

COMmunication

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February 2025

MESSAGE FROM THE Dean



Dear Colleagues,

February is traditionally a time for focusing on the heart – and not just the stuff of valentines but, importantly, on cardiovascular disease awareness and prevention. Heart disease is the leading cause of death in Arkansas, and our state ranks fourth nationally for heart disease mortality. Most of us have been impacted by the toll of heart disease on someone close to us. As [American Heart Month](#) winds down, I urge you to keep heart health front and center in your life.

In the College of Medicine, we will continue to fight heart disease on all fronts, including research and training the next generation of cardiovascular scientists and clinicians. Along with our ongoing focus on cardiovascular care for adult Arkansans, our pediatric cardiology and congenital heart disease team members at Arkansas Children's are doing a wonderful job ensuring the very best care for young Arkansans with heart conditions. Did you know it is estimated that there are currently more *adults* with congenital heart disease alive today than there are *children* with congenital heart conditions? As a pediatric cardiologist, I am awed by this marker of success in the field in recent decades and grateful that so many children born with heart conditions now survive and thrive into adulthood.

This month, we also celebrated having another department chair position filled with an excellent leader: **Deanna Sasaki-Adams, M.D., MBA**, who begins serving as Chair of **Neurosurgery** on March 1. (Read about Dr. Sasaki-Adams below.) The appointment comes on the heels of welcoming **Ashley Norse, M.D.**, as Chair of **Emergency Medicine** in January. I am very excited about these additions to our leadership team.

I would be remiss if I did not say something more about the ongoing threats to our research programs due to the proposed cuts to NIH F and A costs (so-called "indirects"). This is a fast-moving story, and those who follow the news probably know as much as I do at this time. Please continue to check the [research updates intranet page](#) for new information, and watch for any additional communications from Chancellor **Cam Patterson, M.D., MBA**, Provost **Stephanie Gardner, Pharm.D., Ed.D.**, or Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation **Dan Voth, Ph.D.** We will keep everyone updated as we learn more.

In the meantime, please continue to do your research as usual. Your work not only contributes to advancing knowledge and improving human health, but also makes major economic contributions to our state. Although times are uncertain, we will get through this together.

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

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IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Championing Research Funding

UAMS graduate student **Carol Morris** advocated for crucial research funding in a timely visit to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., this month as part of a Science Communication Fellowship with the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology (ARVO).

Carol is a fourth-year student working in the lab of **Abdel Fouda, Ph.D.**, a federally funded researcher and Assistant Professor in the Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology** who specializes in retinal ischemic diseases. Carol has already earned several national and UAMS honors for her research into stroke and retinal ischemic injury.

Her burgeoning research experiences have ignited a passion for ensuring funding for scientific studies that will positively impact health. [READ MORE](#)

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LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS



Neurosurgery Chair

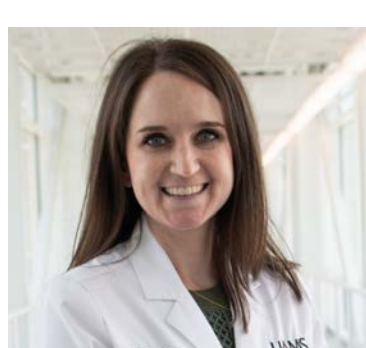
Deanna Sasaki-Adams, M.D., MBA, has been named Chair of the Department of **Neurosurgery**, effective March 1. Dr. Sasaki-Adams, who was recruited to UAMS in January 2023, currently serves as Vice-Chair of Quality and Clinical Operations for the department, Medical Director of the UAMS Neurosciences Service Line and Associate Program Director for the Neurosurgery Residency.

"Dr. Sasaki-Adams will provide strong and innovative leadership for our clinical, educational and research programs in neurosurgery," said Dean and Executive Vice Chancellor **Steven Webber, MBChB**. "She has already excelled in many leadership roles at UAMS and the University of North Carolina." [READ MORE](#)

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NEW FACULTY

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



Julie Windholz, M.D., has joined the Department of **Geriatrics** as an Assistant Professor. [READ MORE](#)



Ayman Mohamed, M.D., M.Sc., has joined the Department of **Radiology** as an Assistant Professor in the Division of **Neurointerventional Radiology**. [READ MORE](#)



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

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RECENT GRANTS

Congratulations to the following College of Medicine team members who were awarded extramural grants in January. Our monthly list, courtesy of the College of Medicine Office of Research, excludes clinical trials and awards under \$10,000, as well as any grants previously reported in the COMMunication.

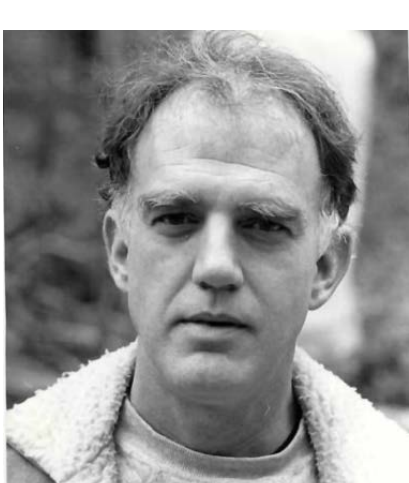
Jennifer Guimbellot, M.D., Ph.D., Department of **Pediatrics**, Maternal and Neonatal Pharmacokinetics of CFTR Modulators [Clinical Research Scholars Program (CRSP) Award - Transfer], Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, (1/11/2023 – 10/31/2026), \$140,220 (ACRI)

Kevin Roney, Ph.D., Department of **Biochemistry and Molecular Biology**, Helicase Mechanism and G-Quadruplex Signaling, NIH/Nat. Inst. of General Medical Sciences, (01/07/2025 – 12/31/2029), \$2,992,715

Rami Shahrer, Ph.D., Department of **Pharmacology and Toxicology**, AHA Postdoc Fellowship, American Heart Association, (01/01/2025 – 12/31/2026), \$173,464

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IN MEMORIAM



Terry Sims, Ph.D.

We recently learned the sad news that **Terry Sims, Ph.D.**, a College of Medicine faculty member from 1978 to 2007, died Nov. 6, 2024. Dr. Sims initially joined the Department of **Pathology** and then served in the Department of **Anatomy** (now the Department of **Neurosciences**), where he taught gross anatomy to medical students for over two decades until his retirement. As a scientist, Dr. Sims specialized in cell regeneration with a focus on the brain and spinal cord. [READ MORE](#)

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.