

THE TRIBUNE

UAMS
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

May/June 2017

ACCELERATING DISCOVERIES TOWARD BETTER HEALTH

Patient Scientist Academy

UAMS Research an Eye-Opener for Participants



Patient Scientist Academy graduates and Translational Research Institute academy leaders, (back, l-r) Dr. Kate Stewart, Richelle Brittain, Tamika Keener, Shalonda Riley, Sharunda Henagan and Camille Hart; (front, l-r), Nicki Spencer, Cheri Thriver and Dr. Bonnie Hatchett. Not pictured are graduates Allene Higgins, Kaiden O'Suilleabhain and Veronica Warren.

Learning how research is conducted at UAMS and how the public can play a role was a revelation for the nine new graduates of the Translational Research Institute's inaugural UAMS Patient Scientist Academy.

Over four two-hour sessions in April, the academy covered research basics such as the difference between blind and double-blind trials, research ethics, and translational research. It was taught by Kate Stewart, M.D., M.P.H., with guest researchers Laura Hutchins, M.D., Jean McSweeney, Ph.D., R.N., and Songthip Ounpraseuth, Ph.D., who provided their unique perspectives from their work with cancer patients, heart patients and biostatistics.

"I didn't know about translational research," academy participant Cheri Thriver said during one of the classes

prior to the graduation ceremony on May 4. "I didn't realize how much we can be involved in the research process."

UAMS honored their participation with a brunch and an inspirational talk from Tiffany Haynes, Ph.D., an assistant professor and researcher in the College of Public Health. Haynes, a TRI KL2 Scholar graduate, noted that UAMS conducts research across the health spectrum, including cancer, diabetes, heart disease and mental health.

"What's at the heart of that research?" she asked. "Y'all!"

"That's why it's so important that you took this first step of coming to this Patient Scientist Academy and learning more about the research process and learning how to get involved because it really doesn't work without you," Haynes said.

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Message from Dr. James



Dear Colleagues,
Three years ago we started our TRIBUTARY feature to highlight research growth that has occurred as a result of TRI programs or support. In this issue, we share a number of translational research successes that stem from TRI investments.

We are proud to share the story of Dr. Amanda Stolarz in our TRIBUTARY. It was last summer's Health Sciences Entrepreneurship Boot Camp that changed her perspective about having a role in the commercialization of research innovations and products. The idea for the boot camp originated with the entrepreneurship focus outlined in the T award of TRI's CTSA application.

We also feature the Patient Scientist Academy. This event is a spinoff from last year's successful Community Scientist Academy, an outgrowth of our Community Advisory Board. Both academies tangibly increase involvement from the lay community in research – a key aim of NCATS - and raise broader awareness about the importance of lay audiences as stakeholders in research, planning and review. We anticipate expanding this program to three training sessions next year.

In addition, our upcoming Research Mentor Training Workshop was made possible by TRI's collaboration – starting in 2015 – with the University of Wisconsin-Madison CTSA, a premier mentor training program for the CTSA Consortium. Learn more inside!

Sincerely,

Laura James, M.D.
Director, UAMS Associate Vice Chancellor
for Clinical and Translational Research

Patient Scientist Academy *(Continued from page 1)*



Laura Hutchins, M.D., takes questions during a Patient Scientist Academy class.

Stewart, a professor in the College of Public Health who leads TRI's Community Engagement Program, said the graduates will have the opportunity to become involved in a number of ways, including serving on research advisory boards, patient advisory boards, and as citizen reviewers of research grant applications.

"We had a great group of participants," Stewart said. "We hope the academy has given them knowledge that will enrich

their involvement and really make a difference in the quality of our research and patient care."

At the end of the ceremony, when the graduates were asked if they would like to share any thoughts before leaving, several expressed their appreciation for UAMS.

"UAMS saved my life," said Tamika Keener, a lupus survivor who said she was turned away from other treatment centers. "I always say, 'thank God for UAMS.' Kudos to the staff and everyone who was a part of this academy. I have a new part of my family – new friends."

Shalonda Riley shared a short video about her battle with late-stage throat cancer, and her successful treatment at UAMS.

"Those treatments came from research," Riley said. "That's why this has become so important to me. I am so glad to be here."

Bonnie Hachett, Ph.D., described herself as a life-long learner and a breast cancer survivor. "I have survived because of research," she said. "I am thoroughly excited about this opportunity and plan to continue my involvement with UAMS."

"I've already been telling everybody about it," Thriver said. "I appreciate everyone in here. It was great."

Other graduates are: Richelle Brittain, Sharunda Henagan, Allene Higgins, Kaiden O'Suilleabhain and Veronica Warren.

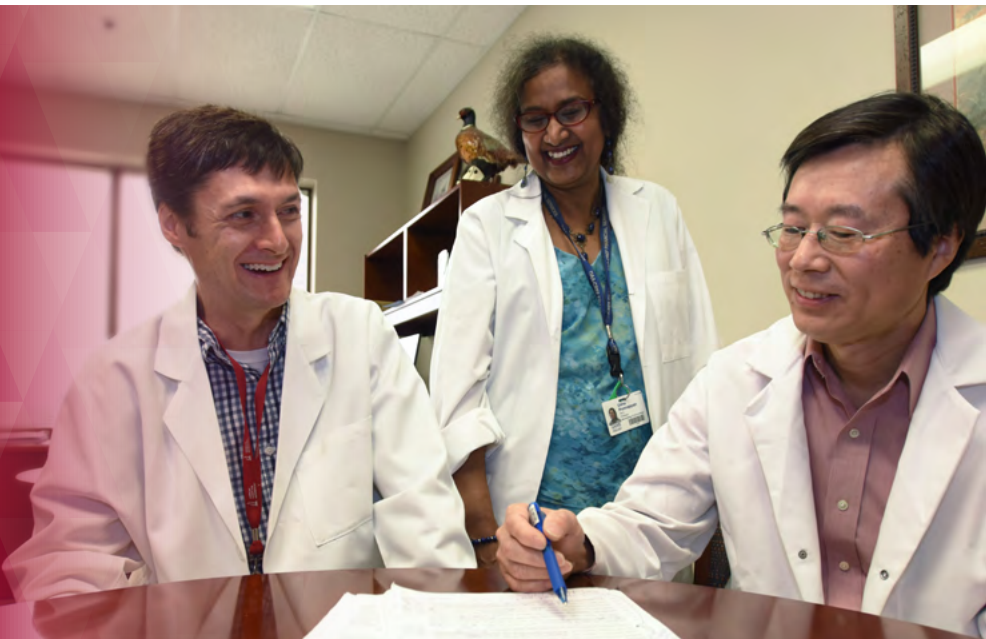
Seats Still Available for TRI-Sponsored Mentoring Workshop

UAMS researchers are invited to a free, day-long workshop June 22 to help improve their mentoring skills.

The workshop is 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. at the Reynolds Institute on Aging, Room 1190. Lunch will be provided.

Sponsored by TRI, the mentor training workshop is modelled after the nationally recognized University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER) curriculum. Facilitators Mary Aitken, M.D., M.P.H. and Beatrice Boateng, Ph.D., have received CIMER certification to offer mentor training at UAMS.

Contact: Donna Mattingly, dmattingly@uams.edu, or (501) 614-2287.



Department of Microbiology and Immunology researcher Craig Forrest, Ph.D., with his former mentors, Usha Ponnappan, Ph.D., and Xuming Zhang, Ph.D. Read their story at TRI.uams.edu!

TRIBUTARY

How TRI Became a Catalyst for a Governor's Cup Victory



Winners of the Governor's Cup business plan competition are (l-r): team members Joshua Phillips, Tiffany Jarrett and Amanda Stolarz. They are joined by (back left) Rush Deacon, CEO, Arkansas Capital Corporation; Gov. Asa Hutchinson, Carol Reeves, team adviser, and Kevin Burns, chairman of the board, Arkansas Capital Corporation.

UAMS' Amanda Stolarz, Pharm.D., Ph.D., recently celebrated her team's victory in the Donald W. Reynolds Governor's Cup business plan competition. The team, Rejuvenics Technologies, won the \$25,000 top prize with its idea for commercializing a drug-delivery system to reduce the harmful side effects of chemotherapy.

Just under a year ago, the business side of research was hardly on Stolarz's radar. Her mindset was: "I don't want to do business at all; I want to do science."

But Stolarz, having just received her Ph.D. last summer, soon gained new perspective.

As a post-doctoral fellow, she was encouraged to attend last summer's Health Sciences Entrepreneurship Boot Camp by Nancy Rusch, Ph.D., who explained that discoveries don't magically go from the laboratory to the clinic. Rusch chairs the College of Medicine Department of Pharmacology and Toxicology and leads the Translational Research Institute's (TRI) educational efforts.

"The boot camp opened my eyes," Stolarz said.

It also made her more inclined to join the Rejuvenics Technologies team.

"Without the boot camp, it would have been a much harder sell for me," said Stolarz, the company's chief science officer.

The idea of establishing entrepreneurship training for researchers, Rusch said, stems from TRI. Laura James, M.D., TRI director and vice chancellor for clinical and translational research, broached the idea and it was included as a key feature of TRI's application for a Clinical and Translational Science Award.

The technology being commercialized has potentially broad application for preventing a multitude of chemotherapy side effects – a good fit for Stolarz.

"I got really excited because my dissertation was on finding ways to treat and prevent side effects from chemotherapy," she said.

TRI & me



Camille Hart, M.P.H.,
Program Manager, Translational
Research Institute Community
Engagement Program

"As program manager for TRI's Community Engagement program, I have the opportunity to work with researchers and community groups across Arkansas. We work with a diverse, insightful Community Advisory Board, which guides our team as we explore innovative methods for increasing community involvement in research. Our successes include our Community

Scientist Academy and recently completed Patient Scientist Academy. We also provide novel services for studies that require participation from hard-to-reach populations. Increased community engagement, especially with those who are underrepresented in research, is a pillar of the TRI and NIH missions, and I am proud to play a role."

The *TRIBune* is produced by the UAMS Translational Research Institute (TRI).

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UAMS | Translational Research Institute



The following UAMS researchers cited the Translational Research Institute (TRI) in publications after utilizing TRI resources or funding:

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