P&T Perfection - Faculty Promotions Set Records

It's a brand new year, and 2020 is already a record-setter for faculty in the College of Medicine. An all-time high of 76 faculty members requested promotion in academic rank, and 100% of the requests were approved – a first since the COM began tracking promotion and tenure (P&T) metrics many years ago.

On July 1, a record 31 faculty members will become full Professors. Another 45 will be promoted from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor.

“Several factors contributed to this unprecedented success rate,” said Erick Messias, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs. “First, the faculty members applying for P&T not only worked for years and demonstrated excellence in our core missions, but also did a great job of documenting this excellence.”

Dr. Messias commended departmental P&T committees for their work to vet initial requests and ensure that their department presented faculty for promotion at the right time. “Our department chairs also were key, not only for creating the environment for faculty to flourish, but also by supporting P&T requests with very strong and detailed chair letters,” he said. He also thanked the COM P&T Committee, which includes 16 tenured professors, for their hard work and thoughtful review of applicants.

“Congratulations to all of our superb faculty members receiving promotion this year,” said Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean Christopher T. Westfall, M.D. “And thanks as well to the many faculty and staff members across the college who worked very hard to make this year's P&T such a great success.”

SEE WHO'S BEING PROMOTED | Click here or on a department link below.
Anesthesiology  
Biochemistry/Molecular Biology  
Biostatistics  
Dentistry  
Emergency Medicine  
Family/Preventive Medicine  
Geriatrics  
Internal Medicine  
Medical Humanities  
Microbiology/Immunology  
Neurobiology/Developmental Sciences  
Neurology  
Neurosurgery  
Obstetrics/Gynecology  
Ophthamology  
Orthopaedic Surgery  
Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery  
Pathology  
Pediatrics  
Psychiatry  
Radiation Oncology  
Radiology  
Surgery  
Urology

Editor’s note: We will highlight faculty members receiving Professor Emeritus status in a future publication.

Back to the Top

In the Spotlight

UAMS honored Department of Geriatrics colleagues AmyLeigh Overton-McCoy, Ph.D., APRN, and Priya Mendiratta, M.D., M.P.H., at a double investiture ceremony on January 16.

Dr. Overton-McCoy was invested in the Murphy Endowed Chair for Rural Aging Leadership and Policy. READ MORE

Dr. Mendiratta was invested in the Alexa L. & William T. Dillard Distinguished Chair in Geriatrics. READ MORE
Thomas Frazier, M.D., Assistant Professor of Orthopaedic Surgery, was invested as the inaugural recipient of the G. Thomas Frazier, M.D., Chair in Hand and Upper Extremity Surgery on December 19.

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Science as Art
It looks like something conjured by the imagination, or perhaps an other-worldly landscape. But this award-winning artistic image actually has roots in the laboratory and creative minds of researchers at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences.

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Leadership Appointments

Paul H. Phillips, M.D., has been appointed Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology and Director of the Harvey & Bernice Jones Eye Institute.

"Dr. Phillips brings exceptional strengths to his new post as a highly respected leader in pediatric ophthalmology, strabismus and neuro-ophthalmology, and as a member of our faculty for the past 22 years," said UAMS Executive Vice Chancellor and College of Medicine Dean Christopher T. Westfall, M.D.

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Daniel Voth, Ph.D., has been appointed Chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology.

"Dr. Voth has done an excellent job serving as Interim Chair since the retirement of former chair Kevin Young, Ph.D., last July and will bring his strong leadership skills, scientific expertise, collegiality and institutional dedication to his post as Chair," said UAMS Executive Vice Chancellor and College of Medicine Dean Christopher T. Westfall, M.D.

Beatrice Boateng, Ph.D., a leader in program evaluation and faculty assessment at UAMS, has been named Assistant Dean for Faculty Assessment and Evaluation in the College of Medicine.

"Dr. Boateng brings incredible expertise to her new role," said Erick Messias, M.D., Ph.D., M.P.H., Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

Rawle A. "Tony" Seupaul, M.D., has been named Chief Clinical Officer for UAMS Medical Center.

"Dr. Seupaul has been an exemplary head of our Emergency Medicine program for the past six years," said Steppe Mette, M.D., senior vice chancellor for UAMS Health and UAMS Medical Center CEO. "This promotion allows us to leverage his medical expertise and leadership skills across our inpatient and outpatient operations."
Anjali Patwardhan, M.D., M.Sc., M.B.A., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as Professor and Director of the Division of Pediatric Rheumatology.

Dr. Patwardhan was recruited from the University of Missouri School of Medicine in Columbia, where she served most recently as Associate Professor and Director of Pediatric Rheumatology. Among other leadership posts, she served as Director of Operational Quality in the Division of Child Health.

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Jay K. Bhama, M.D., has joined the Department of Surgery as Professor and Chief of the Division of Cardiovascular Surgery.

Dr. Bhama, a nationally recognized heart surgeon and leader in cardiovascular health care, will lead the cardiovascular program at UAMS by working alongside Paul Mounsey, M.D., Director of the Division of Cardiovascular Medicine.

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Destiny Chau, M.D., has joined the Department of Anesthesiology as a Professor in the Division of Pediatric Cardiovascular Anesthesia.

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Meera Gangadharan, M.D., has joined the Department of Anesthesiology as an Assistant Professor in the Division of Pediatric Cardiovascular Anesthesia.

READ MORE

Neeraj Kumar, M.D., has joined the Department of Anesthesiology as an Assistant Professor.

READ MORE
Regina Gibson, Ph.D., has joined the Department of Geriatrics as an Assistant Professor.

READ MORE

Wesley Cox, M.D., has joined the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery as an Assistant Professor and leader of the Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine team in Fayetteville.

READ MORE

Chad Songy, M.D., has joined the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery as an Assistant Professor practicing with the Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine team in Fayetteville.

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David Spiro, M.D., M.P.H., has joined the Department of Pediatrics as a Professor in the Division of Emergency Medicine.

READ MORE

Back to the Top

Recent Grants

Extramural Awards

Congratulations to the College of Medicine faculty members who received new extramural grants in December. This list, courtesy of the Office of the Executive Associate Dean for Research, excludes industry trials and awards under $10,000.
Robert Blasier, M.D., Department of Orthopedic Surgery, AO Basic Trauma Course – Interns 2020, Medical Business Services, Inc. (01/16/2020 – 03/31/2020), $10,000.


Melda Onal, Ph.D., Department of Physiology and Biophysics, CRISPR inhibition as an alternate for Cre-loxP, NIH/Nat. Inst. of Arthritis & Musculoskeletal & Skin Diseases (01/01/2020 – 12/31/2021), $367,180.

AmyLeigh Overton-McCoy, Ph.D., APRN, Department of Geriatrics, Ft. Smith 1st Methodist Church Outreach, Fort Smith First United Methodist Church (11/01/2019 – 10/31/2020), $16,000.

Intramural Awards

Congratulations to the College of Medicine faculty members who received new intramural grants in December. This list, courtesy of the Office of the Executive Associate Dean for Research, includes awards of $10,000 or more.

UAMS Foundation/ Medical Research Endowment Awards
Roger Pechous, Ph.D., Department of Microbiology and Immunology, Characterizing the Role of the Novel Yersinia Pestis Virulence Factor BipA During Primary Pneumonic Plague, $15,000.

Analiz Rodriguez, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Neurosurgery, $14,000

Aravindhan Veerapandiyan, M.D., Department of Pediatrics, Blood Neurofilaments as Biomarkers of Spinal Muscular Atrophy Disease Activity in Neonates, $15,700.

Michael Wilson, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Emergency Medicine, $11,500.

COM Intramural Awards
(01/01/2020 – 12/31/2020)

Hornick Endowment Award:
Kevin Raney, Ph.D., Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Elucidating a novel signaling mechanism for cellular damage during stroke, $50,000.

Barton Pilot Award:
Erin Mannen, Ph.D., Department of Orthopedic Surgery, Biomechanical implications of long cervical fusions: where should they end?, $25,000.

Angela Odle, Ph.D., Department of Neurobiology and Developmental Sciences, Metabolic programming of female reproduction: Leptin regulation of gonadotrope maturation and function, $24,365.

Craig Porter, Ph.D., Department of Pediatrics, Development and Characterization of a Rodent Model of Muscle Carnitine Deficiency, $25,000.

Sturgis Foundation Award:
Hari Eswaran, Ph.D., Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Effect of maternal pregestational diabetes on fetal brain development, $25,000.

Christopher Long, Ph.D., Department of Psychiatry, Healthy Food Pilot to Improve Glycemic Control with Food Pantry Clients, $60,938.

Pearl McElfish, Ph.D., Department of Internal Medicine, Evaluation of the feasibility and effectiveness of diabetes self-management education and support delivered by community health workers in the RMI, $60,000.

Rosalia Simmen, Ph.D., Department of Physiology and Biophysics, Co-Morbidity of Diabetes and Endometriosis, $25,000.

ACRI Internal Awards

Eva Diaz Fuentes, Ph.D., Department of Pediatrics, Effects of Wild Blueberry Supplementation on Immune Responses of Children With Low Fruit and Vegetable Consumption, (12/01/2019 - 8/31/2020), $37,360.

Graham Strub, M.D., Ph.D., Department of Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery, Perspective of Patient and Parent Regarding Incidental Papillary Lesions in Thyroid, $25,000.
Accolades

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:

Noor Akhter  
Paul Bucolo  
Rebecca Cantu  
Karina Clemmons  
Alice Faye Crowder  
Ryan Dare  
Mari Davidson  
David Davies  
Erica Dewey  
Alan Diekman  
Breyanna Dulaney  
Andrea Easom  
Ashley Elser  
Stanley Ellis  
Robert Eoff  
Diana Escalona-Vargas  
Lauren Evans  
Jacob Filipke  
Eudice Fontenot  
Rachael Freeze-Ramsey  
Edgar Garcia-Rill  
Laura James  
Sarah Johnson  
Jerrilyn Jones  
Heather Highsmith  
Antonio Howard  
Laura Hutchins  
Thomas Kiser  
Jennifer Kleiner  
Anuradha Kunthur  
Becky Latch  
Rani Lindberg  
Nirvana Manning  
Spyridoula Maraka  
Bobby McGehee  
Joel McGowan  
Anna Mears  
Jay Mehta  
Priya Mendiratta  
Cynthia Mercado  
Erick Messias  
Jill Mhyre  
Amir Mian  
AmyLeigh Overton-Mc Coy  
Prasad Padala  
Paul Parcon  
Tamara Perry  
Kevin Phelan  
Irina Pokrovskaya  
Naga Venkata K. Pothineni  
Jeanne Rabalais  
Sung Rhee  
Gresham Richter  
Jose Romero  

These COM departments were represented in Accolades this month:

Anesthesiology  
Biochemistry/Mol. Biology  
Emergency Medicine  
Family Medicine/Regional Programs  
Geriatrics  
Internal Medicine  
Medical Humanities  
Neurobiology/Dev. Sciences  
Neurology  
Obstetrics/Gynecology  
Otolaryngology-Head/Neck Surgery  
Pediatrics  
Pharmacology/Toxicology  
Physical Medicine/Rehabilitation  
Physiology/Biophysics  
Psychiatry  

Back to the Top
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 526-5163, or click the red button below to email the COMmunication.

Comments? Ideas? Email Us!

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Back to the Top