

Breakthroughs

Feinberg School of Medicine Research Office

October 2021

Cultivating Africa's Research Enterprise

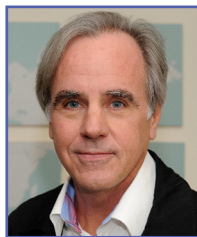
By **Melissa Rohman**

Feinberg's commitment to improving human health transcends borders. Around the world, investigators, trainees and students are working to expand health equity, knowledge and capacity through research and educational partnerships. One of the medical school's most important and longstanding partnerships is with scientists in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Through the [Robert J. Havey, MD Institute for Global Health](#), Feinberg faculty across disciplines are training investigators from Africa, many of whom are enrolled in Feinberg graduate programs, on how to effectively conduct research about diseases currently impacting their home countries. Areas of focus include HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular disease and infection-associated diseases, such as cervical and liver cancer.

Some of these training programs were originally established with funding from the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) launched by George W. Bush in 2003, which has since provided over \$85 billion toward the world's HIV/AIDS response. Currently, Feinberg's growing assortment of programs are supported by the Fogarty International Center at the National Institutes of Health and led by a dedicated group of medical school faculty.

These faculty members include [Robert Murphy, MD, '81 84' GME](#), the John Philip Phair Professor of Infectious Diseases and executive director of the Havey Institute for Global Health; [Claudia Hawkins, MD, MPH](#), associate professor of [Medicine](#) in the Division of [Infectious Diseases](#) and director of the [Center for Global Communicable and Emerging Infectious Diseases](#); [Lifang Hou, MD, PhD](#), chief of [Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention](#) in the Department of [Preventive Medicine](#) and director of the [Center for Global Oncology](#); [Mark Huffman, MD, MPH](#), the Quentin D. Young Professor of Health Policy and director of the [Center for Global](#)



Robert Murphy, MD



[Cardiovascular Health](#); and [Babafemi Taiwo, MBBS](#), the Gene Stollerman Professor of Medicine and chief of Infectious Diseases in the Department of Medicine.

Fostering Independence

A key component of all the Havey Institute for Global Health's programs is mentoring. Trainees are partnered with faculty mentors to guide them through the research process from start to finish.



Claudia Hawkins, MD, MPH

"The ultimate goal is to really foster their independence in research," Hawkins said. "So, they're working on their own research concept, and we're mentoring them through the research proposal development and providing with them with the skills necessary to conduct the research. Ultimately, we want to get them to a stage where they can write their own grants and set up their own research programs later down the line."

Hawkins currently oversees a program that is training investigators from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences in Tanzania on how to conduct HIV care research that incorporates patient-reported outcomes and experiences. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the program received additional funding to study the impact of the pandemic on HIV care and patients' anxiety, and the role of self-management among patients with HIV in Tanzania.

Another program, led by Hou, trains Nigerian investigators who specialize in cancer molecular epidemiology to perform population-based HIV-associated cancer research. This is a collaboration between investigators from Northwestern, the

Africa’s Research Enterprise *(continued from cover page)*

University of Illinois at Chicago, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Jos and the University of Lagos in Nigeria.

“Through trainings in molecular cancer epidemiology, biostatistics and bioinformatics, this new generation will be equipped to lead the development of preventive and therapeutic strategies to reduce incidence and decrease mortality of HIV-associated malignancies in Nigeria, the region and the world,” Hou said.

The same program recently received supplemental funding to address sexual misconduct and harassment in HIV/AIDS research training programs through the establishment of the Equity and Women’s Center at the University of Lagos in Nigeria. This center will be created in partnership with Folasade Ogunsola, MD, PhD, professor of Clinical Microbiology at the University of Lagos, the Havey Institute for Global Health and Northwestern’s [Women’s Center](#) and [Office for Equity](#).

“This project is very timely. It not only addresses an urgent need for a safe work environment at our training site at the University of Lagos but is also in line with national movements in Nigeria, following the introduction of their Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill in early July 2020,” Hou said. “Our goal is to build a strong foundation for the Office for Equity and a mentoring community to support awareness about the operational guidelines and other protocols for ensuring effectiveness and capacity development in prevention, protection and responses to sexual harassment and misconduct on campus.”

Hou and Mamoudou Maiga, MD, MSc, PhD, research associate professor of [Preventive Medicine](#) in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention and of Biomedical Engineering at the McCormick School of Engineering, oversee an additional program that trains scientists from the University of Sciences, Techniques and Technologies of Bamako (USTTB) in Mali to perform epidemiological and population-based research on the country’s most common infection-associated cancers: cervical, liver, gastric and lung cancer.

Similarly, Huffman is leading a cardiovascular research training program for investigators at the University of Abuja in Nigeria. The program aims to strengthen implementation science, clinical trials and patient-centered outcomes research, with the goal of helping shape public health and clinical strategies to improve cardiovascular health in Nigeria.

“Through this program, we will train a new generation of independent Nigerian investigators, mentoring them on the path to independence, and leading the way for University of Abuja to become a center for excellence for cardiovascular research in Nigeria,” Huffman said.

Additionally, Murphy leads a program that trains investigators from USTTB on how to develop and implement diagnostic and monitoring technologies to address the HIV and tuberculosis epidemics in Mali.

Finally, a program led by Taiwo trains investigators in Nigeria about how to expand HIV-related brain disorders research to improve patient care. The program also received additional support to study the mental health effects of COVID-19 among patients with HIV in Nigeria and develop therapeutic interventions for these patients.

These programs have only strengthened academic and scientific leadership in Africa, according to Murphy. Over the years, relationships between faculty at Feinberg and in Africa have flourished. Even with the COVID-19 pandemic, the training programs have continued to prosper.

“We did everything remotely. We did online classes. We’ve continued our interactions, thanks to Zoom and Skype. We did not skip a beat — we applied for new grants, we got new grants; the pandemic didn’t stop us,” Murphy said.

Driving Tangible Impact

The training provided by Feinberg faculty continues to have a long-lasting impact on investigators in Africa. Particularly, four African investigators who completed research training programs at Feinberg have received the Fogarty Emerging Global Leader (K43) Award through the National Institutes of Health. The prestigious five-year award provides research support to non-U.S. citizen investigators from low- to middle-income countries whose work is highly relevant to the health priorities of their country.



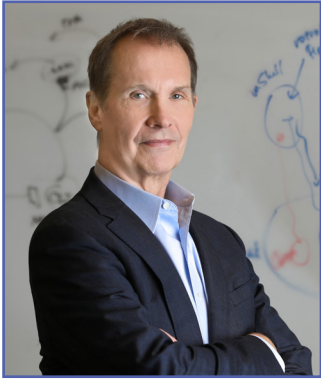
Jonah Musa, MBBS, PhD

One of these awardees is [Jonah Musa, MBBS, PhD](#), adjunct professor of [Preventive Medicine](#) in the Division of [Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention](#) and professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Jos in Nigeria. In 2008, Musa was recruited by Murphy with the help from the Fogarty International Center to train in clinical HIV/AIDS research through Feinberg’s Master of Science in Clinical Investigation ([MSCI](#)) program.

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Surmeier Wins 2021 Tripartite Prize



Watch Surmeier, his mentees and colleagues speak about the award in [this video](#).

[D. James Surmeier, PhD](#), the chair and Nathan Smith Davis Professor of [Neuroscience](#), has been named the winner of the 2021 [Tripartite Legacy Faculty Prize](#) in Translational Science and Education.

“I’m really humbled,” Surmeier said. “This award... is a reflection of why I came to Northwestern, why I’ve stayed at Northwestern: it

creates a unique environment where basic scientists who are really invested in understanding

disease mechanisms can work shoulder to shoulder with clinicians. This award is a recognition of that team effort.”

Surmeier’s research focuses on the mechanisms underlying Parkinson’s disease, Huntington’s disease and chronic pain. Specifically, it has explored how neurons in the brain’s striatum — a cluster of neurons in the subcortical basal ganglia — and its connections with other brain regions are shaped by dopamine and, ultimately, how its loss in Parkinson’s disease induces the remodeling of this network.

Surmeier is the author of more than 250 peer-reviewed publications and is the principal investigator for research projects funded by grants from the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke and National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Ben Yang, PhD, a postdoctoral fellow that trained with Surmeier, praised his mentorship.

“The time that I spent with Dr. Surmeier during my PhD has transformed me, not just to a better scientist but also a better father, a better husband and overall a better person — and hopefully one day a better mentor and a leader like him,” Yang said.

That spirit of collaboration and mentorship was also highlighted by [Tracy Gertler, ’11 MD, ’09 PhD](#), assistant professor of [Pediatrics](#) in the Division of [Neurology and Epilepsy](#) and

of [Pharmacology](#): “Dr. Surmeier has played this mentorship role for me that has changed a lot over time because I’ve moved from being a grad student to an intern to resident and postdoc and now junior faculty, and at different times we’ve had conversations about everything from a specific experiment to what I need to do to start a lab, so I really appreciate him having these longitudinal conversations.”

Surmeier received his PhD in physiology and biophysics from the University of Washington and a Master of Science from the University of Oregon. He joined the Feinberg faculty in 1998, and became chair of the Department of Neuroscience (then known as the Department of Physiology) in 2001.

Surmeier is a two-time winner of the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke’s Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award for demonstrated scientific excellence and productivity in neurological research, which recognizes those investigators with a distinguished record of substantial contributions to neurological science. He has also been honored with the C. David Marsden Presidential Lecture Award by the International Parkinson and Movement Disorder Society for his contributions to the understanding of the mechanisms underlying Parkinson’s disease.

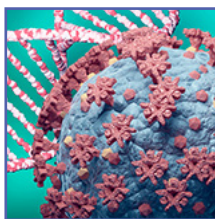
About the Tripartite Prize

The Tripartite Legacy Faculty Prize is given annually to a faculty member who has demonstrated excellence in research that emphasizes translational approaches, teaching and mentoring, and leadership. The award is sponsored and supported by the Office of the Dean and is made possible through the generous support of family members and friends of [Geoffrey Kent, MD, PhD](#).

The prize was established to commemorate the medical teaching legacies of Abraham Albert Hijmans van den Bergh, MD; Isadore Snapper, MD; Hans Popper, MD; Fenton Schaffner, MD; and Kent. European-born and educated, their lives were forever changed by the Holocaust and war: all but Hijmans van den Bergh reached the United States to continue their careers and briefly worked together at Cook County Hospital in Chicago. Through their prolific collaborations and publications, Snapper, Popper, Schaffner and Kent emerged as international leaders in the study of liver disease.

Tune in to the Latest *Breakthroughs* Podcast Episodes

Listen to candid interviews with the Northwestern physicians and scientists behind the latest high-impact medical discoveries on the [Breakthroughs](#) podcast. Stay up-to-date on COVID-19 research and other scientific advances, claim continuing medical education credit and [subscribe](#) to the show, so you never miss an episode.



[Variants of Interest and of Concern with Judd Hultquist, PhD](#)

[Next-Generation COVID Vaccines with Pablo Penaloza-MacMaster, PhD](#)

[The Evolution of Cardiac Monitoring with Rod Passman, MD](#)

[More Breakthroughs podcast episodes here.](#)

Graduate Student/Post-Doc Events and Opportunities

CAPS Weekly Virtual Workshops

Fridays, October 22 to November 5
12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. CST

Are you interested in learning different tools and strategies to manage stress and anxiety to keep you moving toward what is most important in your life? Then join Rachael Collins, PhD, licensed clinical psychologist and CAPS liaison to Feinberg, for a weekly virtual workshop on reclaiming your life from stress and anxiety (or other uncomfortable feelings).

You can register once and select any or all of the sessions to attend. Each session focuses on a different theme with various skills and strategies (see the schedule below). To register for this workshop, [sign up here](#) with your Northwestern email address. If you have any questions, please feel free to email Dr. Collins, at rachael.collins@northwestern.edu.

Workshop Schedule:

October 22 – Mindfulness and “Unhooking” From Thoughts
October 29 – Mindfulness and Self-Compassion
November 5 – Values and Meaning

Drop-in Meditation

Tuesdays, October 26 through December 14
1:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. CST, online

[More information](#)

Join [Elizabeth Tuckwell](#) for a 25-minute virtual guided meditation practice each Tuesday during the academic quarter. Elizabeth is the founder of a website that pairs the art of self-expression with the art of meditation. The benefits of meditation include reducing stress, improving concentration and increasing happiness. No previous experience is necessary and all are welcome.

One Book Keynote with Author and Professor Hope Jahren

October 28, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. CST, online

[More information](#) - [Register here](#)

[One Book One Northwestern](#) will host the author of this year’s common read, Professor Jahren. She will be in conversation with Professor William Miller, One Book faculty chair, about her book “The Story of More and Where to Go From Here.”

5th Annual Translational Bridge Symposium

November 12

9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. CST

Robert H. Lurie Medical Research Center

303 E. Superior, Baldwin Auditorium

Chicago, Illinois 60611

[More information](#)

The Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University is committed to fostering collaborations between physicians and basic scientists to advance translational cancer research with the ultimate goal of translating basic science discoveries to the clinic and impacting cancer patient outcomes. Designed to stimulate collaboration between basic scientists, population scientists and translational clinical investigators, this symposium will feature brief presentations by scientists and clinical investigators on research discoveries with potential for clinical trial development.

This meeting is currently scheduled to be in person with a Zoom option for remote viewing. Updates will be provided to registrants in November. Registration is complimentary, but advance registration is required.

Research in the News

Crain’s Chicago Business, September 6

[Northwestern Study Says Unionizing Doesn’t Help With Burnout](#)

Karl Bilimoria, MD, MS, was featured.

Yahoo! News, September 11

[These Two Things Increase Your Risk of an Early Death, Says Study](#)

Kristen Knutson, PhD, was featured.

Crain’s Chicago Business, September 14

[Northwestern biotech spinout raises \\$85 million](#)

Dimitri Krainc, MD, was featured.

ABC 7, September 14

[COVID pandemic child drug use, mental health highest ranking youth concerns, survey says](#)

Matthew Davis, MD, MAPP, was featured.

HealthDay, September 15

[Black, Hispanic Adults Diagnosed With Diabetes at Earlier Age](#)

Michael Wang, MD candidate, was featured.

[More media coverage](#)

Improving Cancer Care and Survival Through Evidence-Based and Health Equity Research

Betina Yanez, PhD, associate professor of Medical Social Sciences



Betina Yanez, PhD, is an associate professor of [Medical Social Sciences](#) and a member of the [Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) of Northwestern University, the [Center for Behavior and Health](#) and the Northwestern University Clinical and Translational Sciences (NUCATS) Institute. Her work as a psychosocial oncologist aims to improve patient-centered outcomes and issues related to cancer control and survival by translating evidence-based research into equitable and effective cancer care.

Q&A

What are your research interests?

My research program's framework falls in the areas of patient-centered outcomes and psychosocial issues pertinent to cancer control and survivorship. My work bridges behavioral medicine and health equity research to address the concerns faced by individuals with cancer. To that end, I have established an impactful and innovative research program that focuses on patient-centered care by engaging key stakeholders to address major public health problems in oncology, optimize cancer-related outcomes and enhance cancer care delivery. My research program is organized into three distinct but overlapping research components: health equity and community-based research, evidence-based behavioral oncology research, and implementation of patient engagement and patient-reported outcomes in cancer care.

What is the ultimate goal of your research?

My ultimate goal is to translate evidence-based research into cancer care to improve the patient-reported outcomes and clinical outcomes of individuals diagnosed with cancer. To achieve this goal, my research has focused on establishing evidence-based behavioral oncology interventions that are innovative, scalable and often delivered via communication and health information technologies. An important aspect of my research program has been to forge collaborations with key stakeholders to identify and address unmet needs among medically underserved or underrepresented patients.

How did you become interested in this area of research?

A diagnosis of cancer impacts patients in many ways, from accessing evidence-based care to struggling with side effects of treatment and coping with the consequences of a cancer diagnosis. I became interested in this area of research after witnessing the struggles patients often face across the cancer continuum and subsequently worked to increase access to care among medically underserved patients, reduce the burden of cancer and improve patient-centered care in oncology.

How is your research funded?

My research lab is funded by the National Institutes of Health as well as the American Cancer Society and the Melanoma Research Alliance.

Where have you recently published papers?

My research is published in a range of medical and behavioral medicine journals such as [JAMA Oncology](#), [Lancet Oncology](#), [The Oncologist](#) and [Translational Behavioral Medicine](#).

Who inspires you? Who are your mentors?

I am grateful to have had several outstanding, inspirational mentors both in graduate school and during my postdoctoral fellowship. I am constantly inspired by my colleagues who work to find innovative solutions to improve patient experiences during treatment and cancer outcomes. But I am mostly inspired by the patients who I've worked with.

Investigating the Epigenome of Alzheimer's Disease

Bryan McClarty, fifth-year student in the Northwestern Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program (NUIN)



Bryan McClarty is a fifth-year student in the Northwestern Interdepartmental Neuroscience Program (NUIN), studying epigenetic regulation of Alzheimer's disease.

Q&A

Where is your hometown?

I am from a west suburb of Chicago called Wood Dale, Illinois, near O'Hare International Airport.

What are your research interests?

My main research interest includes neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's disease (AD). I enjoy neurodegenerative research because there are many niches within each disease that exist. This allows for more collaboration with other groups that might help shed light on your current projects, but this also helps put together many of the working pieces of the diseases together to address common research questions and goals.

What exciting projects are you working on?

I am currently working on a project that is interested in understanding how epigenetic mechanisms modulate aging and AD processes. I use a specific AD mouse model paired with epigenetic profiling tools to understand the temporal and spatial epigenetic changes occurring during aging and AD and how these changes impact memory function, as well as neuropathology of AD.

After understanding the specific epigenetic changes that are modulating aging and AD-related processes, we plan on using behavioral pharmacology to target such epigenetic changes to improve memory function and decrease the severity of Alzheimer's Disease pathologies.

From my project, we will have a better understanding of the epigenetic mechanisms that link aging and AD. Also, identification of these epigenetic mechanisms may help to develop novel therapeutic strategies targeting the epigenetic alterations for prevention and treatment of AD.

What attracted you to your program?

I have always had a strong interest in neuroscience; however, I did not have my first neuroscience research experience until the summer going into my senior year of undergrad through the Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP) here at

Northwestern. I had the amazing opportunity to work with [Dr. Geoffrey Swanson](#) trying to understand kainate receptor modulation in spinal cord development. I was able to interact with multiple NUIN students and faculty and gained a sense of the program dynamic, rigor and sense of community. Also, given my interest of neurodegeneration and translational research, NUIN has many faculty members conducting strong translational neurodegeneration research, which was most attractive to me.

What has been your best experience at Feinberg?

The best experience has been being able to grow as a scientist due to expanding my network of faculty, advisors and students who have helped me tremendously by identifying my strengths and working with me to improve skillsets that I was lacking. Also, the many friends I have made at Northwestern have been an integral part of my experience here. Graduate school is very hard, and there are many points of struggle, but knowing you have a great support system and sense of community has been very important.

How would you describe the faculty at Feinberg?

The faculty at Northwestern are very collaborative, which is one of the reasons I chose Northwestern to do my doctoral degree. Due to my strong interest in AD, I have consulted with many faculty members regarding my project, which has significantly improved the impact of my research. I have even found faculty outside of my research topic to be extremely helpful in a multitude of ways, including general advising, career planning and helping me understand methods or data analysis tools.

What do you do in your free time?

Before the pandemic, I really enjoyed traveling. Learning about cultures, languages and trying new foods is truly an amazing experience. Due to the pandemic, I have not traveled much, but find myself getting back into photography, running and enjoying time with family and friends! I have already run two half-marathons but would love to run the Chicago Marathon within the next two years.

What are your plans for after graduation?

I am considering multiple career paths after graduating. Based on my time here at Northwestern, I have developed an interest in translational research and science communication and am very interested in careers that would allow me to utilize both interests to help better understand and build upon current scientific knowledge on given issues in the healthcare system.

Coordinating Education at Lurie Cancer Center

Kate Harken, administrative director of education and development at the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center of Northwestern University



Kate Harken is administrative director of education and development at the [Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) of Northwestern University.

Q&A

Where are you originally from?

My hometown is Western Springs, Illinois, a suburb about 20 miles west of Chicago.

What is your educational background?

I am a proud alumnus of the University of Notre Dame and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a double major in English and gender studies.

Please tell us about your professional background.

I spent the first 12 years of my professional life in healthcare marketing communications, advertising and strategy. I held roles in account management and business development, partnering with academic medical centers and large health systems like Northwestern Medicine.

I left the for-profit sector to join The H Foundation, a local nonprofit that supports basic science cancer research at

the Lurie Cancer Center as the foundation's first executive director. There, I gained valuable experience that helped me to transition into my current role as administrative director of education and development at the Lurie Cancer Center, a role I've held for nearly six years.

Why do you enjoy working at Northwestern?

I am inspired by the passion and dedication of my colleagues and our faculty to support Lurie Cancer Center's mission.

How do you help scientists or research students at the medical school?

My team plans and manages a large portfolio of educational opportunities for scientists, physicians, postdocs, graduate students, nurses and other healthcare professionals and staff – from large multi-day conferences to grand rounds and weekly seminars to special lectures and more.

What is your favorite part of the job?

No day is the same! I am involved in many different initiatives in the Lurie Cancer Center. This provides me with the opportunity to use a variety of my skills and leverage my previous professional experience to help us succeed.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I spend much of my free time in my kitchen, cooking and baking for my partner, family and friends. I also love relaxing with my dog, Clover, watching the latest and greatest TV shows and movies. Clover actually watches the screen along with me!

NUCATS Corner
Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute



NUCATS KL2 Career Development Program RFA Announced

The NUCATS Multidisciplinary Career Development Program (KL2) is an NCATS-sponsored career development award supporting early-career faculty at Northwestern. Current [KL2 Request for Applications](#) key dates are listed below:

November 2, 2-3 p.m. — Info session, [Registration required](#)

November 4, 10-11 a.m. — Info session, [Registration required](#)

February 1, 2022 — Letters of Intent are due

March 1, 2022 — Application deadline

July 1, 2022 — Funds available

The NUCATS Institute's KL2 program provides career development resources (formal coursework, peer mentoring and career guidance) to scholars across disparate areas of expertise. KL2 awardees also receive salary support and other resources to ensure protected time for mentored research and didactic training in clinical and translational research. Among two dozen previous KL2 scholars, nearly all remain engaged in clinical and translational science research. Since 2008, KL2 program alumni have contributed to 981 publications, with 70 percent serving as PIs or co-PIs on NIH funded awards.

NUCATS and the KL2 program are committed to creating and nurturing a diverse and inclusive community. It is the institute's mission to value the whole of each scholar's experience — past, present and future. Scholars from diverse backgrounds and life experiences are strongly encouraged to apply. [Learn more.](#)

NIH News

Childcare Costs for Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award Institutional Research Training Awards Extended to Trainees

This past April, NIH began providing childcare cost support to recipients of full-time National Research Service Awards (NRSA) fellowships in recognition that the high cost of childcare impacts graduate and postdoctoral students, hindering their ability to successfully complete their training and fully participate in the extramural research workforce.

NIH announced that it will now begin providing childcare cost support to full-time predoctoral and postdoctoral trainees appointed on NRSA institutional research training awards. This is anticipated for awards made beginning in the first quarter of fiscal year 2022. The NRSA childcare costs apply to each full-time predoctoral or postdoctoral NIH-NRSA-supported institutional research training award appointment. Each trainee is eligible to receive \$2,500 per budget period for childcare costs provided by a licensed childcare provider.

For more information on this notice, please review the guide notice ([NOT-OD-21-177](#)) and visit the NIH [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page for more information.

2021 NIH Virtual Seminar on Grants Administration and Program Funding

Monday, November 1 – Thursday, November 4

If you are an administrator, researcher, early-stage investigator, graduate student or anyone new to working with the NIH grants process, then this seminar is designed

specifically for you. More experienced? Attend a session on policy updates, and check out the case study series.

Register for the free, online event here: <http://bit.ly/NIHsem2021>.

eRA Commons Password To Be Replaced With Passphrase, Starting November

While eRA has been transitioning users of eRA Commons, Commons Mobile, ASSIST and IAR to a [two-factor authentication](#) system using either [Login.gov](#) or an [InCommon Federated Account](#) that supports NIH's two-factor authentication standards, users will still need to maintain their eRA Commons username and password for the time being.

In November (exact date to be announced), NIH will be moving from passwords to passphrases — a set of random words or a sentence at least 15 characters long. Passphrases will only need to be updated annually, as opposed to every 120 days under the current password system. This change is part of a new NIH password policy designed to make passwords easy for users to remember but hard for others to guess. The new policy aims to improve user experience and enhance cybersecurity.

Once this new change is in effect, Commons users will be prompted to change their password to a passphrase when trying user credentials with an expired or forgotten password. Users are advised to avoid words that can be easily guessed, such as family names.

Welcome New Faculty

[Ulas Bagci, PhD](#), joins as an associate professor in the Department of [Radiology](#). His research interests are machine learning and artificial intelligence and their applications in biomedical and clinical imaging. Bagci has more than 230 peer-reviewed articles on these topics. Previously, he was a staff scientist and lab co-manager at the NIH's radiology and imaging sciences department in the Center for Infectious Disease Imaging. Bagci is principal investigator on two NIH R01 grants and serves as a steering committee member of the NIH's Artificial Intelligence Resource. He is also a member of the [Lurie Cancer Center](#). Bagci holds a PhD from the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom.



Sponsored Research

M PI: Jody Ciolino, PhD, associate professor of Preventive Medicine in the Division of Biostatistics and of Medicine in the Division of General Internal Medicine and Geriatrics; director of the Master of Science in Biostatistics program



PI: Daniela Ladner, MD, MPH, professor of Surgery in the Division of Organ Transplantation and of Medical Social Sciences; interim director of the Comprehensive Transplant Center



Sponsor: National Institute of Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Title: Liver Cirrhosis Network: Scientific and Data Coordination Center

Liver cirrhosis poses a significant public health burden in the United States as it is associated with substantial morbidity, mortality and cost. An estimated one-third of patients develop decompensating events such as gastrointestinal variceal bleeding, ascites, hepatic encephalopathy (HE), jaundice and renal impairment. Further, these poor outcomes are also associated with development of hepatocellular carcinoma in the cirrhotic liver, the ninth leading cause of death among cancers within the U.S.

While transplantation is a curative treatment for cirrhosis, patients are often ineligible for transplantation due to lack of available organs and additional risks involved. Thus, patients and providers frequently focus on symptomatic treatment options such as lifestyle/nutrition modifications to initiate weight loss and optimize protein absorption, non-selective beta-blockers to reduce the risk of gastrointestinal bleeding and treatment for HE to improve confusion. A recent meta-analysis suggests statin therapy as a promising treatment for cirrhosis as statins tend to decrease oxidative stress and inflammation and increase endothelial cell function, with downstream effects including reduction of hepatic inflammation, fibrosis and vascular tone.

Although this review represents over 120 thousand patients, true efficacy data in the setting of a randomized controlled trial (RCT) are presently limited to just four RCTs from outside of the U.S., representing less than 300 patients with cirrhosis. To better understand the natural history of the disease and to further evaluate the use of statins in the treatment of cirrhosis, the Liver Cirrhosis Network (LCN), consisting of up to 10 clinical centers and one Scientific and Data Coordination Center, has been charged with developing (a) a prospective observational cohort and (b) an RCT to evaluate statin efficacy in patients with cirrhosis. Northwestern University Data Analysis and Coordinating Center ([NUACC](#)) and its partners have been selected to serve as the SDCC – the central scientific and leadership core for the LCN – coordinating all operational and data-related activities using cutting-edge resources for study design, planning and conduct, ongoing monitoring and statistical analyses.

[Read more](#)

PI: Emily Lattie, PhD, assistant professor of Medical Social Sciences and of Preventive Medicine



Sponsor: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality

Title: Implementation of Digital Mental Health Tools in Ambulatory Care Coordination

Care coordination services have been developed to provide safer and more effective care for patients who have difficulty managing their healthcare. The role of care managers (CMs) working in care coordination is intended to take a holistic view of patients and to improve healthcare system efficiency, yet there remain several gaps in the efficiency of this work. CMs often struggle to find resources for their patients, particularly in the realm of depression management. Resources are limited, waitlists for services are long and many patients are hesitant to seek mental healthcare.

Our research group has developed a productive partnership with the Ambulatory Care Coordination service at Northwestern Medicine – a large integrated delivery system of more than 3,500 physicians, serving one million patients. Currently, CMs, primarily nurses by training, provide remote coordination services to patients who typically have multiple physical and mental health conditions. They report abundant challenges in supporting patients with depression. A digital mental health intervention packaged within a patient management system for depression would fill the need for depression management resources and fit into CM work.

The overarching aim of the proposed project is to adapt and implement a digital mental health intervention to improve access to and coordination of mental health services in Ambulatory Care Coordination. Specifically, this study aims to: 1) adapt a digital mental health platform and service model to address implementation barriers within care coordination, 2) develop and subsequently optimize a multicomponent implementation strategy, and 3) conduct a randomized rollout effectiveness-implementation trial of the digital mental health platform and a sustainment pilot period in the four regional teams of the Ambulatory Care Coordination service. Data gathered throughout this project will be used to develop an implementation guide, capable of being used by other healthcare systems as they expand their mental health service offerings to provide holistic support for patients.

[Read more](#)

Funding

Career Development Program

[More information](#)

Sponsor: Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

Application Deadline: November 1 (eligibility due);
November 15 (abstract due)

Award Amount: Awards are offered in the categories of Scholar (\$600K), Scholar in Clinical Research (\$625K), Special Fellow (\$134K-\$201K) and Fellow (\$180K).

Synopsis: The Career Development Program provides awards to researchers engaging in basic, clinical or translational research to help understand and treat hematologic malignancies and relevant premalignant conditions. Please see each program description for additional eligibility information.

Neurosurgeon Research Career Development Program (K12 Independent Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

[More information](#)

Sponsor: National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS)

Application Deadline: December 15

Award Amount: NINDS intends to commit approximately \$1.36M in direct costs in fiscal year 2023 to fund one award.

Synopsis: The purpose of this funding opportunity is to invite applications to continue support for the Neurosurgeon Research Career Development Program, a national program of mentored research career development for junior neurosurgeon faculty at institutions nationwide that support

neurosurgical research. The goal of the program is to expand the cadre of neurosurgeon investigators trained to conduct high-quality, impactful research into neurological disorders, making use of their neurosurgical training.

Virtual Consortium for Translational/ Transdisciplinary Environmental Research (ViCTER) (R01 Clinical Trial Optional)

[More information](#)

Sponsor: National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS)

Letter of Intent Due: January 2, 2022

Application Deadline: February 1, 2022

Award Information: NIEHS intends to fund an estimated 3-4 awards, corresponding to a total of \$2.75M for each fiscal year (FY): FY 2023, FY 2024 and FY 2025.

Synopsis: The purpose of the ViCTER program is to use the R01 mechanism to foster and promote early-stage transdisciplinary collaborations and/or translational research efforts to address fundamental research among basic (technology and mechanism oriented), clinical (patient-oriented) and population-based researchers in the environmental health field. The newly established collaborative teams will come together in common interest to investigate potential links between human health and one or more environmental stressor(s). The ViCTER program is intended to support innovative high-risk, high-reward transdisciplinary/translational research projects that are more difficult to achieve in a typical R01 application. Collaboration among investigators at different institutions through a virtual consortium arrangement is encouraged.

Africa's Research Enterprise *(continued from page 2)*

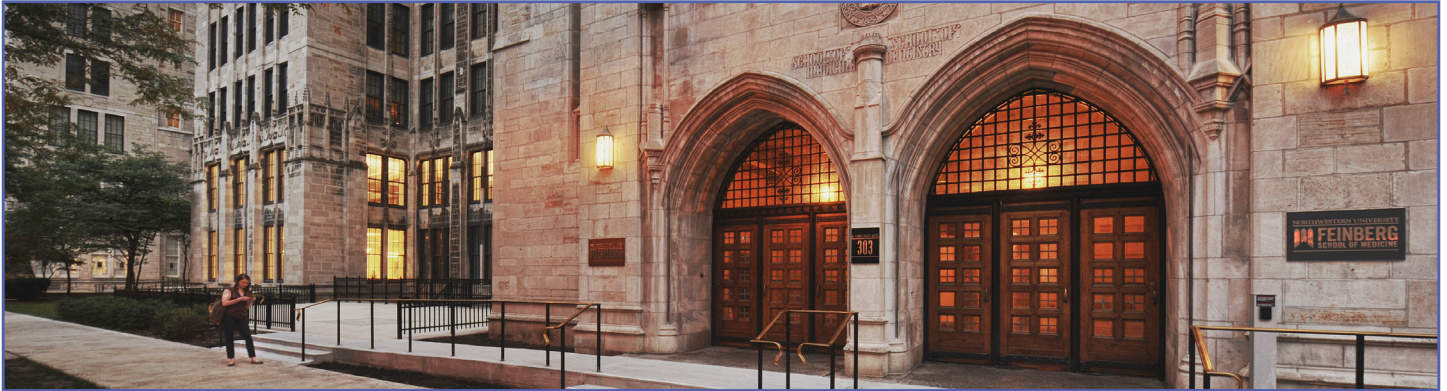
"Prior to 2008, we were generating tons of clinical data in Jos. But one of the serious gaps I noticed was that I had no knowledge or skills in epidemiology, in querying data, in formulating an appropriate research hypothesis and even going about how to answer research questions," Musa said. "When I came to Northwestern, the faculty taught me how to decipher information from data, and since then, my academic story has changed."

Soon after completing the program, Musa returned to Feinberg and earned his doctorate from Feinberg's Health Sciences Integrated PhD Program ([HSIP](#)). During his doctoral program, Musa mobilized investigators from the University of Jos and University of Lagos in Nigeria to identify epigenomic biomarkers in two of the most common HIV-associated cancers in Nigeria: cervical cancer and liver cancer, which comes with a life expectancy of three months in Africa compared to five years in the U.S.

In 2018, Musa was named adjunct professor of Preventive Medicine in the Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Prevention at Feinberg. Shortly after, he received a K43 award to study the epigenetic mechanisms that contribute to HPV persistence and clearance to improve therapeutic interventions for women with cervical cancer.

"I cannot write my academic and scientific story without mentioning what Dr. Murphy and other Northwestern faculty have done for me," Musa said. "I conduct research, I analyze data and I share research knowledge without much difficulty anymore. I owe this to the faculty and the educational opportunity I had at Northwestern through this program. They have done incredibly well with educating and training me, and equipping me to be a successful researcher."

You are not alone: 12 million registered ORCID iDs and counting...



By Karen Gutzman, head, Research Assessment and Communications

If you have ever tried to find a researcher's entire body of scholarly work based on their name, maybe even with a few identifying characteristics such as subject area, years active or geographical region, you will instantly understand the painful problem of name disambiguation. At last count, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Science Report counted 7.8 million full-time equivalent researchers in 2013¹, which accounts for about 0.1 percent of the global population. Moreover, with all those researchers, there is bound to be overlap if we only rely on names for identifying scholarly contributions.

To address this issue, the scholarly community created the Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID), which can uniquely identify and connect researchers to their scholarly contributions regardless of whether the researcher changes their name, their field of study, or any of their affiliations. Since 2015, over 12 million researchers have registered for an ORCID iD.

How can you register for an ORCID iD?

You can quickly register for an ORCID iD using the [Northwestern ORCID Enrollment](#) site. Even if you already have an ORCID iD, we highly recommend you use this site to link your ORCID iD to your Northwestern credentials.

Are you unsure if you have an ORCID iD?

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- If you find your ORCID iD, [then connect your ORCID iD with your NetID here.](#)
- If you don't find your ORCID iD, [then create a new ORCID iD here.](#)
- If you find an ORCID iD and you are unsure if it is yours, [then try connecting to your \(possibly\) existing ORCID iD here.](#)

How can you use your ORCID?

Signing up for an ORCID iD takes only a few minutes and you can make use of it in many different situations.

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- Include your ORCID iD on conference posters (generate a QR code, if you like, right from your ORCID record page), to direct people to your work.
- Consider including your ORCID iD on your webpage, on social media accounts and your email signature.

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Several new and exciting changes about ORCID are worth mentioning.

- Newly designed profiles. The ORCID interface has a fresh new look that improves readability and accessibility for users.
- Highlighting contributions. ORCID will soon be supporting the CRediT ontology, a popular contributor role taxonomy that represents contributions to a scientific scholarly output.
- Requirements by NIH. As of January 2020, the NIH requires ORCID identifiers at the time of application for individual fellowship and career development awards.
- New research types. ORCID now supports Data Management Plans on the list of work types within the registry.

Galter Library is just a click away.

Need some help with your ORCID? Curious about how to use your ORCID with sciENcv? Want to request a presentation to your faculty on ORCID? See our online [ORCID Guide](#) or contact your [liaison librarian](#).

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2. ORCID Statistics. <https://orcid.org/statistics>

High-Impact Factor Research

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Featured Core

Pathology Core Facility

The [Pathology Core Facility](#) at the [Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center](#) of Northwestern University provides Lurie Cancer Center investigators histology, immunohistochemistry, molecular analysis and extraction, and microscopic evaluation services for human tissue-based studies. The core offers multiple laboratory services supporting basic, translational and clinical research, as well as the procurement of fresh biospecimens for biomarker-based clinical trials and biobanking.

Key services include:

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- [Immunochemistry laboratory](#)
- [Molecular laboratory](#)
- [Microscopy laboratory](#)
- [Biorepository laboratory](#)

In partnership with the Clinical Trials Office at the cancer center, the core's [Clinical Trials Unit](#) also participates in industry-sponsored and investigator-initiated clinical trials.

Contact:

Jian-Jun Wei, MD, Director
jianjun-wei@northwestern.edu

Demirkan Gürsel, MSc, PhD, Scientific Director
demirkan.gursel@northwestern.edu

Location:

Olson Pavilion, 8-419
710 N. Fairbanks Court

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