

Lerner Trainee Newsletter

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This newsletter is written by members of the Lerner Trainee Association Communications Committee. We welcome your questions and suggestions!

Email LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org connect with us.

Love (for science) is in the air!

While February is likely most notable for Valentine's day, there is a lot to love in this issue of the LTA newsletter!

In this issue, we feature post-doctoral fellow Dr. Anushruti Ashok and doctoral student Edelyn Park, along with LRI alum Dr. Sivakumar Vijayaraghavalu.

We highlight both the first LTA General Election results and the kick-off of Heart Health month, which featured "LRI Wear Red" day in support of women's heart health, among other recent events.

In Upcoming Events, we feature the CBTA 2024 Networking Day at Case, and the Northeastern Ohio Science and Engineering Fair 2024 at CSU. We have also recently added an Opportunities section which summarizes all the funding and grant opportunities that have been advertised in LRI in the past and have upcoming deadlines.

Our monthly feature presents a Q&A with Dr. Saqib Sachani, the Associate Director of Business Development and Licensing at CCF Innovations. Our readers who are interested in inventing but may be intimidated by the process can find his excellent advice at the end of this section.

Lastly, we are proud to spotlight the endeavors undertaken by our LTA members over the past 1.5 years, as we strive to keep the momentum and make even bigger waves in 2024.

If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please reach out to us at LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org.



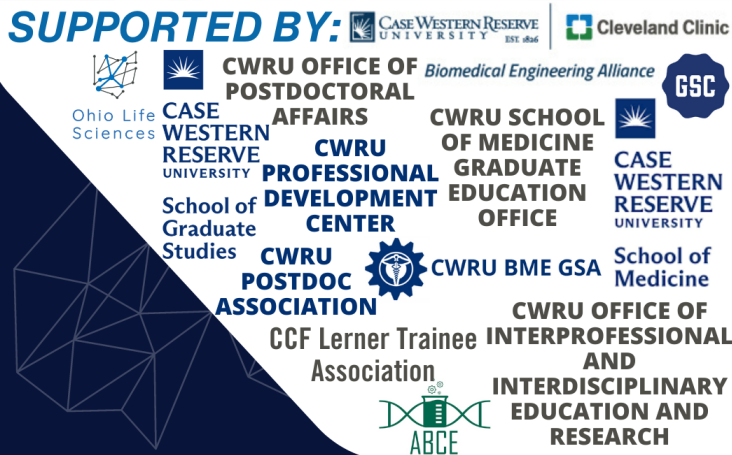
Join our LinkedIn Group

The Lerner Postdoc and Grad Student Alumni Network on LinkedIn is a group of current and former postdoctoral fellows, research scholars and graduate students at Cleveland Clinic Lerner Research Institute. We share opportunities for career development, networking and highlighting our scientific achievements. We also post reminders about upcoming events, so be sure to turn on notifications! [Request to join here.](#)

Upcoming Events



CBTA 2024 Networking Day



NETWORKING DAY

MAR 6

**TINKHAM VEALE
UNIVERSITY CENTER
BALLROOMS**

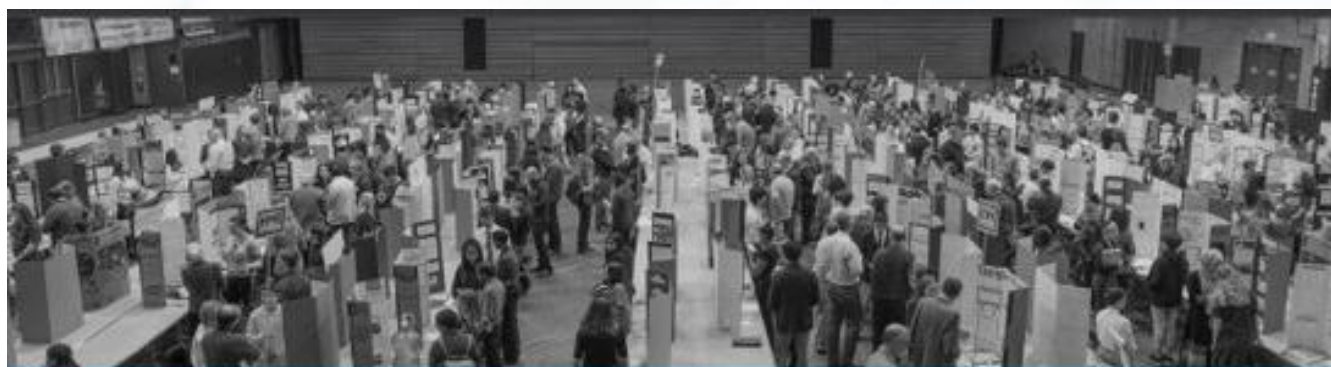


A follow up to the 2023 Professional Development Conference in October, this event will provide a space for trainees to utilize their learned networking skills to interact with industry representatives in a variety of forms.

Register Now!



Upcoming Events



LRI Trainee Outreach Opportunity

Northeastern Ohio Science and Engineering Fair 2024

March 11th – 12th at Cleveland State University

Calling all main campus LRI postdocs, research scholars, and PhD students!
The science fair is being held in person this year.

Monday, March 11th

10AM - 1PM

Setting up the gym

1PM – 8PM

Student registration (*shifts can be as short as two hours*)

Tuesday, March 12th

1:30PM – 5:45PM

LRI Special Awards Judging

3PM – 6PM

Reception set up (*Non-judges only; heavy lifting may be involved*)

Upcoming Events

The Postdoc Academy Course

"Succeeding as a Postdoc"

March 18 - April 29



BUx: The Postdoc Academy: Succeeding as a Postdoc

Create a rewarding postdoc experience that will launch you into your chosen career path by developing strategies and skills to successfully navigate your time as a postdoc.



The Postdoc Academy is the first professional development online course built specifically for and created with postdocs. This FREE course provides skill development for postdocs from orientation to their next career step. Using inclusive, active-learning approaches, participants in this course will build skills to (1) find success as a postdoc, (2) draft an actionable career plan, (3) develop resilience, and (4) work effectively in an intercultural environment. This course explores the research related to postdoc success and guides participants in applying it to their environments. Connect to experiences of the postdoc community through the Postdoc Academy!

Register [here](#).

What you'll learn

- Explore identities and roles you hold and how they impact your work environment;
- Identify strategies to transition into your new postdoc community and align your expectations with those of your mentor;
- Apply career planning tools effectively and create an actionable plan that can both guide and be integrated into day-to-day practice;
- Develop and implement an action plan to support progress on personal or professional goals that effectively build and sustain resilience;
- Reflect on your own professional and personal identities and explore how to cultivate and support an inclusive research environment.

Upcoming Events



BenMed Program

The goal of the BenMed Program at Benedictine High School is to expose students to medical or medical-adjacent careers, to enhance their college choice and provide networking. They have a particular interest in exposing students to medical research. Most of BenMed's activity is in the form of seminars from 11-11:35 am on Wednesday or Thursday. They also are happy to facilitate on-site visits or shadowing, if possible, but there may be some regulatory hurdles for high school students that are sometimes prohibitive. (Any interested parties for an onsite visit will need to work in more detail with Dr. Misko in the Graduate Education Office, CWRU.)

The seminar format is a 20-minute talk followed by 10 minutes for Q&A. Trainees could also do ask-me-anything sessions with very little presentation, if someone wants to do that.

Below are some example topics:

- Biomedical research summary
- Overview of specialized medicine (e.g. orthopedics vs cardiology)
- Surgical/procedural/treatment/lab techniques
- Diagnostic techniques/pathology
- FDA approval process for drugs/treatments
- Career summary (what it's like to be a...)
- Overview of an ambulance/clinic/lab

They would be happy to have doctors, nurses, lab technicians, technologists, post-docs, paramedics, or other staff. The goal is to stoke the fires of their student's interest.

[Please sign up here if you are interested in this outreach opportunity.](#)

Anyone who is interested in participating can reach out to Dr. Tessianna Misko (tam37@case.edu) or Alicia Santin (axa1059@case.edu) and put their name on the document above. They will then reach out with scheduling information for those who are interested.

Recent Events

Lerner Lunchtime Linkup kick-off with treats and Legos



We recently introduced Lego to our Lerner Lunchtime Linkups (LLL), and it has been a super hit!

This month's LLL was held on February 7th and had an attendance from 61 trainees. To go along with the delicious treats from Insomnia Cookies, we served Starbucks coffee. It is heartwarming to see different corners of LRI come together at this event.



Between all the research and adulting, it is important to take a deep breath and forget stress for a few minutes. LTA Social/Outreach subcommittee is glad to bring to you this opportunity to mingle with fellow trainees. LLL is a monthly event which takes place every first Wednesday of the month. So, join us and bring your friends for a fun time with coffee, treats and Legos at the next LLL!



Recent Events



American
Heart
Association

Wear Red Day

Heart disease is the leading cause of death among Americans, with nearly 45% of women over the age of 20 living with some form of heart disease or stroke. Our researchers are working diligently to innovate the future of heart care.



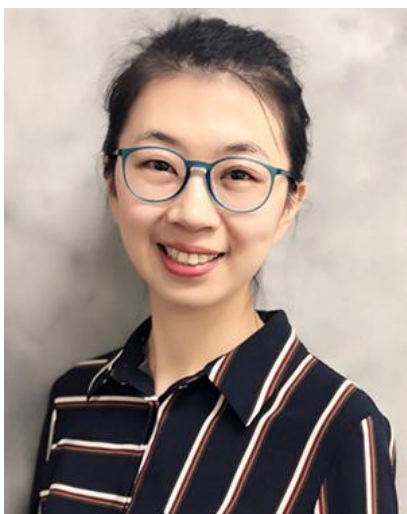
LRI celebrated the kick-off of Heart Health Month.

Recent Events

The New LTA Executive Board

The first ever **LTA General Elections** were held this month. Thank you to all the trainees for making it a success!

Congratulations to the newly elected Board Members!



Postdoc Co-President
Jia Liu, PhD



Graduate Student Co-President
Hope Zehr



Treasurer
Noah Dubasik



Coordinator
Molly Guthrie

Recent Events

2024 CC-BioR Award Winners!

The [Cleveland Clinic BioRepository](#) (CC-BioR) has named two recipients of the 2024 CC-BioR Award, who will work directly with the CC-BioR to collect and store biospecimens and related data from 1,000 research participants over the next one to two years.

The award is given to two teams annually and provides support including participant recruitment, specimen storage, and sample organization and analysis. Each award is co-led by a basic and clinical researcher, with the long-term goal of enabling researchers to collect preliminary data and attract external funding.

The CC-BioR surpassed more than 800,000 specimens collected this year. The CC-BioR supports Cleveland Clinic's global research growth and sustainability through supporting collecting and storing data and biospecimens, one of the most critical steps in the research process.

The 2024 awardees are:

Obesity Surgery BioRepository

[Ali Aminian, MD](#) and [Daniel Rotroff, PhD](#)



CCF Sarcoma Biorepository (CC-BioSarc)

[Zachary Burke, MD](#) and [Jacob Scott, MD, DPhil](#)





Meet your Fellow

Anushruti Ashok

PhD

Where are you from?

I was born and raised in Gorakhpur, an ancient city located in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP), India.

What is your educational background?

I have a Master's degree in Biotechnology from Bundelkhand University, Jhansi, India. After qualifying for the Dept. of Biotechnology (DBT) fellowship with an All India Rank of 65, I received a PhD fellowship and pursued my PhD from the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR), Delhi in the field of Biological sciences specifically neurotoxicology.

What did your graduate research focus on?

My graduate research focused on understanding the role of chronic exposure of heavy metal mixture, namely Arsenic (As), cadmium (Cd) and lead (Pb) through drinking water on developing rat brain. My research highlighted that long term exposure of metal mixture synergistically accelerate amyloidogenesis in different brain regions, cognitive impairment and early-onset Alzheimer's Disease-like pathology. Additionally, I worked on various project as a lead investigator to explore different mechanistic pathways involved in the pathogenesis of neurodegenerative diseases (AD, demyelination) and cerebrovascular diseases (cerebral hypoperfusion, hypoxia).

How did you decide to pursue your current postdoc at Cleveland Clinic?

After finishing my PhD, I started working as a neuropathologist at Case Western Reserve University in 2018. My goal was to elucidate structural differences in the disease-causing distinct misfolded amyloid-beta ($A\beta$) deposition in the rapidly progressive and slow progressive Alzheimer's Disease (rpAD and sAD) cases. I also wanted to explore different avenues of translational research in the field of neurodegenerative, cardiovascular, and

cerebrovascular disease pathology. Therefore, I joined the Department of Biomedical Engineering at Lerner Research Institute in 2020 with the goal of expanding my knowledge of disease pathology and skill sets. I began working on a thromboembolic rat stroke model to determine the thrombolytic and neuroprotective effects of a novel drug formulation of tissue plasminogen activator (t-PA) conjugated to antioxidants, such as superoxide dismutase and catalase nanoparticles.

Which lab do you work in and for how long have you been a part of this team?

I am working in Dr. Prasad's laboratory. I have been with this fantastic institution for four years now, and I am fortunate to be a part!

What is your current research focus?

I am currently exploring the mechanistic regulation of Beta-adrenergic receptor (β 1Ars) by phosphoinositide 3-kinase (PI3K) in cardiac hypertrophy and heart failure. Along with that, I am also investigating downstream signaling pathways mediated by the immuno-allosteric modulation of β 1Ars by autoantibodies.

Do you have any recent accomplishments in your current position?

I have so far published two articles as a postdoc at LRI, one as the first author and the other as a co-author. My first author article is one of the most cited and Editor's choice articles published in Antioxidant journal. I recently received a promotion to staff research associate.

What do you like to do outside of the laboratory?

I enjoy spending time with my daughter the most. I also like to play music and dance. I presently serve as a communication committee member of Lerner Trainee Association.

Meet your Graduate Student

Edelyn Park



Where are you from?

I'm originally from Seoul, Korea, where I spent my early years. For my undergraduate studies, I ventured to the United States, attending institutions in both Texas and Maryland. Following that, I pursued my master's degree in Rhode Island. Currently, I reside in Cleveland, where I am working towards my PhD.

What is your educational background?

I hold a Bachelor of Science's degree, with a major in Health Science Profession concentrated in Public Health, from the Texas Tech University System, specifically Angelo State University and Johns Hopkins University. After completing my undergraduate education, I pursued and obtained a Master's degree in Biotechnology from Brown University. My undergrad and graduate research focused on HIV and malaria drug and vaccine development, reflecting my commitment to addressing global health challenges. In 2022, I further advanced my academic pursuits by enrolling in the Molecular Medicine Program at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine and Case Western Reserve University, where I am currently engaged in cutting-edge research.

Which lab do you work in and for how long have you been a part of this team?

I am affiliated with the Scott Cameron Laboratory in the Department of Cardiovascular Metabolomic Science. My tenure at this laboratory commenced in May of 2023, marking my involvement in a team dedicated to pioneering research in cardiovascular platelet biology.

How did you decide on the Cleveland Clinic?

My decision to pursue my PhD at the Cleveland Clinic was profoundly influenced by my previous experience as a summer fellow at the institution during my undergraduate studies. I was deeply impressed by the Clinic's comprehensive approach to training students

from diverse geographic backgrounds and its commitment to translational research that bridges the gap between clinical practice and laboratory science. The opportunity to observe firsthand the Clinic's dedication to 'bed-to-bench' research initiatives solidified my interest in focusing on translational research for my doctoral studies. Consequently, this led me to join the Molecular Medicine Program, where I could further my research in an environment that prioritizes the direct application of scientific discoveries to patient care.

What is your current research focus?

My research is focused on the study of platelet biology, specifically investigating the role of platelet microparticles (PMPs) in Fibromuscular Dysplasia (FMD) and Spontaneous Coronary Artery Dissection (SCAD). These conditions, known for their unclear triggers and lack of definitive treatments, significantly increase the risk of stroke and transient ischemic attacks (TIA). My work explores how alterations in blood flow and vessel integrity in FMD and SCAD may activate platelets and release PMPs, contributing to thrombosis. The aim is to understand the interaction between platelets and endothelial cells through PMPs, potentially offering new insights into preventing thrombotic events in patients with these conditions.

What do you like to do outside of the work?

Outside of my lab work, I pursue interests that enhance my well-being and offer opportunities for social engagement. I particularly enjoy rock climbing and restaurants exploring with my friends. Additionally, I explore Cleveland's cultural and natural landmarks, from its renowned art museum and Severance Hall to the tranquil settings of Edgewater Park and the Cleveland Metroparks.



Meet your Alum

Sivakumar Vijayaraghavalu

PhD

Where did you obtain your PhD?

I was awarded my PhD in 2006 from University of Madras, India, in Biomedical Genetics.

When did you work in Lerner and in which lab? What positions did you hold?

My tenure at the LRI spanned from being a Post-doctoral Fellow (2007-2012), followed by Research Associate (2013-2019), under Dr. Labhassetwar in the Department of Biomedical Engineering.

What did you work on at Lerner?

Within the LRI, my scholarly activities were primarily focused on cancer nanomedicine with a particular emphasis on evaluating the potential of epigenetic drug delivery systems to overcome drug resistance and prevent metastatic spread. Furthermore, I contributed significantly to a NIH-sponsored initiative aimed at devising nanoparticle-based delivery systems for the targeted treatment of bone metastasis of prostate cancer. My research responsibilities also extended to the development of nanoparticles.

What successes did you have at Lerner?

I successfully published 14 research articles. One of my articles published in Biomaterials was distinguished as an Editor's choice article. I am also a co-inventor on a US patent and was bestowed with an innovator award by the CCF for the development of the decitabine-nanogel delivery system.

What is your current position title and where are you now?

I currently hold the position of Associate Professor at Manipur University (Dept. Of Life Sciences), India. I am also proud to serve as an adjunct professor at IIT Madras, Tamil Nadu, India.

What does your role in your current position entail and what is your favorite part?

Currently, I am dedicated to both teaching and research. My research pursuits are centered around nanomedicine, gene polymorphisms and their implications for drug resistance in cancer. Teaching is not just a duty to me; it's a passion. The fulfillment I derive from delivering an engaging lecture, coupled with the eagerness and responsive engagement of my students, is immensely rewarding.

What about your time at the Lerner do you think prepared you for this position?

My tenure at Lerner provided a comprehensive foundation that has been instrumental in shaping my current academic role. The rigorous training in independently managing research projects endowed me with the skills necessary to navigate complex scientific inquiries with autonomy, coupled with the responsibility of guiding new lab members. Moreover, the CCF's steadfast commitment to diversity and inclusivity profoundly influenced my professional ethos. This exposure enables me to foster an environment that respects and celebrates the rich cultural tapestry of Manipur, North-East India.

Is there something you particularly miss from your time at Lerner?

The nurturing policy towards its employees and trainees at LRI is unparalleled. The wealth of resources and the conducive work environment provided an ideal setting for research.

In one sentence, what advice would you give current Lerner postdoc?

Embrace the GRIT mantra: Growth, Resilience, Innovation, and Teamwork.

Accomplishments

Congratulations to Christopher Benson from the Schmit Lab in the Department of Genomic Medicine!

Chris was selected for the "2024 AACR Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award" to support his participation in the American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting 2024 in San Diego, California.

<https://www.aacr.org/professionals/meetings/aacr-travel-grants/aacr-minority-scholar-in-cancer-research-awards/>



Congratulations to Dr. Phillip Awodutire from the Kattan Lab in the Department of Quantitative Health Sciences!

The recent article by Dr. Awodutire titled "An Accelerated Failure Time Model to Predict Cause-Specific Survival and Prognostic Factors of Lung and Bronchus Cancer Patients with at Least Bone or Brain Metastases: Development and Internal Validation Using a SEER-Based Study" was published in *Cancers(Basel)*.

<https://doi.org/10.3390/cancers16030668>

We love celebrating trainee accomplishments! To submit your own news or to recognize someone else, email

LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org

Accomplishments

Congratulations to Dr. Valeria Villabona & Dr. Barbara Dutra from the Wilson Lab in the Department of Ophthalmic Research!

The recent article by Dr. Villabona (left photo) & Dr. Dutra (right photo) titled "Topical Losartan Inhibition of Myofibroblast Generation in Rabbit Corneas With Acute Incisions" was published in *Cornea*. <https://doi.org/10.1097/ICO.0000000000003476>



Congratulations to Dr. Erica M. Orsini from the Scheraga Lab in the Department of Inflammation and Immunity!

The recent article by Dr. Orsini titled "TRPV4 Regulates the Macrophage Metabolic Response to Limit Sepsis-induced Lung Injury" was published in *American Journal of Respiratory Cell and Molecular Biology*. <https://doi.org/10.1165/rcmb.2023-0456OC>

Congratulations to Dr. Deepthi Mallela from the Hazen Lab in the Department of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Sciences!

Dr. Deepthi Mallela was recently promoted from a postdoctoral position to a Staff Research Associate position that starts in less than a month. She has successfully completed two years of her postdoctoral fellowship at LRI, and we wish her all the best for the adventures and endeavors that await her in the future!



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Opportunities

- **Cancer Research Institute Irvington**

- [Postdoctoral Fellowship Program](#), \$186,000/3yrs. Provide support to fund and train young immunologists and cancer immunologists. Deadline: **March 1, 2024**
- [Postdoctoral Fellowship to Promote Racial Diversity](#), \$186,000/3yrs. Provide support to fund and train young immunologists and cancer immunologists. Deadline: **March 1, 2024**
- [Immuno-Informatics Postdoctoral Fellowship](#), \$186,000/3yrs. Aims to support qualified young scientists at academic research institutions around the world who wish to receive dual training in immunology and data science. The fellowships will support both computational biologists who seek to strengthen their knowledge of immunology and cancer immunologists who seek training in computational biology, data science, and/or genomics under the mentorship of world-renowned scientists in these disciplines. Deadline: **March 1, 2024**

- **IGEN Travel Grant**

Are you a graduate student or postdoctoral scholar planning or interested in attending a national meeting and/or professional development event this year? If so, consider applying for an IGEN travel grant by **Friday, March 1st**. IGEN travel grants are intended to defray registration and travel costs for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students to attend a disciplinary national meeting and/or professional development event of the recipient's choice. Learn more and apply [here](#).

- **American Association for Cancer Research**

[Joanne Barlia Research Fellowship](#), \$130,000/2yrs. Intended to support a postdoctoral or clinical research fellow to conduct ocular/uveal melanoma research and to establish a successful career path in ophthalmology, ocular oncology, uveal melanoma biology, or a similar field. Deadline: **March 21, 2024**

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Opportunities

- **Velosano Fellowship (multiple)**

- [VeloSano Fellowship Grants 2024](#) encourages small research project applications focused on a training experience for a post-doctoral or clinical fellow in a cancer research laboratory or clinical program. Deadline: **March 4, 2024**
- [VeloSano Graduate Student Grants 2024](#) encourages small research project applications focused on a training experience for a graduate or medical student in a cancer research laboratory or clinical program. Deadline: **March 4, 2024**
- [VeloSano Summer Student Grants 2024](#) encourages small research project applications focused on a summer training experience for undergraduate and medical students in a cancer research laboratory or clinical program. Deadline: **March 4, 2024**

- **American Cancer Society**

[Postdoctoral Fellowship](#), \$216,000/3yrs. Support new investigators in research training programs to position them for independent careers in cancer research. As part of their evaluation, peer reviewers consider how well the fellowship will broaden the applicant's research training and experience. Deadline: **April 1, 2024**.

- **Global Center for Pathogen and Human Health Research**

The Global Center for Pathogen and Human Health Research is offering the 2nd annual opportunity to apply for funding in support of the training and career development of postdoctoral fellows. The purpose of this mechanism is to provide one early-career postdoctoral fellow each year a 2-year fellowship covering salary, fringe benefits, and the cost of a computer. No specific scientific research discipline required. **Please note-** This is a **nomination submission**. All interested postdoctoral candidates must be nominated by a CCF mentor PI with a primary appointment in LRI.

For more information, please reference the attached Request for Proposals. To submit your nomination, please visit the InfoReady link below. **All nominations must be submitted by the mentor PI by April 12, 2024.**

<https://ccf.infoready4.com/#competitionDetail/1930738>

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Opportunities

JOBS

- **Cancer Biology Researcher | Wake Forest Brain Tumor Center of Excellence:** is hiring multiple positions for basic science and translational researchers focusing on brain tumor therapies. The [job link](#) states that an established independent research program and active funding are requirements, but we're told that may not be the case depending on the candidate. If interested, you can reach out to [Dr. Bryan T. Mott](#), Neurosurgery Resident at Wake Forest, with any questions.
- **Tenure-Track Faculty Positions | University of Louisville:** The School of Medicine at the University of Louisville invites applications for tenure-track faculty positions in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the Assistant/Associate Professor level from applicants with research interests and a strong record of productivity in cancer immunology including clinical and experimental Immunotherapy, CAR-T cells, reprogramming of tumor microenvironment, and/or role of microbiome in cancer immunotherapy. Learn more [here](#).
- **Science Writer and Communications Specialist | Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee:** Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) is seeking a science writer and communications specialist who is interested in contributing to the advancement of supercomputing. This on-site position resides in ORNL's Communications Division and is matrixed to the Oak Ridge Leadership Computing Facility (OLCF), which is home to *Frontier*, the world's fastest supercomputer and first to exceed the exascale performance barrier. More information [here](#).

TEACHING

Spring 2024 Inclusive Teaching Course: Join the [Inclusive STEM Teaching Project](#) from March 4th – April 26th for the next course run by [enrolling here](#). Join the community of more than 11,000 faculty, postdocs, graduate students, and staff, and register for the online course this spring. By participating in this free course, you will learn how to advance your awareness, self-efficacy, and ability to cultivate inclusive classroom environments; support your development as a reflective, inclusive practitioner; engage in reflection and discussion around topics of equity and inclusion across a variety of institutional contexts; and implement inclusive teaching methods in your classes which will remove common barriers and enhance learning in STEM for all students. If you are interested in joining a learning community, please express that interest [here](#).

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Monthly feature



CCF Innovations

Hi LRI Trainees, we hope you have been staying warm and having a nice Cleveland winter! Cleveland Clinic Innovations (CCI) is the commercialization arm and tech transfer office of the Cleveland Clinic. Our strategic goal is to accelerate the delivery of lifechanging healthcare solutions to patients. We re-organized in 2021 to better serve inventor and to make innovation easier and more accessible for all caregivers. The results are new medical devices, therapeutics and diagnostics, and digital health solutions that drastically improve patient outcomes.

For this issue, we wanted to introduce and highlight CCI's Saqib Sachani, PhD, MBA, Associate Director, Business Development and Licensing and Life Science expert by providing a Q&A. For the past year, Saqib has been leading the charge to help establish a better commercialization pathway for research tools including cell lines, animal models, PDX models, and antibodies. If you or your lab has any technologies or tools that you think are unique, please reach out to us. Your LRI Engagement Partners (Morgan Carter, PhD and Matt Koletsky, MS as leads for Therapeutics and Diagnostics, Nicole Byram as lead for Medical Device, and Michelle Leung as lead for Digital Health), are here for any questions and/or to discuss the innovations process or ideas you may have. Thanks!



Q&A with Saqib Sachani, PhD, MBA

Associate Director

Business Development and Licensing

Please tell us about your role within Cleveland Clinic Innovations. What does your day-to-day look like?

My day-to-day role involves having conversations with industry and companies, discussing their interests and focus areas, and discussing how we can complement that with solutions developed at Cleveland Clinic. I try to envision how our research output would look as products that can have an impact on patients and solve real-world problems. This is in terms of an external focus. Internally, I try to focus on what our assets and technologies are, where they are coming from, and the next key experiments, along with how we can position them to be strong technologies and products that we can partner around with the industry.

Monthly feature



CCF Innovations

I am the facilitator and translator of scientific discoveries into products through our partners, which includes life sciences companies, biotech, biopharma, startups, entrepreneurs contract research organizations – anybody who's working in the life sciences space. We look to see how we can move those findings outside the laboratory into broader society.

What attracted you to Cleveland Clinic?

The core values of Cleveland Clinic are very personal to me, and they resonate very well with me. Cleveland Clinic's emphasis on putting patients first resonated with my own professional philosophy, as I believe in the fundamental importance of prioritizing the well-being and needs of individuals. The commitment to collaboration and teamwork also appealed to me, aligning with my role as a translator working to bridge communication gaps between academic and industry scientists. Cleveland Clinic's dedication to innovation and continuous improvement mirrors my passion for advancing biomedical research and finding novel solutions. Overall, the shared values of patient-centered care, collaboration, and innovation were pivotal factors that brought me here, as they align closely with my personal and professional values.

What first made you interested in working in Innovations?

My interest in working in Innovations was initially sparked by a profound fascination with the dynamic intersection of scientific discovery and its practical applications. As a scientist by training with my PhD and post-doctoral work, I have always been on the side of witnessing cutting-edge discoveries. Witnessing the transformative potential of cutting-edge research and its ability to address real-world challenges motivated me to delve into a role where I could actively contribute to translating innovative ideas into tangible solutions.

The prospect of being part of a process that takes groundbreaking concepts from the laboratory and propels them toward meaningful applications, whether in healthcare or other sectors, was particularly appealing. The inherent excitement in exploring novel solutions and the potential to make a lasting impact on various industries fueled my passion for working in Innovations.

Moreover, the fast-paced and ever-evolving nature of the field presented a constant learning opportunity, allowing me to stay abreast of the latest advancements and collaborate with diverse experts. Overall, the prospect of being at the forefront of innovation, bridging the gap between research and application, has driven my interest in working in Innovations.

Monthly feature



CCF Innovations

What do you find most inspiring about your job?

What I find most inspiring about my job is the opportunity to witness the transformative journey of scientific discoveries from the laboratory to real-world applications. Being at the forefront of biomedical research, I engage with brilliant minds working on fundamental aspects of life sciences, therapeutics and diagnostics. The sheer potential for these discoveries to evolve into therapies that could positively impact lives is incredibly motivating.

As a translator between science and business, I enjoy breaking down communication barriers between academic and industry scientists. Facilitating collaboration and finding synergies between diverse stakeholders in the life sciences arena is also intellectually stimulating and promises to expedite the development of innovative solutions.

Moreover, the constant exposure to a wide range of research initiatives and the chance to contribute to a process that may ultimately lead to groundbreaking therapies creates a sense of purpose in my work. Witnessing the impact of collaborative efforts in advancing healthcare and overcoming challenges is undoubtedly the most inspiring aspect of my job.

What does innovation mean to you?

In a more personal sense, innovation embodies the spirit of curiosity, creativity, and a relentless pursuit of improvement. It's about challenging the status quo, exploring uncharted territories, and pushing the boundaries of what is known or possible. Innovation, to me, is a dynamic process that involves embracing change, learning from failures, and adapting in the quest for better solutions. It also represents a mindset – an openness to new ideas, a willingness to take calculated risks, and a commitment to continuous learning. It's about finding joy in the discovery process and contributing, in whatever capacity, to the collective progress of knowledge and improvement.

Innovation is a deeply ingrained part of my professional and personal growth approach – a guiding principle that encourages exploration, adaptation, and the pursuit of excellence in every endeavor.

Are there particular technologies or areas that you're excited about?

One area of focus and excitement for me right now within Innovations is our infectious disease

Monthly feature



CCF Innovations

portfolio. There are novel vaccines developed in our labs and a lot of infectious disease work is happening at the Florida Research & Innovation Center (FRIC) that I'm supporting as well. The labs of Michaela Gack, PhD, Ted Ross, PhD, and Jae Jung, PhD are doing cutting-edge work and I'm excited about the potential impact. There's also a flu vaccine clinical trial happening from some of the work that Dr. Ross has done. This is exciting on the therapeutic side. And on the diagnostic side, I'm supporting the portfolio for Stanley Hazen, MD, PhD. Dr. Hazen has been incredible in researching cardiovascular disease biomarkers and their associated risks. I am excited about this work being developed into diagnostic tests and benefiting patients.

In addition, I am very excited about our growing research tools portfolio that we are partnering with industry around – this has the potential to have a wider impact by allowing tools developed at Cleveland Clinic to enable other researchers outside of Cleveland Clinic to advance their research. These are just some projects I think can make an impact and difference.

Are there any current trends you're seeing in the healthcare and tech transfer space?

I'm seeing several partnerships and deals happening around data and generative AI in the tech transfer space. This is more on the digital side, but on the therapeutics and drug development side, I think precision medicine is something companies are very interested in. This includes tailoring treatments based on a patient's genetic, environmental, and lifestyle factors. I believe we'll see this focus growing over time. There are many cancer immunotherapy advancements and other immunological approaches. CRISPR and gene-editing advancements in gene-editing technologies with potential applications in treating genetic disorders. There are a lot of advancements happening in that space, with the invention of mRNA vaccines that allow for the potential ability of RNA-based therapies. That field is going to grow significantly over time, and we are well positioned at Cleveland Clinic because we have projects and programs in all these spaces that will put us at the forefront of cutting-edge innovation over the next decade.

What advice would you give to someone interested in inventing who may be intimidated by the process?

Embarking on the invention process can indeed be intimidating, but here are some pieces of advice I have, to help ease the journey for someone interested:

- **Start Small and Build Confidence:** Begin with manageable projects. Tackling smaller inventions first allows you to build confidence, learn valuable skills, and understand the process more effectively.

Monthly feature



CCF Innovations

- **Embrace Failure as a Learning Opportunity:** Understand that setbacks and failures are an inherent part of the invention process. Instead of being discouraged, view them as opportunities to learn, iterate, and improve your ideas.
- **Network and Seek Guidance:** Connect with experienced inventors, mentors, and professionals in the field. Seeking advice from those who have been through the process can provide valuable insights, guidance, and a supportive network.
- **Stay Curious and Keep Learning:** Cultivate a curious mindset and be open to continuous learning. Stay informed about advancements in relevant fields, technologies, and methodologies that may contribute to your inventions.
- **Document Your Ideas:** Keep a detailed record of your ideas, sketches, and thought processes. This helps you organize your thoughts and provides a valuable reference as your projects evolve.
- **Collaborate with Diverse Perspectives:** Invention often benefits from collaboration and diverse perspectives. Engage with individuals from different backgrounds, disciplines, and experiences to bring fresh insights to your projects.
- **Understand the Market and User Needs:** Before investing significant time and resources, thoroughly research the market and understand the needs of potential users. A successful invention is not just novel; it also addresses a real-world problem or demand.
- **Utilize Available Resources:** Leverage online platforms, maker spaces, and other resources that support inventors. Many communities offer tools, funding opportunities, and collaborative spaces that can facilitate the invention process.
- **Protect Your Intellectual Property:** Understand the basics of intellectual property and consider protecting your ideas through patents, trademarks, or copyrights. This can provide legal safeguards for your inventions.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Recognize and celebrate every milestone, no matter how small. Acknowledging your progress can help maintain motivation and enthusiasm throughout the invention process.

Remember that inventing is a journey. Every step, whether successful or challenging, contributes to your growth as an inventor. Don't be afraid to take that first step and embrace the excitement and learning that come with the creative process.

LTA Summary for 2023

The LTA Executive Board would like to highlight the significant efforts of our active members over the past 1.5 years.

1. The creation of the **first survey** to collect data on the needs of the LRI trainee community to help us better focus our efforts as an organization reestablishing goals post-Covid.
2. Formulation of the **new annual budget** through RETC to support new trainee-led programming.
3. Partnership with RETC on **Graduate Student Appreciation** and **National Postdoc Appreciation Weeks**.
4. Creation of the new **LTA Constitution and Bylaws** to provide a solidified structure to the organization moving forward.
5. The creation of the **Cleveland Biomedical Trainee Alliance (CBTA)** in collaboration with the CWRU Biomedical Engineering Graduate Student Association (BME GSA), CWRU Biomedical Graduate Student Organization (BGSO), CWRU Postdoctoral Association (PDA), and CSU Association of Biomedical and Chemical Engineers (ABCE).
6. Hosting the inaugural **CBTA Professional Development Conference**.
7. Acquisition of **official recognition from CWRU** as a graduate student organization, opening additional resources for the LTA to utilize for all LRI trainees.
8. Recognition by the National Postdoc Association with a **Top Poster Award** for the LTA's efforts to create the CBTA.
9. Leading the CBTA with administrative partners in CCF BME and Innovations to host the annual **Winter Clothing Drive for Bolton Elementary**, providing over 600 clothing and personal hygiene items for children in need in the surrounding community.

Subcommittee Specific Efforts:

1. **Social & Outreach**
 - LTA GSAW and NPAW Open Houses
 - Monthly Lerner Lunch Linkups
 - Summer Ice Cream Social
 - Halloween Party
 - CBTA Winter Clothing Drive for Bolton Elementary
2. **Mentorship & Advocacy**
 - Mentorship Seminars
 - Handling Difficult Conversations Seminar
 - Mentor-Mentee Buddy Program
3. **Career Development**
 - Python Workshop 1.0
4. **Communications**
 - Restructured/Revised Monthly Newsletter

For those **still interested in joining the LTA**, please fill out the following form and we will schedule a time to meet with you!

<https://forms.gle/jcudTcNBCfAMsMTP9>

Wellness Resources

The Cleveland Clinic Wellness logo is in the top left corner. The background features a silhouette of a person in a yoga pose against a sunset sky. The text is white and pink on a dark purple background.

Cleveland Clinic
Wellness

Daily Wellness Tools for YOU Program

Weekly, live and virtual. Ongoing self-help support.

Meditation Monday 12:15 – 12:45 pm	Fitness Friday 10:00 - 10:30 am
Yoga - Therapeutic Chair 12:15 - 12:45 pm Tuesday - Level 1 Wednesday - Level 2 Thursday - Level 3	Culinary Medicine/Nutrition Friday 12:15 - 12:45 pm two times per month (see event page for dates)

All sessions will be held via the Webex platform,
registration is required at:
clevelandclinic.org/CILMevents

Well-Being, Self-Care and Emotional Support for Caregivers

Please note: A connection to the Cleveland Clinic network is required to access many of these resources.

For a more detailed and complete list of resources, please visit [this link](#).

Caregiver Experience Wellness Portal: disconnect, unwind or say thank you virtually

Caring for Caregivers: confidential services that preserve, restore and enhance wellbeing of our caregivers. Available at 1-800-989-8820 (including new Boost telephone appointment).

Cleveland Clinic Office of Caregiver Experience on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

Connect Today/Learner Connect: resiliency resources to help you manage complex, changing times (virtual meetings, change and stress management, and communication)

Occupational Health: If you have further questions about COVID-19 please contact the COVID-19 Caregiver Hotline at 216-445-8246.

OneClick to Well-Being: well-being information and resources for staff

Spiritual Care and Healing Services: information for the religious and spiritual needs of CCF patients, their families and loved ones, and Cleveland Clinic caregivers. (216) 444-2518

CCPD Victim Advocacy: resource to help educate and support the CCF community on domestic violence. Email the committee at: dvcommittee@ccf.org

Join in on live virtual Yoga, Meditation, Fitness and Culinary Medicine sessions. These are available for free to all caregivers. All sessions will be held via the Webex platform, registration is required at:

<http://clevelandclinic.org/CILMevents>

****Graduate Students are welcome to join!****

Behind the Scenes

This newsletter is written by the Communications teams of the Lerner Trainee Association Leadership Council and fellow trainees. We welcome your questions and suggestions!

Email LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org to connect with us.

LTA Communications Team

Jason Ross, Nam Than, William (BJ) Massey, Anushruti Ashok, Swapnil Dey, Susan Afolabi, Julia Myers, Lavanya Jain

Lerner Trainee Association Leadership Council



Executive Board

Co-Presidents: Jia Liu, Hope Zehr

Coordinator: Molly Guthrie

Treasurer: Noah Dubasik

Advisors: Edward Carson, Lavanya Jain, Jason Ross

Career Development and Resources

Co-Chairs: Ujjwal Dahiya

Members: Pooneh Koochaki, Mary Vincent

Advisor: Sumit Bhutada

Communications

Co-Chair: Nam Than

Members: William (BJ) Massey, Anushruti Ashok, Swapnil Dey, Susan Afolabi, Julia Myers, Lavanya Jain

Mentorship/Advocacy

Co-Chairs: Kavya Vipparthi, Amira Salim

Members: Andras Ponti, Omer Onur

Social/Outreach

Co-Chairs: Daniela Duarte Bateman, Kristen Kay

Members: Zaida Laventure, Naoko Uno, Mary Jo Talley, Maximilian Strobl, Rachel Hohe, Lavanya Jain,

Instagram: ClevelandPetriDish