Time for Breakfast!

The second year of Breakfasts with the Dean, a Friday morning tradition for first- and second-year students in the College of Medicine, kicked off last week. Dean Christopher Westfall, M.D., and other academic leaders enjoyed breakfast and conversation with a group of M2s.

“I think I speak for all of us when I say that is definitely a valuable and much-appreciated opportunity,” sophomore Preslie White said afterward. “The breakfasts are a great chance for our voices to be heard by people who can directly act to make changes for the better. For example, our comments from last year were taken so seriously that I’ve heard of many specific changes that were made as a result, just within a single year.”

Classmate Paige Jones agreed: “The breakfasts are a great way to bridge the gap between students and administration, while also giving students a chance to have their concerns addressed.”

Students also share praise for faculty and learning experiences during the breakfasts. Approximately 50 faculty members were mentioned by name last year, and the tradition of giving shout-outs to highly appreciated educators will continue in Dr. Westfall’s weekly Accolades emails, starting this week!

Pictured above: Students pause for a photo with COM leaders after breakfast. Front row, from left: Zeytun Guyo, Aubrie Hanson, Preslie White, Paige Jones and Nick Wary. Behind them are Richard P. Wheeler, M.D., Executive Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Christopher Westfall, M.D., Dean; and James Graham, M.D., Associate Dean for Undergraduate Medical Education.
Dr. Teresita Bellido Returning to UAMS as Chair of Physiology & Biophysics in 2020

Teresita Bellido, Ph.D., has been named the next Professor and Chair of the Department of Physiology and Biophysics. She will be at UAMS full-time by July 1, 2020, succeeding Michael Jennings, Ph.D., who is retiring after 25 years of service.

Dr. Michael Birrer to Join Faculty as Director of the Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute

Internationally recognized medical oncologist Michael Birrer, M.D., Ph.D., has been named Vice Chancellor and Director of the UAMS Winthrop P. Rockefeller Cancer Institute. Dr. Birrer specializes in gynecologic cancers and will join the university by the end of the year.

Editor's note: This issue features some of the faculty members who have joined us this summer and fall. We will continue to introduce new colleagues in the months ahead.

Yasser Salem, M.D., has rejoined the Department of Anesthesiology as an Associate Professor.

Viviana Suarez, M.D., has joined the Department of Family and Preventive Medicine as an Assistant Professor.

Joseph A. Henske, M.D., has joined the Department of Internal Medicine as an Associate Professor and Director of the Diabetes Program in the Division of Endocrinology and Metabolism.

Ragesh Thandassery, M.D., has joined the Department of Internal Medicine as an Assistant Professor and transplant hepatologist in the Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology.

Ian Crane, M.D., has joined the Department of Internal Medicine as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine.

Franklin John Gray Jr., M.D., has joined the Department of Internal Medicine as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine.
Bhawna Jha, M.D., has joined the Department of Neurology as an Assistant Professor and pain management specialist in the Neurosciences Service Line.

Sean Morell, M.D., has joined the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery as an Assistant Professor.

Deepak Choudhary, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Emergency Medicine.

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Ethan Gillett, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Emergency Medicine.

Farnaz Norozian M.D., M.S., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Emergency Medicine.

Samuel Boston, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Gastroenterology.

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Abdul R. Shahein, M.D., M.Sc., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Gastroenterology.

Megan Butler, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Associate Professor in the Division of Gastroenterology.

David Douglass, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hematology and Oncology.

READ MORE
Julia Killingsworth, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Hospital Medicine. READ MORE

Megan Baber, D.O., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Neonatology. READ MORE

Paul Manbeck, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Neurology. READ MORE

Zena Ghazala, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Pulmonology. READ MORE

Matthew Pertzborn, M.D., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Pulmonology. READ MORE

Lindsay Mohney, D.O., has joined the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation as an Assistant Professor. READ MORE

Molly Reeves, M.D., has joined the Department of Psychiatry as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. READ MORE

Melissa Kost, M.D., has joined the Department of Surgery as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Trauma/Critical Care Surgery. READ MORE

Recent Grants

Congratulations to the College of Medicine faculty members who received new extramural grants in August. This monthly list, courtesy of the Office of the Executive Associate Dean for Research, excludes industry trials and awards under $10,000.
Merideth Addicott, Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, Distress Tolerance and Smoking Cessation, NIH/Nat. Inst. on Drug Abuse (08/15/2019 – 05/31/2024), $1,737,101.

John Arthur, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Internal Medicine, Development of biomarkers for improved classification of proliferative lupus nephritis, NIH/Nat. Inst. of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases (07/26/2019 – 06/30/2020), $90,974. Pass through from Arkana Laboratories.

Joseph Bonner, Ph.D., Department of Biomedical Informatics, Bonner Fellowship, M2Gen (01/01/2019 – 12/31/2019), $137,540. Pass through from University of Southern California.

Xiawei Ou, Ph.D., Department of Radiology, Effects of Maternal Obesity and Inflammation on Offspring Brain Development, NIH/ Nat. Inst. Child Health and Human Dev., (08/10/2019 – 06/30/2024), $3,120,876.

Latunja Sockwell, Department of Family and Preventive Medicine, Project HEAL, Dept. of Health and Human Services/ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (09/30/2019 – 09/29/2024), 2,499,994.

Congratulations to College of Medicine faculty members who received UAMS breast cancer research awards:

Justin Wai Chung Leung, PhD., Department of Radiation Oncology, Mechanistic Characterization of BRCA1 Regulation at Damaged Chromatin (09/01/2019 – 08/31/2020) $190,950.

Angus MacNicol, PhD., Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences, Identification of Agents Selectively Active Toward Breast Cancer Stem Cells through Single Cell mRNA Sequencing of Organoid Cultures (09/01/2019 – 08/31/2020) $75,000.
Have you read the latest Accolades from Dean Christopher T. Westfall, M.D.? 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 Dr. Westfall via COM Internal Communications!

These UAMS team members and students were named in Accolades this month:

- Antiño Allen
- Jason Arthur
- Sirish Bennuri
- Michael Birrer
- Jace Bradshaw
- Olivia Brasher
- Dustin Brown
- Mary Burgess
- Jessica Bursk
- Marcia Byers
- Heejung Choi
- Stuart Cobb
- Drake Cullum
- Ray Dillon
- John Domhoffer
- Amber Marshall Fluharty
- Jerad Gardner
- Stephanie Gardner
- Elizabeth Gath
- Lane Gay
- Jennifer Gess
- Johnathan Goree
- Terry Harville
- Ronda Henry-Tillman
- Caitlin Hirsh
- Robert Hopkins
- Aubrey Hough
- Robin Howell
- April Hughes
- Jennifer Hunt
- Laura Hutchins
- Diane Jarrett
- Donald Johann
- Stephen Kahler
- Danviona King
- Jennifer Kleiner
- Daniel Knight
- Shashank Kraleti
- Jonathan Laryea
- Jennifer Laudadio
- Zachary Lewis
- Kate Liebmann
- Matthew Lindberg
- Lea Mabry
- Spyridoula Maraka
- Alex Marshall
- Jared McEllish
- Joel McGowan
- Steppie Mehta
- Priya Mendiratta
- Erick Messias
- Rebecca Moreira
- Mayumi Nakagawa
- Matthew Nix
- Kalpana Padala
- Cameron Parsley
- Anjali Patel
- Chris Paul
- Suman Peela
- Erika Petersen
- Paige Plumley
- Charles Matthew Quick
- Mildred Randolph
- Bobbie Rhodes-Clark
- Gregory Robinson
- Jose Romero
- Shannon Rose
- Ashley Sanders
- Allison Schneider
- Amy Scott
- G. Richard Smith
- Laturja Sockwell
- Jordan Spencer
- Karam Sra
- Kandi Stallings-Archer
- Leslie Stone
- Joseph Su
- Alan Tackett
- Sara Tariq
- Billy Thomas
- Marie Tippett
- Frits van Rhee
- Bill Ventres
- George Vilanilam
- Kent Westbrook
- Blake Wiggins
- Eva Woodward
- Linda Worley
- Fen Xia
- Musa Yilanli

These COM departments were represented in Accolades this month:

- Anesthesiology
- Biochemistry/Molecular Biology
- Biomedical Informatics
- Emergency Medicine
- Family/Preventive Medicine
- Geriatrics
- Internal Medicine
- Neurosurgery
- Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery
- Pathology
- Pediatrics
- Psychiatry
- Radiation Oncology
- Radiology
- Surgery

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In Memoriam

May Griebel, M.D., a retired longtime Professor of Pediatrics who was instrumental in developing the Sleep Disorder Center at Arkansas Children's Hospital, died September 14. Dr. Griebel graduated from the College of Medicine in 1983 and stayed at UAMS and ACH for her residency. She completed a fellowship in neurology with a focus in child neurology, sleep and epilepsy at Duke University. Dr. Griebel returned to Arkansas and joined the faculty in 1990. She served for many years as Medical Director of the Sleep Center, one of the nation’s first certified pediatric sleep centers, and also served as Co-Director of the Epilepsy Program. She retired in 2012 and was awarded ACH’s Ruth Olive Beall Award.

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The COMmunication is published monthly to highlight key initiatives and developments in the COM, to introduce new faculty members and leaders, and to celebrate major professional honors and awards. The Dean’s Office works in partnership with designated newsletter liaisons throughout the COM. To find your department’s contact, read our submission guidelines or view past issues, visit the COMmunication webpage.

Comments, questions and suggestions for improvements are always welcome. Call Tamara Robinson, Senior Communications Writer, at 528-5163, or click the red button below to email the COMmunication.