW

GME Program Coordinator

Pediatric Anesthesiology

*Nominated by Anita Akbar Ali,
Fellowship Program Director*

“Corinne joined our department as a program coordinator for our fellowship at a very critical point, as the department was going through a lot of administrative changes ... Not only did Corinne learn the ropes very quickly, she managed to revamp the entire program including our website, make a promotional video, and rearrange the orientation for fellows, keeping our program up to date with deadlines and requirements. Now I **cannot imagine my program without her.**”



JASON MUESSE, M.D.

Assistant Professor

Surgery

*Nominated by Katy Marino, M.D.,
Assistant Professor*

“If **a servant’s heart** and a big Texas grin (under a mask) qualify you for this award, then look no further than Dr. Jason Muesse. Just ask any of his patients, and they will tell you a story about Dr. Muesse going the extra mile for them. I notice this almost every time I round on his patients, and it inspires me to take the extra time with my own patients.”



ROSALYN PERKINS, APRN

APRN Coordinator

**Institute for Digital Health &
Innovation**

*Nominated by Chickilah
Davenport, Program Manager;
and Terri Imus, Clinic Director*

“Rosalyn is a **true professional** who genuinely cares about everyone and challenges us to deliver excellent quality work. She sets the standards of what above and beyond looks like. She strives to understand the bigger picture. I am incredibly fortunate to have her as my leader.” “Rosalyn is a role model for all who work with her. She is kind, compassionate, and a caring nurse who garners respect from all who know and have worked with her.”

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New Faculty



Shami Nandy, M.D., has joined the Department of **Geriatrics** as an Assistant Professor.

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Auras Atreya, M.D., M.P.H., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor and electrophysiologist in the Division of **Cardiology**.

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Maria Ruiz, D.O., M.S., has joined the Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology** as an Assistant professor in the Division of **Gynecologic Oncology**.

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Ellen van der Plas, Ph.D., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Associate Professor in the **Hematology and Oncology** Section.

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Timothy R. Kosciak, Ph.D., has joined the Department of **Pediatrics** as an Associate Professor in the **Neurology** Section.

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Holly Hunter, M.D., has joined the Department of **Psychiatry** as an Assistant Professor.

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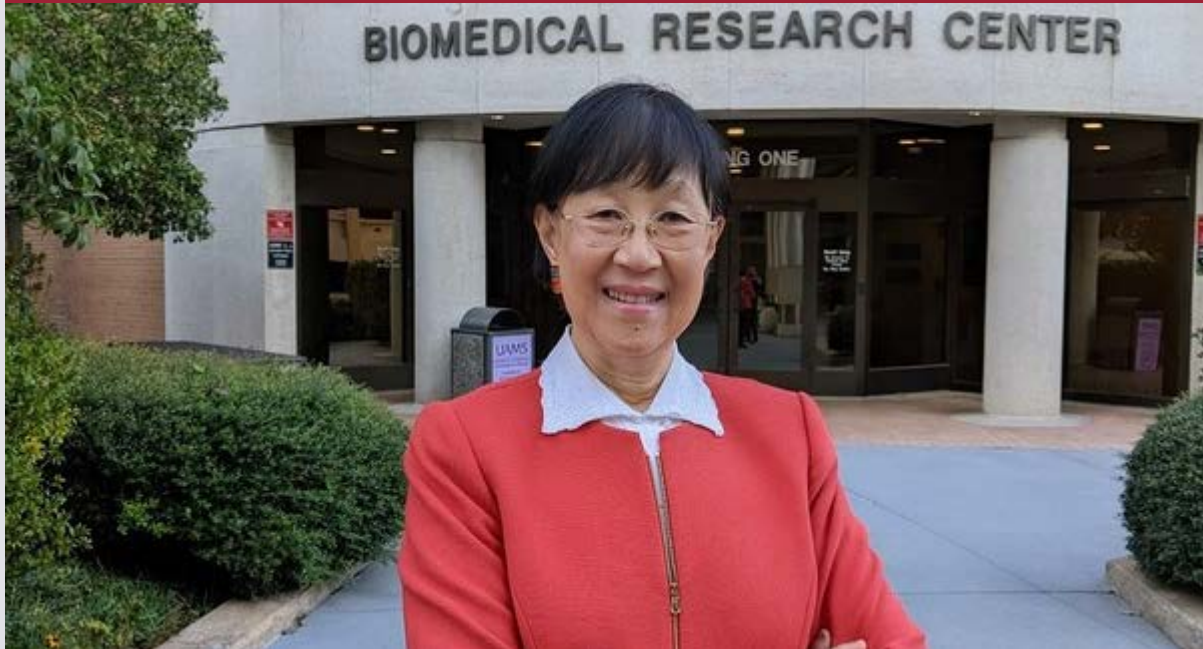


Maegan Calvert, Ph.D., has joined the Department of **Psychiatry** as an Assistant Professor.

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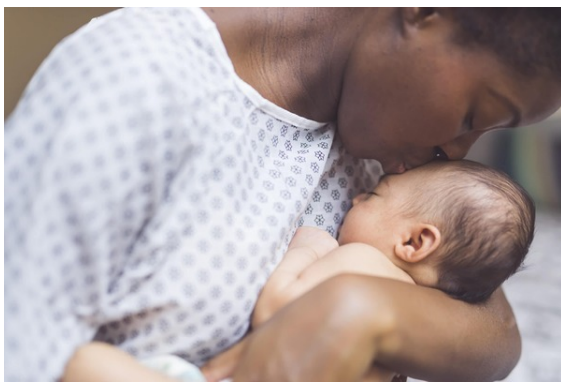
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Recent Grants



Banner Year for Research

UAMS and its affiliate research institutions, the **Arkansas Children's Research Institute (ACRI)** and the **Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System (CAVHS)** saw research funding grow by 14.5% in FY 2022, with \$203.1 million in grants. Of this, UAMS' external grant funding was nearly \$158 million, with more than two-thirds awarded to College of Medicine researchers. Almost all of the top 20 funded researchers are COM faculty. **Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., MBA**, who directs the **Office of Community Health & Research** at the **UAMS Northwest Regional Campus**, led all researchers with 11 grants totaling \$18.3 million for FY 2022. **Shuk-Mei Ho, Ph.D.**, Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation, (pictured above) announced the grant totals at a Dec. 5 program hosted by the Division of Research and Innovation. [READ MORE](#)



IMPROVING MATERNAL & INFANT HEALTH | UAMS has received a five-year, \$1.2 million grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Reproductive Health to help establish a Perinatal Quality Collaborative to improve the quality of care for mothers and babies throughout Arkansas. "Our goal will be to engage all birthing hospitals in Arkansas," said **Jennifer Callaghan-Koru, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor of **Internal Medicine** in the **Office of Community Health & Research**. [READ MORE](#)

EXPANDING RESEARCH ACROSS THE STATE | The **Arkansas IDeA Network for Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE)** program, led for over 20 years by **Lawrence Cornett, Ph.D.**, Distinguished Professor in the Department of **Physiology and Cell Biology**, recently received \$614,117 in supplemental awards to its most recent \$18.4 million grant renewal. The program has received nearly \$80 million in cumulative funding to expand and promote research at educational institutions throughout Arkansas. [READ MORE](#)

Extramural Awards

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

Sufna John, Ph.D., Department of **Psychiatry**, Expanding Mental Health Services for Children in Foster Care: Trauma Assessment, Mental Health Case Management, US Department of Justice – Office for Victims of Crime, (11/14/2022-9/30/2023), \$202,429. Pass through from Arkansas Department of Finance & Administration.

Sara Landes, Ph.D., Department of **Psychiatry**, Jumpstarting Culturally-informed Advance Care Planning Conversations with AIAN People in Primary Care (JUMP), NIH/National Institute of Nursing Research, (11/22/2022-5/31/2027), \$153,680. Pass through from Southcentral Foundation.

Michael Mancino, M.D., Department of **Psychiatry**, State Opioid Response Grant for MATRIARC and ECHO, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, (11/9/2022-9/30/2023), \$350,000.

Irion Pursell, M.P.H., RN, B.S.N., Department of **Internal Medicine**, DHHS, CDC Activities to Support State, Tribal, Local and Territorial (STLT) Health Department Fund – Response to Public Health or Healthcare Crises, Arkansas Department of Health, (11/7/2022-5/31/2023), \$215,000.

Jeanne Wei, M.D., Department of **Geriatrics**, DAABHS SOR III OPAL Narcan Drug Project, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, (11/15/2022-9/30/2023), \$750,000. Pass through from Arkansas Department of Human Services.

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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:

Gregory Albert
Neha Anand
Wade Arthur
Murat Aydin
Ariel Berlinski
Gwendolyn Bryant-Smith
Jessica Coker
Daniel Conde
Lawrence Cornett
Marybeth Curtis
Paul Darden
Ben Davis
John Dornhoffer
Ruofei Du
Alysia Dubriske
Susan Emmett
Lauren Evans
Teresa Fletchinger

Christopher Fowler
Rachael Freeze-Ramsey
Natalie Guley
Quincy Gragg
Sarah Greenberger
Hoda Hagrass
Evan Hicks
Laura Hobart-Porter
Brian Hohertz
Robert Hopkins Jr.
Erika Santos Horta
Usman "Uzi" Hyder
Supriya Jambhekar
Donald Johann Jr.
Stacie Jones
Jeannette Lee
Vivek Malhotra

Nirvana Manning
Randy Maddox
Pearl McElfish
Heidi Meredith
Rachel Millner
Pete Mourani
Ariel Noble
Song Ounpraseuth
Raj Patel
Samantha K. Robler
Sara Shalin
Jessica Snowden
Jeffrey Stambough
Punith Thogaripally
Vidhu Vadini
Tiffany Weinkopff
Michael Wilson

COM departments represented in Accolades this month:

Anesthesiology
Biomedical Informatics
Biostatistics
Dermatology
Emergency Medicine
Family/Preventive Medicine
Internal Medicine
Microbiology/Immunology
Neurology
Neurosurgery
Obstetrics/Gynecology

Orthopaedic Surgery
Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery
Pathology
Pediatrics
Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation
Physiology/Cell Biology
Psychiatry
Radiology
Surgery
Urology

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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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