

# Lerner Trainee Newsletter

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

*Click to navigate*

- 2 [Puzzle](#)
- 3 [Recent Events](#)
- 5 [Upcoming Events](#)
- 13 [Meet your Fellow](#)
- 14 [Meet your Grad Student](#)
- 15 [Recent Accomplishments](#)
- 16 [Opportunities](#)
- 21 [Monthly feature: CCF Innovations](#)
- 24 [Wellness Resources](#)
- 25 [Behind the Scenes](#)

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

Email [LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org) to connect with us.

**Welcome to the March 2025 Lerner Trainee Newsletter!** We're here to keep you informed and inspired with important updates and resources to help you succeed in your training! Check out our recently added section, a science-themed puzzle with a chance to win a prize!

In *Recent Events*, the 2025 Buddy Mentor Program has expanded significantly—a testament to our commitment to fostering meaningful connections and career development. Our senior trainee mentors continue to play a crucial role in guiding junior trainees, sharing knowledge, and strengthening our collaborative environment. We also highlighted the National Wear Red Day with fun trivia!

In the *Meet your* sections, we introduce Dr. Atif Z. Khan and PhD student Rana Abdelgawad, spotlighting their diverse journeys and research passions, from drug discovery to investigating molecular mechanisms in disease pathology. Their stories highlight a commitment to innovation, collaboration, and mentorship—key pillars of the LRI. Be sure to visit our *Recent Accomplishments* section and congratulate your colleagues for their awards, publications, talks, and career milestones. Want to get featured? Check out the *Opportunities* section and start applying. Many have upcoming deadlines in March!

This month, *CCF Innovations* introduces Dr. Joseph Iannotti who shares his decade-long journey of transformative innovations in shoulder surgery. Dr. Iannotti emphasizes the power of perseverance, collaboration, and Cleveland Clinic's commitment to discovery in driving groundbreaking advancements in patient care.

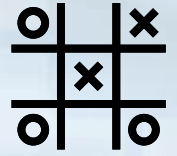
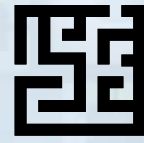
Lastly, trainees can find *Wellness Resources* that provide Yoga, Meditation, Fitness, and Culinary Medicine sessions. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter, please reach out to us at [LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org).



## 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.](#)

# LTA Newsletter Puzzle



**Congratulations to our December 2024 puzzle winner Vishal Srivastava!!**

## How to play:

- Figure out the correct sentence. **Hint: Ocean and Oxygen**
- Submit the correct answer via this [link](#) or by scanning the QR Code.

## Rules:

- Only one entry per person into raffle.
- One raffle winner will be selected at random and notified via CCF email to pick up prize.



A P R R W H E Q C P I O V U N P V G H G  
 I N O H E U X O S R W H F B T I Q H S  
 O N O P W I N T H C O D G W H C  
 I N O H T O P S Q T R V P S J I H S  
 D B T N P D F W Q G I Q S X  
 R V P S I D , A P V X P O , A N D D H C O  
 Z P T I O W Q P I N P I T P S  
 R N H I H D U S I N O D Q A O

# Recent Events

## 2025 LTA Buddy Mentor Program

The Lerner Trainee Association is pleased to announce the kick start of the new 2025 Buddy Mentor Program. This initiative is to connect LRI trainees (post-docs and graduate students) who joined LRI for less than a year with a senior LRI trainee mentor who not only understands your research background but is also eager to guide you on your academic journey at LRI. In 2024, we proudly had 11 mentors and 12 mentees, with mentors playing a key role in guiding junior trainees through their research and career growth. This year, we're thrilled to welcome 17 mentors and 14 mentees—an incredible sign of growth and commitment to mentorship! Through this program, mentors and mentees form meaningful connections, share knowledge, and support one another in their professional journeys. We can't wait to see how this year's cohort thrives!



New and returning mentees bonded over a pizza lunch!



Congratulations to Dr. Bishnu Datt Pant and Dr. William Massey for winning the **2024 Best Peer Mentor Award!**



2024 mentors and mentees were recognized with certificates for their dedication and impact.

The Buddy Mentor Program continues to foster a supportive and collaborative community at LRI. With this year's growth, we look forward to seeing even more meaningful connections and shared successes. Thank you to all our mentors and mentees for your dedication to learning and guiding others.

# Recent Events

## 2025 National Wear Red Day

On Friday, February 7, 2025, caregivers at the Lerner Research Institute and the Cleveland Clinic main campus donned red in support of the American Heart Association's [National Wear Red Day](#), raising awareness for women's heart health. Cardiovascular disease remains the leading cause of death among women, yet nearly 80% of heart-related issues are preventable with lifestyle changes and early detection. To commemorate the day, we're featuring a collection of event photos, celebrating our community's commitment to heart health advocacy.

♥ **Heart Health Trivia:** Did you know the human heart beats about 100,000 times per day? Your heart pumps about 2,000 gallons of blood every day!

🩺 **Fact or Fiction?** Heart disease affects more women than breast cancer. (Answer: True! Heart disease is the leading cause of death for women.)

🏃 **Challenge:** How many steps do you aim for each day? What's your favorite way to stay active—dancing, hiking, yoga, or something else?

Think you're up to date on the latest risks, research and care? Learn more [here](#) or [take this quiz](#) to discover your level of heart health.



*Quiz and photo courtesy of LRI Communication Office*

# Upcoming Events

## Lerner Trainee Association



# RePlay *for Kids* Toy Drive



**February 10 – March 10, 2025**

Please help us collect new or gently used, battery operated toys for children with disabilities:

- Plush toys
- Action figures
- Motor vehicles
- Musical toys

Donation box locations:

- ND2-650 BME Commons
- NB2 Central Office mailbox
- NB3 elevators
- NE6 elevators
- Lerner Commons kitchenette
- QHS - JN3

Questions? [LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org)

[www.replayforkids.org](http://www.replayforkids.org)

Before donating, please review the following toy guidelines:

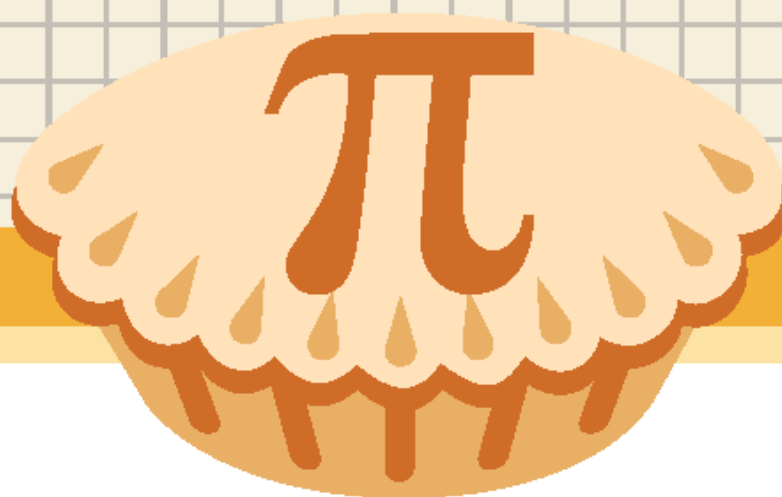


Or, shop from the RePlay for Kids Amazon wish list:



# Upcoming Events

---



## SAVE THE DATE: PI DAY

**FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 2025**  
**12:30 - 1:30 PM**  
**NE1-205 CONFERENCE ROOM**

**Bake a *sweet* or *savory* pie (or two!) to share**  
***Questions? Contact Jasmine (gajetoj2@ccf.org)***

# Upcoming Events



# SPOTLIGHT SERIES



Presented by the LRI Faculty Center

**Friday, March 14 • 4 – 5 pm**

NE1-205, Refreshments in NC1 atrium to follow

## Spotlight on Physician-Scientists

Featuring Drs. Amy Attaway, Natalie Silver, Matthew Grabowski



**Dr. Amy Attaway**  
"Nocturnal hypoxemia dysregulates skeletal muscle protein homeostasis in COPD"



**Dr. Natalie Silver**  
"Modulating the Tumor Microenvironment in Head and Neck Cancer: a Translational Approach"



**Dr. Matthew Grabowski**  
"Deciphering the role of lactotransferrin in the glioblastoma tumor immune microenvironment"

\*In-person on main campus, hybrid link will be provided for satellite campuses

# Upcoming Events



**CBTA**  
Cleveland Biomedical  
Trainee Alliance

**presents the 2025**

**PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
CONFERENCE**

TINKHAM VEALE  
UNIVERSITY CENTER  
BALLROOMS

**March 19, 2025  
9 AM - 5 PM**

Join us for a series of concurrent sessions that is tailored to trainee professional, personal, and career development! Open to all trainees interested in furthering professional development, regardless of discipline.

**SPONSORED BY:**

- CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY School of Medicine
- CWRU Biomedical Graduate Student Organization
- CCF Lerner Trainee Association
- Cleveland Clinic
- GSC
- CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
- CSU
- ABCE
- CSU AFB
- CWRU BME GSA
- CWRU Postdoc Association

**With Keynote Speaker:**  
**Shereen Naser, PhD**  
Assoc. Professor at Cleveland State University

**NETWORKING**  
**WORKSHOPS**  
**PANELS**

**Register now!**

Registration for the CBTA 2025 Professional Development Conference is now open! Space is limited so please register ASAP [here](#) or via the QR code in the flyer. Thanks to generous supporters, we are able to provide access to the plethora of resources at the conference for a general trainee admission fee of only \$10 that covers all days. See further details next page!



# Upcoming Events



## 2025 CBTA Professional Development Conference

Wednesday, March 19th		Tinkham Veale University Center Kelvin & Eleanor Smith Foundation Grand Ballrooms A, B, C
Time	Session	Speakers
9:00-9:30am	Check-In	
9:30-9:50am	Welcome and Introduction	
9:50-10:50am	Keynote Address	<b>Shereen Naser, PhD</b> <i>Assoc. Professor, Cleveland State University</i>
11:00-12:00pm (Concurrent)	<b>Session 1A: Conducting Research with a Purpose</b>	<b>Eric Schearer, PhD</b> <i>Staff Scientist, The MetroHealth System</i>
	<b>Session 1B: Becoming Faculty in Academia Panel</b>	<b>Prahaba Sikder, PhD</b> <i>Asst. Professor, Cleveland State University</i> <b>Akhil Mohan, PhD</b> <i>Research Associate, Cleveland Clinic</i> <b>Ana Hernandez-Reynoso, PhD</b> <i>Asst. Professor, Case Western Reserve University</i>
	<b>Session 1C: From Research To The Interview: The Skill of Articulating Your Research Thesis and Building Career Readiness</b>	<b>John Nelson-Hronek, MEd</b> <i>Career Specialist/Instructor, Cleveland State University</i>
12:00-1:10pm	Break	
1:20-2:20pm (Concurrent)	<b>Session 2A: Crafting Your Personal Brand as a Biomedical Researcher</b>	<b>Rowan Barker-Clarke, PhD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic</i>
	<b>Session 2B: Strategic Moves for Postdocs to Propel Their Careers</b>	<b>Priya Putta, PhD</b> <i>Program Manager, Cleveland Clinic</i> <b>Akhil Mohan, PhD</b> <i>Research Associate, Cleveland Clinic</i> <b>Sepideh Khazie, MD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic</i>
2:30-3:30pm (Concurrent)	<b>Session 3A: Academic Pursuit and Clinical Practice</b>	<b>Rohit Moudgil, MD, PhD, FRCPC, FACC</b> <i>Asst. Professor, Cleveland Clinic Lerner School of Medicine and CWRU</i>
	<b>Session 3B: Women in Academia and Industry Panel</b>	<b>Elise Baron, PhD</b> <i>Director of Research, Augment Therapy</i> <b>Sarah Busch, PhD</b> <i>Cell Therapy Development, Translational Neuroscientist, Strategic Advisor</i> <b>Diana Zajac, PhD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic</i> <b>Camila Caetano, PhD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic</i>
3:40-4:40pm (Concurrent)	<b>Session 4A: Crafting Your Personal Brand as a Biomedical Researcher</b>	<b>Rowan Barker-Clarke, PhD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic</i>
	<b>Session 4B: Becoming a Postdoc in an Academic Role Panel</b>	<b>Diana Zajac, PhD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic</i> <b>Camila Caetano, PhD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic</i> <b>Alejandro Neito Ramos, PhD</b> <i>Postdoctoral Fellow, Cleveland Clinic</i>

# Upcoming Events

---



## **CTSC Research Discovery Day: A Celebration of Collaboration and Career Exploration in Clinical and Translational Research**

Date: March 21, 2025

Time: 8:30AM - 2:00PM

Location: Tinkham Veale University Center, CWRU (all Ballrooms)

The Case Western Reserve University Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative (CTSC) will be hosting its first Research Discovery Day! The CTSC is looking for investigators who would like to volunteer to assist students with judging posters at the event, and/or network with students to discuss your research journey at a luncheon. You are also welcome to attend the entire day. [Click here](#) to register to participate. Find more information [here](#). Please send questions to [ctsc-discoveryday@case.edu](mailto:ctsc-discoveryday@case.edu).

# Upcoming Events



## Scientific Symposium Honoring the Life and Legacy of Charis Eng, MD, PhD

### March 31, 2025

Bunts Auditorium\* | Webex

Join us for a special scientific symposium honoring the legacy of the late Dr. Charis Eng. The event will feature leading experts exploring key topics in genetics research and beyond. We hope you will join us in celebrating Dr. Eng's lasting contributions to science and her impact on the global medical community.

View the agenda, speakers and more:

<https://eng-symposium.splashthat.com/>

\*RSVP required for in-person attendance:

<https://forms.office.com/r/6yQmUKD3tL>

Can't attend in person? Join virtually via Webex (RSVP not required):

<https://cmrccf.webex.com/cmrcf/j.php?MTID=m8269bacf1613e64e21702fa34585df40>



Scan to view event website



# Upcoming Events



## Graduate Student Appreciation Week is Almost Here!

April 7<sup>th</sup>  
through  
April 11<sup>th</sup>



GSAW 2025

Celebrating the  
Invaluable  
Contributions of  
170+ LRI Graduate  
Students

## EVENT DETAILS COMING SOON



# Meet your Fellow

Atif Z. Khan

PhD

## Where are you from?

I'm from India.

## What is your educational background?

I completed my B.Sc. in Biochemistry from Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Aligarh, India. Later, I pursued both my Masters and PhD in Biochemistry in the same department. In my Masters project I worked towards identifying new chemical drug molecules and their mechanism of action against trematode parasites. While in Master's program, I had the opportunity to visit University of Wisconsin - Madison, USA under prestigious Khorana Scholar Exchange program. In the exchange program, I worked in the lab of Prof. James Thomson at Wisconsin Institute of Discovery, UW – Madison to investigate the role of transcriptional factors in stem cell biology. After completing my PhD, I also worked as an *ad hoc* Assistant Professor in the same department and taught courses at BS and MS levels. I started my postdoc career in 2020 and worked with Prof. Ruiwen Zhang at University of Houston, Houston, Texas, to identify new drug molecules for neuroblastoma therapy. Thereafter, I moved to Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio at the end of 2020, and worked with Dr. Ganapati Mahabaleshwar, to investigate the molecular mechanism by which CITED2 and KLF6 (transcriptional factors) regulates the macrophage inflammatory gene expression and pathogenesis in atherosclerosis and diet-induced obesity.

## What did your graduate research focus on?

The laboratory focused on free radical biology, diabetes and cancer therapeutics. In my PhD program, I worked in the lab of Prof. Imrana Naseem and the PhD thesis focused to investigate the anticancer activity and mechanism of coumestrol, a phytoestrogen, in breast cancer cells. I was successfully able to identify anticancer activity of coumestrol in breast cancer cells,

and establish copper-targeted reactive oxygen species mediated p53 dependent mechanism of coumestrol in estrogen positive breast cancer cells. However, coumestrol anticancer activity was found to be non-copper targeted ROS independent in triple negative breast cancer cells. These findings help better understand anticancer mechanism of coumestrol (phytoestrogen) and establish it as a lead molecule for breast cancer treatment.

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

My previous postdoc mentor at CWRU collaborated with Dr. Andrei Ivanov, current mentor. A year before I left CWRU, I visited Dr. Andrei Ivanov's lab, and I liked this research.

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

I work with Dr. Andrei Ivanov at the Department of Inflammation and Immunity, it's been almost two years since I joined the lab.

## What is your current research focus?

Our lab focuses on epithelial barrier integrity in the small and large intestines, and role of cytoskeletal proteins in intestinal fibrosis. My first project specifically investigates the role of septin cytoskeleton in intestinal fibrosis by regulating contractile properties and extracellular matrix production by activated myofibroblasts. My second project investigates the role of cell division cycle 42 (Cdc42), Rho family of small GTPases, in regulating fibrogenic activation of intestinal myofibroblasts in vitro.

## What do you like to do outside of the laboratory?

I enjoy spending time with my friends, reading books, exploring new food outlets, listening music and gaming. And of course, I love road trips with friends and family.

# Meet your Graduate Student

Rana Abdelgawad



## Where are you from?

The Pearl of the Mediterranean, Alexandria, Egypt.

## What is your educational background?

I earned my PharmD from Pharos University in Alexandria, Egypt, in 2017. After a brief stint as a pharmacist, I realized I was more curious about what happens in the lab than behind the pharmacy counter. That curiosity led me to Dayton, Ohio, where I pursued a master's degree in Pharmacology at Wright State University. My thesis explored the role of NKCC1 transporter in diabetes and obesity, a topic that kept me both fascinated and caffeinated. Afterward, I worked as a research assistant, sharpening my technical skills and diving deeper into the world of science. In 2022, I embarked on the next big adventure: pursuing a PhD in Pharmacology at the BSTP program at Case Western Reserve University.

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

This past spring/early summer, I joined Andrew Dhawan's (Tabula Rasa) Lab at Cleveland Clinic as a rising third-year PhD student and advanced to candidacy shortly after. Our lab brings together the powers of applied mathematics, computer science, data science, genomics, pharmacology, wet lab biology, and patient registry studies, all with one goal: to improve care for patients with neurological diseases like glioblastoma. These conditions currently lack long-term effective treatments, and we're determined to change that. It's a dynamic environment where every day feels like a step closer to making a difference in patients' lives.

## How did you decide on the Cleveland Clinic?

As I started exploring potential labs to join as a PhD student, I knew I wanted to take my research to the next level in a place that combined cutting-edge science with real-world impact. That's when, I came across a newsletter highlighting the School of Medicine's strategic plan to harness artificial intelligence and machine learning in translational research, spearheaded by Dr. Satish E. Viswanath and Dr. Jacob Scott. It immediately clicked.

After meeting with Dr. Scott, he introduced me to my incredible new PI, Dr. Andrew Dhawan and his lab. Our lab operates across both the LRI and Taussig, and we collaborate closely with Dr. Scott and Dr. Justin Lathia, an expert in GBM. It's the perfect blend of dry and wet lab research, where computational power meets experimental biology. The collaborative environment at Cleveland Clinic felt like the ideal place to grow as a scientist, and I've been inspired every day since joining.

## What is your current research focus?

My research explores glioblastoma's (GBM) knack for survival and resistance by recreating its interactions with normal brain cells. Using a mix of GBM cells, both IDH-wildtype and IDH1-mutant, cultured with human neurons, astrocytes, and microglia, brain-like co-cultures are developed to simulate the tumor microenvironment. A key focus is understanding how GBM cells exploit glutamate receptor-mediated calcium signaling, a pathway that keeps them alive, growing, and resistant to therapies. Treatments like temozolomide (TMZ), radiation, and tumor-treating fields (TTF) are applied to induce resistance, followed by drug screenings to uncover vulnerabilities. Stressful conditions like hypoxia and low glucose are also introduced to mimic the harsh tumor environment and identify weaknesses. The ultimate goal? To uncover smarter, targeted therapies that flip GBM's strengths into weaknesses because even cancer cells can't win forever.

## What do you like to do outside of the work?

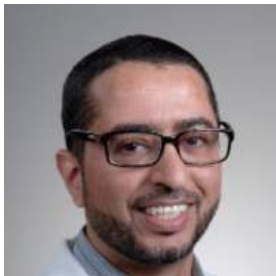
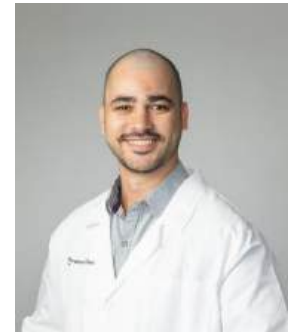
Outside my research, I love diving into video games whether it's exploring open worlds or solving tricky puzzles. I'm also a fan of music, art, and movies, especially ones that spark a little creativity or curiosity. Lately, I've been getting back into reading, and I'm currently working my way through *Sophie's World*, a novel that manages to make philosophy both fun and thought-provoking. And obviously, I enjoy experimenting with new recipes in the kitchen, it's science with tastier results!

# Accomplishments

## **Congratulations to Dr. Costa and Dr. Sautto from the Sautto Lab in Florida Research and Innovation Center!**

Dr. Gabriel Costa's and Dr. Giuseppa Sautto's recent article titled "Towards an HCV vaccine: an overview of the immunization strategies for eliciting an effective B-cell response" was published in *Expert Review of Vaccines*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/14760584.2025.2452955>



## **Congratulations to Dr. Almotah from the Wessely Lab in the Department of Cardiovascular and Metabolic Diseases!**

Dr. Khalil Almotah defended his dissertation "Inflammatory Responses Alter Interstitial Fibroblasts in Ulcerative Colitis" This work will be published in the next few weeks.

## **Congratulations to Nour Mouannes from the Brown Lab in the Department of Cancer Biology!**

Nour Mounannes, PhD student, won the best oral talk at Case Comprehensive Cancer Center Workshop 2025 in Cleveland, OH. The title of the talk was "Gut Microbes Shape The Effect of Dietary Fatty Acids in Liver Inflammation and Non-alcoholic Steatohepatitis".



## **Congratulations to Dr. Marquez from the Escobar Lab in the Department of Biomedical Engineering!**

Dr. Gerardo Marin Marquez is moving from the Neural Dynamics and Modulation Lab, LRI, to the Department of Surgery, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), Mexico City, Mexico, to begin a Surgery Residency. As a neurosurgeon he aims to integrate the anatomical knowledge of neurosurgery, the investigative methods of neuroscience, the technological approaches of biomedical engineering, and the pattern-detection strategies of neurophysics to deepen our understanding of the brain. By combining these disciplines, he plans to

launch a research line dedicated to exploring the neurophysical bases of consciousness. As a surgery resident, he wishes not only refine clinical and operative skills but also to expand his knowledge of the brain's structure and function—ultimately paving the way for innovative therapeutic strategies and groundbreaking research in functional neurosurgery.

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

[LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org)

# Opportunities

## Professional Development

- **Learn how to advance your research with the Center for Computational Life Sciences (CCLS).** Whether you're looking to expand your research through biospecimens or high-performance computing, CCLS offers a variety of opportunities to learn and collaborate across the enterprise. With state-of-the-art resources and facilities including the Cleveland Clinic BioRepository and the Discovery Accelerator, we can advance our research like never before. Find more information, including a video about the progress made in CCLS programs, [here](#).
  - Lara Jehi, MD, Director of CCLS and Chief Research Information Officer, recently shared more about how clinicians and researchers can get involved with the CCLS's programs. Topics covered in her webinar included:
    - How institutes across CCF are collaborating on Discovery Accelerator projects
    - Funding opportunities as an entry point to implementing high-performance computing in research projects
    - Bio-R growth and sample availability, as well as new tools to search biospecimens
    - How Bio-R co-enrollment can support future studies
  - Discover the progress each program has made and all the ways you can get involved in the video [here](#).
  - For more questions, feel free to contact [ccls@ccf.org](mailto:ccls@ccf.org) or visit these pages:
    - [BioRepository intranet](#)
    - [DA internet/website](#)
    - [CCLS intranet](#)
- **Complete Career Masterclass Collection:** RETC is covering the cost for all of you to access Jeremy's Complete Career Masterclass Collection on LinkedIn + ChatGPT (see Upcoming Events, page 8). Claim your free access to the course collection by [registering here](#) before July 1st, 2025, for lifetime access!

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

[LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org)



# Opportunities

## Professional Development

- **A Science Career Toolkit:** [This collection of articles](#) from Science Careers was curated to offer useful and actionable advice about some of the most common challenges faced by early-career scientists.
- **2025 Office of Educator & Scholar Development | Overview of Programs and Offerings and Updates:** The Education Institute offers both live and self-paced teaching courses. [Click here](#) to see the full list of offerings. Postdoctoral Fellows are now eligible to participate in their *Distinguished Educator Implementation Programs* (4 individual programs), after they have completed the *Distinguished Trainee Educator Program*. For questions, please contact [educatordevelopment@ccf.org](mailto:educatordevelopment@ccf.org).
- **New Educator Development for Students:** This online, on-demand course provides an opportunity for students at Cleveland Clinic to explore key topics in health professions education. PhD students are eligible to participate! This is a great course to take if you are interested in teaching. [Click here](#) to register.
- **Mandel Global Leadership and Learning Institute Courses:** Check out free online opportunities to engage connect and help grow your skills as a leader [here](#).
- **NPA SmartSkills webinar:** You can find a recording of the February course titled “Applying a Project Management Lens to your Job Search” [here](#). You can find other archived NPA webinars [here](#).

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

[LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org)

# Opportunities

## Funding, Awards, and Grant Writing

- **Lower Award:** William E. Lower, one of the founders of Cleveland Clinic established this award with the purpose of encouraging original investigation and professional excellence in the preparation of scientific papers. Postdoctoral research fellows are eligible to apply. A total of four awards are given, first and second place in both clinical and non-clinical categories. Recipients receive certificates and \$1000 first place/\$500 second place cash awards presented at the Annual GME Awards Dinner. **Deadline: March 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:59PM.** Apply [here](#).
- **Tarazi Fellowship Award:** The Tarazi Fellowship Award was established in memory of the late Dr. Robert C. Tarazi, former Vice Chairman of the Division of Research. The award's purpose is to recognize papers which make an outstanding contribution in Cardiovascular Research aimed at better understanding and/or treating cardiovascular disease. Postdoctoral research fellows are eligible to apply. Recipient receives \$1000 cash award presented at the Annual GME Awards Dinner. **Deadline: March 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:59PM.** Apply [here](#).
- **The Mary B Stark Travel Award for Graduate Students:** available for full-time graduate students who have been selected to give a presentation at a scientific meeting, to help with the costs of attendance. **Deadline: March 31<sup>st</sup> at 11:59PM.** See [flyer](#) and apply [here](#).
- **CTSC T32 Postdoctoral Training Program:** The Clinical and Translational Science Collaborative (CTSC) is now accepting applications for one T32 postdoctoral slot to begin September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025. The program aims to develop Clinical/Translational scientists with skills for interdisciplinary work, ability to work across disciplines, and ability to envision and design advances in clinical and community settings. Visit [the website](#) and see [Request for Applications document](#) for more information. **Deadline: April 14<sup>th</sup>.**

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

[LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org)

# Opportunities

## Funding, Awards, and Grant Writing

- **Alumni Association Postdoctoral Fellow Travel Award:** The Cleveland Clinic Alumni Association has generously provided funds for awards of up to five \$1,000 awards per application cycle for postdoctoral fellows who have presented their research at a nationally recognized scientific meeting in 2025. See [flyer](#) for eligibility and submission guidelines. The deadline for 2025's cycle 1 is April 25th. Apply [here](#).
- **Researchers' Writing Podcast:** Podcast is hosted by Anna Clemens, Ph.D., who has helped hundreds of researchers inside her online program, the [Researchers' Writing Academy](#), develop a structured writing process so they can get published in top-tier journals time-efficiently. Subscribe on YouTube [here](#). On this podcast, you will learn how to:
  - Write scientific research papers time-efficiently
  - Get published in your target journals
  - Structure a paper so that it tells a compelling and coherent story
  - Develop a healthy (and joyful!) relationship with your writing The Researchers' Writing
- **The POSTDOCKet | A Personal Guide to Applying for the NIH K99/R00 by Debosmita Sardar, PhD:** The NIH's K99/R00 Pathway to Independence Award provides up to five years of grant support in two phases - two years of mentored postdoctoral training (K99) and additional funding for up to three years of independent research support (R00). This prestigious and highly competitive award can fund up to approximately 1 million dollars and is the only NIH funding available for international postdocs. [This article](#) aims to discuss the overlooked aspects of the K99/R00 award in two parts. Part I will focus on the period before and during the preparation of the application; while Part II will delve into what happens after the submission and the potential of resubmission.
- **CCF Internal Opportunities:** Explore various funding and collaboration opportunities through the CCF Office of Research Development. Be sure to visit the Competition Space on [InfoReady](#) for the latest updates on internal opportunities tailored to support your research goals and levels.

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

[LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org)

# Opportunities

## Career and Jobs

- **Assistant, Associate, or Full Project Scientist | UC San Diego School of Medicine Department of Cellular & Molecular Medicine:** Seeking candidates who will be responsible for performing studies and experiments. In addition, the successful candidates will analyze and prepare presentations and reports, summarizing results from experiments and research data. The selected candidates will teach and mentor postdocs and students in the laboratory. Find more information [here](#).
- **Cancer Pathobiology Tenure-track Assistant Professor | University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine:** The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is seeking an outstanding individual who will establish and maintain an independent, extramurally funded research program at the intersection of some of the most dynamic areas in experimental oncology, including but not limited to: functional cancer genomics and transcriptomics | genome editing | metabolism and proteomics | chemical biology | precision medicine | cancer immunotherapy. Find more information and apply [here](#).
- **Education Institute Positions:** The EI has announced new positions have been posted to support our new organizational structure, including several leadership and program management positions: Program Manager, GME (I, II, III, IV): Requisition – 282048 – apply [here](#).

## In Case You Missed It

- **New Executive Orders Toolkit:** A new [Executive Orders Toolkit](#) is now available for all caregivers on the intranet. Executive Orders are directives, issued by the president, that manage operations of the federal government. They serve as the president's plan of action on specific issues, and they often require various agencies in Washington, D.C., to enforce or circulate rules and regulations to implement the order(s). The toolkit is designed to be updated on an ongoing basis with as much information as possible, sorted by topic (including Research & Education, DEI and immigration) as well as resources to help caregivers navigate these changes. Please check back periodically for those updates. Should you have questions, you may contact [EOQuestions@ccf.org](mailto:EOQuestions@ccf.org).

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

[LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org)

# Monthly feature



## CCF Innovations

**Cleveland Clinic Innovations (CCI) is the commercialization arm and tech transfer office of the Cleveland Clinic.**

Happy Valentine's day and welcome to Spring, LRI Trainees! For this issue, we wanted to share an article on CCF's Joseph Iannotti, MD, PhD, Chief Research and Academic Officer at Cleveland Clinic Florida. This is an example of how persistence, partnership, and payoff can be the driving forces behind an inventor's journey within Cleveland Clinic's Innovation Ecosystem.

As always, if you would like to connect on anything innovations related, please reach out to 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). We are here for any questions and/or to discuss the innovations process or ideas you may have. Also please check our [Inventor Portal](#). This page also has lots of information and resources for you.



### **Joseph Iannotti, MD, PhD**

**Chief Research and Academic Officer at Cleveland Clinic Florida**

### **Persistence, Partnership, and Payoff: The Driving Forces Behind Cleveland Clinic's Innovation Ecosystem**

Joseph Iannotti, MD, PhD, Chief Research and Academic Officer at Cleveland Clinic Florida, transformed shoulder surgery through a 15-year research journey that began with a simple anatomical question, developing innovative technologies like preoperative planning software and patient-specific instrumentation. The success of these innovations exemplifies Cleveland Clinic's commitment to reinvesting commercialization gains back into research, creating a virtuous cycle of medical discovery that continuously pushes the boundaries of healthcare innovation.

# Monthly feature



## CCF Innovations

**Uncovering the Anatomy of Innovation:** In the bustling world of medical innovation, the story of Cleveland Clinic's research and commercialization efforts serves as a shining example of how a relentless commitment to discovery and a strategic approach to reinvesting returns can fuel an ongoing cycle of progress. One of the many examples of this narrative at Cleveland Clinic is Joseph Iannotti, MD, PhD, Chief Research and Academic Officer, Cleveland Clinic Florida, whose decades-long journey exemplifies the power of perseverance and collaboration in driving transformative change. "You could not have an orthopedic surgeon in 2004 ask a very simple question, 'What is the anatomy of the glenoid?' and end up, 15 years later, with multiple FDA-approved products that have literally changed how shoulder surgeries are done around the world," Dr. Iannotti reflects. "It would have never happened without the Cleveland Clinic."

**The Journey Begins:** The journey began in the early 2000s, when Dr. Iannotti set out to address a deceptively simple question: "What is the anatomy of the glenoid?" This inquiry sparked a chain of events that would ultimately reshape the landscape of shoulder surgery. Through a combination of research, ingenuity, and strategic partnerships, the team developed a suite of groundbreaking technologies, including preoperative planning software and patient-specific instrumentation. These innovations not only enhanced surgical precision but also paved the way for a remarkable commercialization journey. "If we know the anatomy of the normal glenoid, can you use that information in an abnormal glenoid to define the premorbid anatomy, which was the first patent, and that became a software tool," Dr. Iannotti explains.

**Reinvesting for the Future:** The success of these innovations did not go unnoticed. The team's work garnered the attention of industry partners and government agencies, leading to a steady influx of funding that fueled further research and development. But Dr. Iannotti and his colleagues recognized the true value in reinvesting these gains back into Cleveland Clinic, which had nurtured their endeavors.

"The money we received was reinvested back to the orthopedic department," Dr. Iannotti explains. "We recycled it. We used it to develop a novel radio-opaque suture with my colleague Dr. Kathleen Derwin that was licensed and is now used in research and clinical care." This cyclical approach, where commercialization successes are channeled back into the research pipeline, has been a hallmark of Cleveland Clinic's innovation ecosystem. It's a virtuous cycle that not only sustains but also accelerates the pace of discovery, with each breakthrough paving the way for the next.

# Monthly feature



## CCF Innovations

**Advancing What's Possible Through Collaboration:** Dr. Iannotti acknowledges that this process of collaboration between research and innovation to push the boundaries of what is possible brings out the best within the enterprise. It is precisely this willingness to confront unmet needs within healthcare and to ideate on solutions that has allowed Cleveland Clinic to maintain its position as a global leader in medical innovation. Dr. Iannotti's candor in discussing the ups and downs of the journey serves as a testament to Cleveland Clinic's commitment to transparency and continuous improvement.

"We are geared to provide great health care and a great culture to bridge gaps within healthcare," Dr. Iannotti explains. "Cleveland Clinic supports caregivers by fostering an environment of creativity and openness to explore how things can be done differently for the benefit for all patients. This culture of innovation is a core value that permeates throughout our entire ecosystem."

**Driving Transformative Change:** As the world continues to grapple with complex healthcare challenges, the story of Cleveland Clinic's orthopedic research and commercialization efforts stands as a shining example of how a relentless pursuit of knowledge, coupled with a strategic approach to reinvesting success, can drive transformative change.

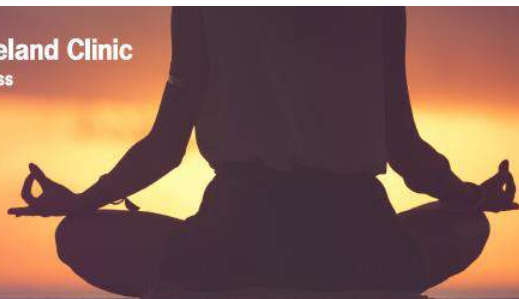
Ultimately, it is this willingness to reinvest funds gained through commercialization back into the research pipeline that has allowed Cleveland Clinic to maintain its position as a global leader in medical innovation, continuously uncovering new breakthroughs that improve patient care.

***Read the latest Innovations news, subscribe to [Innovations Impact!](#)***

# Wellness Resources



 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](http://clevelandclinic.org/CILMevents)

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!\*\***

## 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.*

**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](mailto:dvcommittee@ccf.org)



# 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](mailto:LRITraineeAssoc@ccf.org) to connect with us.

## LTA Communications Team

Nam Than, Amanda Daulagala, Swapnil Dey, Alan Chen, Kelsey Bohn

## Lerner Trainee Association Leadership Council



### Executive Board

Co-Presidents: Jia Liu, Hope Zehr

Coordinator: Molly Guthrie

Treasurer: Noah Dubasik

Advisors: Edward Carson, Lavanya Jain, Kelsey Bohn

### Career Development and Resources

Co-Chairs: Ujjwal Dahiya

Members: Pooneh Koochaki, Mary Vincent

Advisor: Sumit Bhutada

### Communications

Co-Chairs: Nam Than, Amanda Daulagala

Members: Swapnil Dey, Alan Chen

### Mentorship/Advocacy

Co-Chairs: Kavya Vipparthi, Amira Salim, Andras Ponti

Members: 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](#)