

MESSAGE FROM THE Dean



Dear Colleagues,

The academic year is in full swing, and I want to thank all of you for contributing to our progress across our mission areas. You may have heard me talk about community engagement as our “fourth mission,” complementing our work in education, research and clinical care – and it truly is at the heart of what we do.

I just returned from Northwest Arkansas, where **Dr. Pearl McElfish** and her team in the **Institute for Community Health Innovation (ICHI)** hosted National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Dr. Monica Bertagnolli. Arkansas Congressman Steve Womack’s office coordinated the visit to showcase ICHI’s community engagement initiatives and impact. Senator John Boozman also participated in the event. Dr. Bertagnolli was highly impressed with the ICHI team’s dedication and approach to improving health in communities across Arkansas.

Other highlights this month included the annual Dean’s Distinguished Faculty Scholar Lecture by **Dr. Shuk-Mei Ho** and the UAMS Emeritus Society “Last Lecture: Lessons from a Lifetime of Learning” talk by **Dr. Michael Jennings**. Both were deeply insightful and engaging, and I hope you will take a moment to read about them below.

Congratulations also to **Dr. Maya Lopez**, **Dr. Ron Sanders** and **Dr. David Spiro**, who were invested in endowed chairs at Arkansas Children’s on Oct. 2, and to **Dr. Corey Montgomery**, who will be invested in the Richard W. Nicholas, M.D., and Corey O. Montgomery, M.D., Chair in Orthopaedic Oncology on Oct. 29.

Steve

Steven A. Webber, MBChB, MRCP
Dean, College of Medicine
Executive Vice Chancellor, UAMS

[Back to the top](#)

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



2024 Distinguished Faculty Scholar: Dr. Shuk-Mei Ho

Shuk-Mei Ho, Ph.D., has earned international recognition for her pioneering research in oncology, toxicology and epigenetics, and accolades for her leadership in research more broadly. But as she was being honored as the College of Medicine’s 2024 Distinguished Faculty Scholar, she emphasized the central role of teamwork in successful research programs.

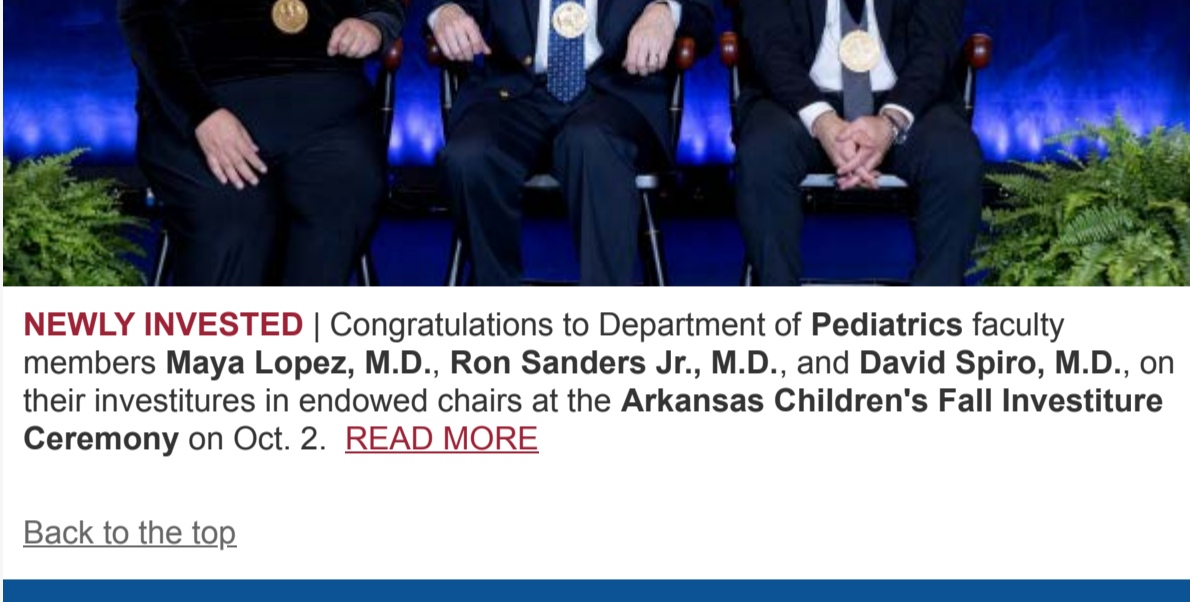
“None of this is *my* accomplishment; this is a collective effort,” said Dr. Ho, a Professor in the COM Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology** and the UAMS College of Public Health’s Department of Environmental Health Sciences. She also served as UAMS Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation from 2019 to April 2024. [READ MORE](#)

Emeritus Society “Last Lecture” Honors Dr. Mike Jennings

Michael Jennings, Ph.D., has gleaned valuable lessons about science, education, leadership and more over his lifetime and many decades as a biophysicist, faculty member and department chair. His wealth of experiences has taught him many things – including the joy of growing tomatoes.



“There’s just something about tomatoes,” Dr. Jennings said as the 2024 honoree in the UAMS Emeritus Society’s “Last Lecture: Lessons from a Lifetime of Learning” series. “You get emotional about it.” [READ MORE](#)

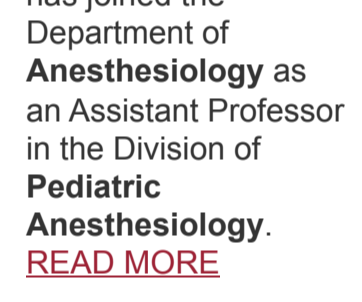


NEWLY INVESTED | Congratulations to Department of **Pediatrics** faculty members **Maya Lopez, M.D.**, **Ron Sanders Jr., M.D.**, and **David Spiro, M.D.**, on their investitures in endowed chairs at the **Arkansas Children’s Fall Investiture Ceremony** on Oct. 2. [READ MORE](#)

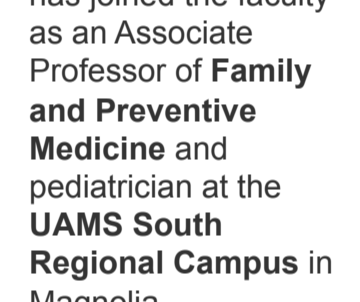
[Back to the top](#)

NEW FACULTY

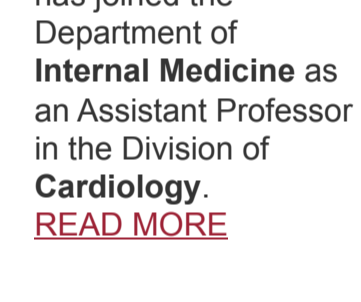
Please join us in welcoming these recent additions to the COM faculty!



Ahmed Zaghw, M.D., has joined the Department of **Anesthesiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pediatric Anesthesiology**. [READ MORE](#)



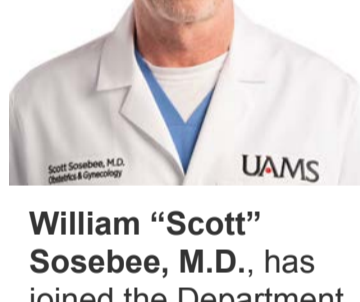
Amy Cross, M.D., has joined the faculty as an Associate Professor of **Family and Preventive Medicine** and pediatrician at the **UAMS South Regional Campus** in Magnolia. [READ MORE](#)



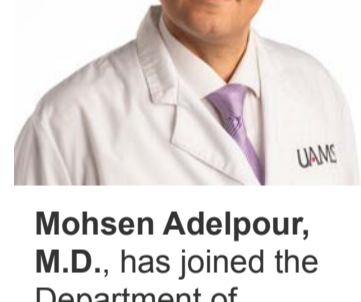
Risheek Kaul, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Cardiology**. [READ MORE](#)



Gilbert-Roy Kamoga, M.D., has joined the Department of **Internal Medicine** as an Associate Professor and internist at the **UAMS Northwest Regional Campus**. [READ MORE](#)



William “Scott” Sosebee, M.D., has joined the Department of **Obstetrics and Gynecology** as an Associate Professor in the Division of **General Obstetrics and Gynecology**. [READ MORE](#)



Mohsen Adelpour, M.D., has joined the Department of **Ophthalmology** as an Assistant Professor specializing in glaucoma. [READ MORE](#)



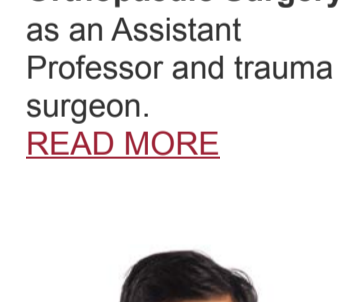
Ryan Anthony, M.D., has joined the Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery** as an Assistant Professor and trauma surgeon. [READ MORE](#)



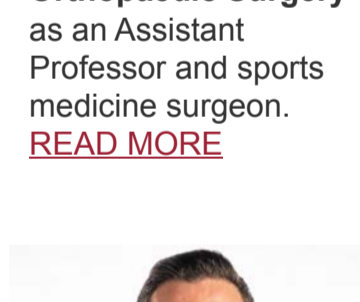
Paul Inclan, M.D., has joined the Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery** as an Assistant Professor and sports medicine surgeon. [READ MORE](#)



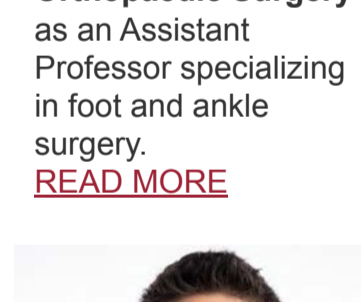
Sean Parham, M.D., has joined the Department of **Orthopaedic Surgery** as an Assistant Professor specializing in foot and ankle surgery. [READ MORE](#)



Shrivas Radder, M.D., has joined the Department of **Radiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Pediatric Radiology**. [READ MORE](#)



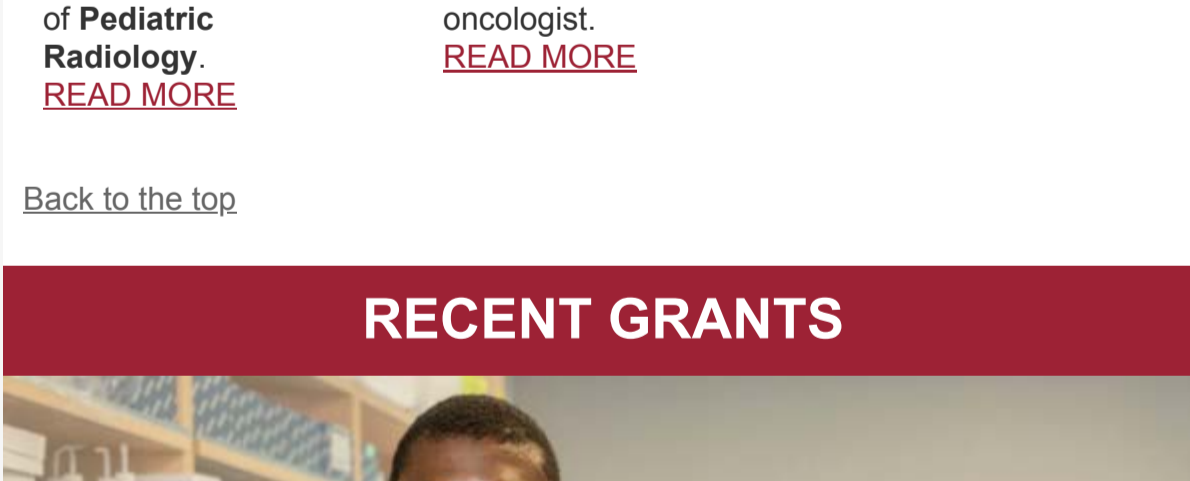
Marcelo Bigarella, M.D., has joined the Department of **Urology** as an Assistant Professor and urologist. [READ MORE](#)



Jun Song, M.D., has joined the Department of **Urology** as an Assistant Professor and urogynecologist. [READ MORE](#)

[Back to the top](#)

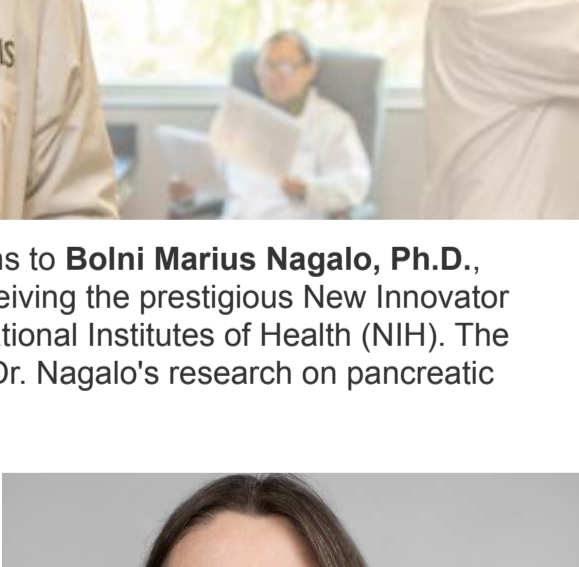
RECENT GRANTS



FIRST FOR ARKANSAS | Congratulations to **Bolni Marius Nagalo, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of **Pathology**, on receiving the prestigious New Innovator Award from the Director’s Office of the National Institutes of Health. The five-year, \$2.3 million award will support Dr. Nagalo’s research on pancreatic cancer. [READ MORE](#)



QUEST FOR A BETTER TB VACCINE | **Lu Huang, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor of **Microbiology and Immunology**, has received a \$3.9 million grant from the NIH to support his ongoing work to find a more effective tuberculosis (TB) vaccine – a feat that has eluded scientists for more than 100 years. [READ MORE](#)



IMPROVING CYSTIC FIBROSIS TREATMENT | The NIH has awarded \$2.9 million to the Arkansas Children’s Research Institute (ACRI) and **Jennifer Guimbellot, M.D., Ph.D.**, Chief of **Pediatric Pulmonary and Sleep Medicine**, to explore how a critical therapy for patients with cystic fibrosis might become even more effective. [READ MORE](#)

Congratulations also to the following College of Medicine team members who were recently awarded new extramural grants. This monthly list, courtesy of the College of Medicine Office of Research, includes clinical trials and awards under \$10,000, as well as grants highlighted above or previously reported in the *Communication*.

Martin Cannon, Ph.D., Department of **Microbiology and Immunology**, Mechanisms of Combinatorial Therapy to Enhance Anti-PD-1 Immune Checkpoint Inhibition for Ovarian Cancer, U.S. Department of Defense, (11/15/2024 - 11/14/2027), \$1,147,500.

Akilah Jefferson, M.D., Department of **Pediatrics**, Multifactorial Asthma Determinants in Under-resourced Pediatric Populations, National Institutes of Health, (9/15/2024 – 7/31/2028), \$662,725. (ACRI)

Melissa Zielinski, Ph.D., Department of **Psychiatry**, Effectiveness, Implementation, and Cost of Cognitive Processing Therapy in Prisons, NIH/Nat. Inst. on Drug Abuse, (09/30/2024 - 05/31/2029), \$668,290.

[Back to the top](#)

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 and questions are always welcome. Call Tamara Robinson, Senior Communications Writer, at 526-5163, or send an email to COMInternalCommunications@uams.edu.