



Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development

Spring 2024 Newsletter

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Welcome to the Spring 2024 Faculty Affairs newsletter.



This is a busy season for our office. We have already started a new promotion season, preparing for promotions that will be effective in 2025. Our Google site has many resources to assist you with preparing your dossier for promotion. If you are applying this year, the deadline is June 28. You will need to submit your updated CV, your application letter, and the names of recommendation letter writers to our office. We will take care of everything from there.

We have also sent out announcements about completing your annual review, which this year must be completed in May 2024. A major improvement in the annual review process is that we have moved to an electronic format. Look for a survey about your experience with this new format to arrive in your email inbox sometime in June. We would love to hear what you think about it!

In addition to our usual updates, we are focusing on research in this issue. We are sharing an update on *Elements*, the new database for maintaining academic and research activities. We have “8 tips for..... new investigators”, supplied by three of our faculty in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. Our School of Medicine committee feature is about the Research Space Review Committee.

Further research focused pieces include “Meet the Dean’s Staff”, featuring Dr. Noah Hillman, the Associate Dean for Clinical Research and our regular “Faculty Spotlight”, featuring Dr. Melissa Berrien-Elliott, a recent addition to the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology.

Finally, don't forget to congratulate our President's Research Fund awardees (whose names you will find within.)

Jane McHowat, Ph.D., FAHA
Associate Dean, Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development
Director, M.D./Ph.D. Program
Department of Pathology, School of Medicine



The 2024 Promotion Cycle

The Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development supports an environment where faculty members are encouraged to accomplish and excel in their professional goals.

On our office's [Promotion website](#) you will find information regarding application instructions, guidelines, checklists, timelines, and further resources.

Application Instructions:

Prior to June 28, 2024, the applicant/faculty member should email the application documents (see below) to somfacultyaffairs@health.slu.edu with the subject line: Last Name, First Name Promotion Application. Each document should be sent as a separate PDF attachment.

Application Documents:

1. Current CV in SLU SOM format
Note: In the CV, tenure track/tenured faculty and research track faculty must link to their self-selected five most significant publications or five most significant contributions to their field while in rank.
 - o [Template](#)
 - o [Example](#)
2. Application Letter
 - o [Template](#)
 - o [Example](#)
3. [Promotion and/or Tenure Evaluator Request Form](#)
 - o [Letter Guide](#) - for assistance in determining which type of evaluators your application requires



Promotions Workshops: CV and Application Letter

Are you applying for promotion during the current promotion “season” and would like personalized feedback on your promotion submission documents?

The OFAPD has two remaining dates for applicants to consult on their CV and application letter, two important components of their promotion application submissions. Applicants can choose a forty-five minute time slot, from 4-7pm, on Wednesday, April 17th or Wednesday, June 5th. Appointments will take place in Schwitalla Hall, room 259.

Sign up for your time (below) today to make sure you don't miss out on receiving the OFAPD's helpful comments. There are still a few slots available!

[Wednesday, April 17](#)

[Wednesday, June 5](#)

Annual Reviews - New Format

This year, the Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development has used faculty feedback from last year to improve the Annual Performance Review process. This year's annual review process will look slightly different. While faculty and their reviewer will be providing essentially the same information as in previous years, they will be submitting that information via an **online** form.

In April, all full-time faculty will be sent an email with a unique link to the online SLU SOM Faculty Performance and CART Allocation form. Faculty will complete their 2023-2024 effort distribution and accomplishments and upload a copy of their current CV. Once the form is completed and submitted, a copy of your answers will be forwarded to your reviewer.

At your scheduled annual review meeting, you and your reviewer will discuss your submission and together you will complete sections on strengths/weaknesses, goals for the coming year, and a summary. You will also discuss your CART allocation for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Be on the lookout for an email from the OFAPD with your unique link to the online form and other information to help you with the online form and annual review process. As always, feel free to reach out to the Office of Faculty Affairs and Professional Development (somfacultyaffairs@health.slu.edu) with any questions.

SOM Committee Elections

Every year faculty have the opportunity to help determine their representation in Saint Louis University's School of Medicine governing structures via the standing committees.



Recently, a call went out from the Faculty Affairs Committee requesting nominations for all open committee positions. While the nominations period is now closed, it is not too late to take part in deciding who will fill those slots. In mid-April, faculty will be sent a link to the Faculty Affairs Committee ballot to vote for Elected Committee positions effective July 1, 2024. Please remember to vote!



When the next nomination period comes along, please consider joining a committee. You have tremendous influence to positively shape the School of Medicine with your knowledge, skills, talents, and dedication. Your participation helps raise the value of this academic institution and shapes the future of medicine.

CEDAR Connection

Contributed by Dr. Kristina Dzara, Assistant Dean for Scholarly Teaching and Learning, and Director of the Center for Educator Development, Advancement, and Research



The Saint Louis University School of Medicine Center for Educator Development, Advancement, and Research (CEDAR) is the hub for educator development and educational scholarship for educators working across the Undergraduate Medical Education, Graduate Medical Education, Graduate Education and Continuing Professional Development continuum.

Our team consists of Kristina Dzara, PhD, MMSc and Aric W. Hamilton, BA. Learn more about our CEDAR strategic goals, resources, programs, and events on our [website](#), including:

- Our April 2024 CEDAR Community Blog Post by Keniesha Thompson, MD, MS, FACP, FHM, about “[Formative Feedback Strategies that Foster Learner Growth](#).” Interested in blogging with us? Email CEDAR@health.slu.edu. Want to join our next CEDAR Community Blog Post Discussion Circle on April 24th from 12pm – 1pm in the LRC? [Register here](#).
- Our four one-page, high-yield CEDAR conclusions on topics including “[High Yield Resources for Educators](#),” “[Small Group Facilitation](#),” “[Principles to Encourage Adult Learning](#),” and “[Publishing Educational Scholarship](#).”
- Our CEDAR consultations on educational strategies, curriculum design, educational scholarship, and peer observation of teaching are available educators. Email CEDAR@health.slu.edu to request. 
- Our “[Projects Resulting in Improvement to Medical Education \(PRIMED\) Initiative](#)” is a partnership with the Office of Curricular Affairs. The initiative offers faculty, staff, trainees, and students the opportunity to participate in a mentored education project on three selected topics of key interest to the SLU SOM. The initiative is generously funded by the Dr. Jay Howard Tureen and Nikki Cohn Tureen Fund.

CEDAR is also pleased to spotlight two recent publications which may interest medical and biomedical educators:

- “What’s my line?: Pseudo-improvised teaching when the clinical teaching script is blank” by Elizabeth S. Jarrett, MD, MPH, et al. in [Academic Medicine](#), which offers a toolkit of teaching techniques that clinician-educators can use without preparation during busy clinical teaching experiences (available from the SLU library).
- “Striking a (vocal) chord: musical instruments as mnemonic devices when teaching the functional anatomy of the larynx” by our very own Aidan Ruth, PhD in [Advances in Physiology Education](#), which details how musical instruments and toys can be employed by educators as mnemonic devices to help learners understand and recall the functional anatomy of voice production (publicly available).

Stay tuned for CEDAR updates throughout 2024! Email us with any questions at CEDAR@health.slu.edu.



CME Corner

Brought to you by the Saint Louis University School of Medicine's Continuing Medical Education (CME) program



Online Continuing Medical Education

Advancing Medicine is an online continuing medical education program designed to explore innovations, share new procedures, treatments, research studies, and other advancements to improve patient care. These online courses are designed to be a convenient way to enhance medical training and earn CME. Browse our website, [Advancing Medicine CME](#), for content that is available to watch and earn CME.

We are looking to add more content to our website. If you would be interested in recording a session, having material from a grand rounds session added, or being a part of the planning team, please reach out to Amanda Sain, SLU SOM CME Program Director.

Grand Rounds

The CME office has updated their website to show all Grand Rounds Programs. This is a convenient place to see the Grand Rounds in all departments as well as upcoming topics and speakers. Visit the [CME Website](#).

Would you like more information on CME and offering CME for future programs? Reach out to CME Program Director, Amanda Sain, for more information! She can be reached at 977-7401 or amanda.sain@health.slu.edu.



Research Space Review Committee

Contributed by Ratna Ray, Ph.D., chair of the Research Space Review Committee

The Research Space Review Committee (RSRC) functions as an advisory body to the Dean, offering recommendation for assignment of research space to the faculty members. The committee comprises seven faculty members appointed by the Faculty Affairs Committee, and Vice Dean for Research, Dr. Adriana Montano. Currently the committee is chaired by Dr. Ratna Ray. The committee considers the direct and indirect cost generated by the faculty member from extramural funding, research trends, track record for extramural funding, scholarly activities and number of personnel in his/her laboratory.

For more information, please visit the committee description on the [OFAPD webpage](#).



From the Wellness Corner...

The SLUCare 4 Self & Others Task Force was established with the support of Dr. Jacobs to work on wellbeing initiatives. The Task Force includes representatives from faculty, staff, residents and students. Assessment of the community needs was circulated and completed in 2022 that included measures of wellbeing, depression, anxiety, and work meaning. In response to feedback from the survey, the following efforts have been achieved by the Task Force in year one of its formation:



- Increased availability of fresh food offerings on campus via installation of the Farmers Fridge in the LRC.
- Evaluation of space and resources to provide a gym on SOM premises.
- Opening of the new student wellness space.
- Development of a website which houses all the wellbeing and mental health resources available at the School of Medicine, the University and SSM.
- A mental health badge buddy with a QR code for the website that will be distributed to faculty, staff, and learners.
- An unexpected death protocol to aid in times of crisis after a loss of a community member was developed. This includes the workflow of communication as well as resources for leaders.
- Bringing Schwartz Rounds to SSM/SLUCare. There have been 2 successful meetings thus far and the plan moving forward is to offer these quarterly.

FUTURE EFFORTS:

In future, the task force has recommended the establishment of a formal wellness/wellbeing hub for faculty, staff and learners. The hub would include a psychiatrist and a therapist.

In year 2, the goal is to develop a pilot program of wellbeing champions in each department. The expectation will be that these champions will serve as liaisons between the wellbeing hub and stakeholders in their department. These champions will assist with developing department-specific programs and support to aid in the wellbeing of their respective departments. These leaders will be trained in the Care for Caregivers Program which provides peer support.

In years three to five, the goal is to apply for the AMA Joy in Medicine.

The achievement of these efforts would establish SLU SOM and SSM as a leader in mental health support and wellbeing in medicine.



Epic Update



Members of the SLUCare 4 Self & Others Task Force have met with Dr. Michael Scharff, Regional Chief Medical Information Officer Greater Midwest Region at SSM Health, to discuss initiatives SSM has underway for Electronic Medical Record (EMR) improvements that support provider wellbeing. Areas of current focus include reduction of in-basket volume, reviewing Best Practices Alerts (BPAs), and looking at methods for assisting with clinical documentation. More communications to come as these initiatives develop!

Faculty Assembly Update

From the Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly

The Faculty Assembly consists of all full-time and part-time faculty and serves to strengthen the academic mission of the School of Medicine. The Executive Committee of the Faculty Assembly (ECFA) serves as the elected voice of the faculty to the Dean and wants to hear from you regarding any concerns you might have. We are here to support you.

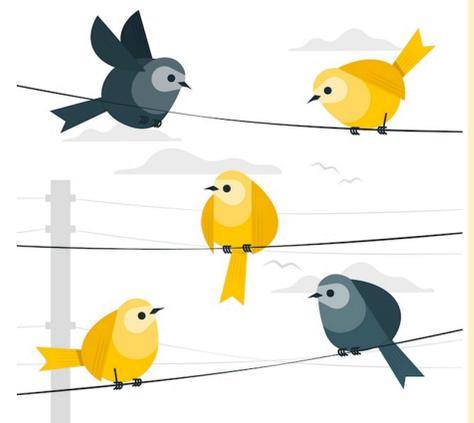
The ECFA has been working on several initiatives over the past year.

2023 Faculty Assembly Accomplishments:

- Supported Department Chair searches by providing faculty member committee recommendations to SOM Dean.
- Developed a process for the establishment of a Clinical Provider Faculty Manual including the establishment of a Clinical Provider Faculty Manual Development Committee.
- Elected Dr. Fred Buckhold to represent the faculty on the SSM-SOM Academic Leadership Council.
- Represented the faculty body in the development and/or review of SOM policy and procedure.

In 2024 the Faculty Assembly is working on:

- Enhancing faculty engagement with shared governance
- The development of a Clinical Provider Faculty Manual
- Review and revision of the SOM Constitution and Bylaws
- The support of other faculty-led committees (APT Committee, Sabbatical Committee, Faculty Affairs Committee)



8 Tips For...New Investigators

Contributed by Drs. Joel Eissenberg, Gucan Dai, and Reza Dastvan

“It’s very hard to become a researcher and it’s even harder to stay as one.”

~Joanne Gere, Executive Director, Westchester Biotech Project

Saint Louis University School of Medicine is a research medical school. The recruitment and retention of successful investigators is central to our mission. Here are eight tips of professional advice that could help establish your research program and keep it sustainable.

- 1. Define your research focus:** A well-defined focus will guide the lab's direction, resource allocation and collaboration opportunities. Clearly articulate the long-term goals and objectives of the lab, identifying specific research areas or topics that align with your expertise, interests, and the interests of the broader scientific community.
- 2. Recruit strategically:** Accept teaching assignments that put you in front of graduate students. Accept rotation students whenever you can. Finding talented postdocs is difficult initially, so consider recruiting one or two skilled technicians with a strong college GPA and previous lab experience. Invest time in mentorship and professional development to nurture the growth of your team members. Respond swiftly to any hiring challenges to maintain momentum.
- 3. Publish early and focus on NIH funding:** Even a single publication or preprint from your own lab can significantly increase the prospects of securing NIH R01 or equivalent grants. While funding from private foundations, industry partnerships, and internal university grants is important to launching your lab, prioritize large-scale grants whenever feasible.
- 4. Invest in the latest technology:** Invest in essential laboratory infrastructure, cutting-edge equipment, and resources to facilitate high-quality research outcomes. Equipment with the latest technology can lead to impactful publications and attract funding opportunities and talented trainees.
- 5. Cultivate a collaborative culture:** Foster interdisciplinary interactions and networking opportunities in the department, the university and the world community to stimulate creativity and the generation of new ideas. Encourage collaborative efforts among lab members and external partners to address gaps in techniques and expertise, creating a dynamic environment for continuous improvement.
- 6. Start a “promotion file:”** Keep a record of any correspondence or encounter you have with leading scientists in your field who might be willing to write a letter on your behalf when you come up for promotion.
- 7. Attend and present at national and international meetings:** Reviewers of your grants and manuscripts will be there. Check the membership of the study section you’re targeting for your grant application. If you see them at a meeting, make a point of talking to them about your ideas.
- 8. Exploit your department’s seminar program:** Your departmental seminar program is there for you to bring experts in to consultants. Host visitors who can critique your research program and future research plans.

Get ready for Elements!

Contributed by the Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR)

You may have heard that Saint Louis University is adopting a new faculty profile platform called [Symplectic Elements](#). After much background work and research, *Elements* is almost ready to unveil!

Various world class research universities, including the University of Oxford, University College London, Duke University, and the University of Pennsylvania use *Elements*, and the Office of the Vice President for Research is pleased to bring this capability to SLU's faculty.

Symplectic Elements is a smart database that collects, maintains, and organizes academic and research activities in one location. From their *Elements* profile, faculty can generate CVs, biosketches, publication lists, collaboration maps, and other custom reports. The complementary [Discovery Module](#) uses the data within *Elements* to automatically create public-facing research profile webpages. Together, *Elements* and *Discovery* will provide SLU faculty with robust, searchable, and customizable faculty profiles that highlight the expertise, scholarly outputs, and other professional activities.

Specific benefits of the *Elements* system include:

- Prominence – Creates discoverable awareness of researchers' expertise, interests, and experience - e.g. for journalists seeking expert comment or story ideas, students seeking supervisors or committee members, or collaborators seeking specific research capabilities or infrastructure.
- Consistency – Gives faculty's research and academic activities a professional look & feel that will be consistent across SLU faculty *Elements* users.
- Automation – Automated profile population and information harvesting reduces the burden on faculty of maintaining a profile while retaining the capability for manual editing.

Elements and *Discovery* can serve SLU faculty members—especially in the SLU School of Medicine—in myriad ways. For example, SOM faculty may be particularly interested in the ability to set and display their availability for mentoring or training opportunities through *Elements*.

We are excited to assist in getting as many faculty members as possible up and running on the new system very soon.

Please email the Office of the Vice President for Research at elements@slu.edu if you have any questions or if we can help in any way.



President's Research Fund Awardees - Congratulations!

Submitted by Richard DiPaolo, Ph.D., Chair of the Research Planning Committee

The President's Research Fund supports projects with a strong potential for obtaining external funding. At the School of Medicine, the Research Planning Committee administers a single cycle for awards, with a January deadline for applications and a May start date for funding.

Congratulations to the School of Medicine awardees for 2024:

Chen, Kevin

"Custom 3D-Printed Nasal Conformers
for Improved Cleft Nasal Outcomes"

Cifarelli, Vincenza

"Determining the role of a novel E3 ligase
Ube4A in intestinal function and IBD"

Gonzalo-Hervas, Susana

"Cathepsin L-mediated remodeling
of the nuclear proteome"

McCommis, Kyle

"Structure and transport/inhibition mechanisms
of the human mitochondrial pyruvate carrier"

Kisselev, Oleg

"Mechanisms of inherited retinal degeneration"

Teague, Ryan

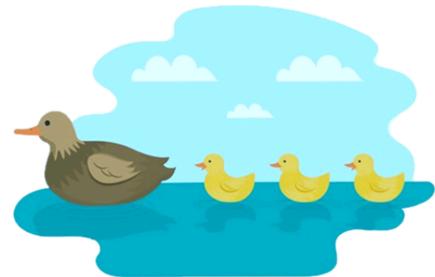
"Maternal Obesity and Immune Dysfunction in Neonates"



Women In Medicine and Science (WIMS) Updates

The Women in Medicine and Science Steering Committee is focusing on 4 subcommittees this year: AMWA Mentoring, Career Development Planning, Spotlight on Women in Medicine and Science (SWIMS) planning and Social Event Planning.

We are planning ahead for our SWIMS event that will be held on the afternoon of Wednesday September 18, 2024. This year's theme will be "Working in a Multigenerational Team" and will feature a keynote speaker, workshops, a panel session and a poster session.



Save the date for SWIMS and look for more details to come.

Meet the Dean's Staff

Noah Hillman M.D. is the Associate Dean for Clinical Research at the School of Medicine



What do you do at the medical school?

The Associate Dean of Clinical Research works with the clinical trials office (CTO) and the academic research administrative units (ARA) to help facilitate clinical research within the medical school and the clinical departments within SSM Health. We have been working hard on trying to increase the resources in the CTO and have hired an experienced clinical research operational officer (CROO) Matt Alday to help develop all the different aspects of clinical trials. We have expanded the budgetary team in the CTO to increase the speed and accuracy of budget and coverage analysis (both industry and federal). We have continued to develop the Clinical Conductor System, our clinical trials management system, and have added additional developers to increase the use of the system for multiple aspects of research. We have also expanded the available educational resources for training clinical research coordinators, and the CTO has additional clinical coordinators that can temporarily assist within clinical research units when needs arise. The CTO has recently hired a regulatory specialist who can assist coordinators with IRB application issues, though all IRB decisions remain under the IRB and VP of compliance.

The Associate Dean of Clinical research, along with the Vice Dean Adriana Montano, works with north campus and the IRB to address issues within the clinical divisions. We can assist with helping both development of new research areas, as well as helping with audits or issues. The medical school is working on creating a system similar to the GO Center on North campus to help with grant submissions, and post-award management.

Where are you from? How did you get here?

Like many of our faculty, I grew up part of my life in St. Louis and the city slowly pulled me back. I completed college in Minnesota then came back to University of Missouri for medical school. I then ventured east to Cincinnati Children's Hospital, where I completed a pediatric residency and a fellowship in Neonatology before staying on faculty for 6 years. I developed my early translational research career under one of the most famous neonatologists, Dr. Alan Jobe, and have continued to work with him on translational lung research on preterm sheep for the last 20 years. My wife is also from St. Louis and when a job became available here for her, we decided it was time to come home. I considered both academic centers in the city, but liked the people I met at SLU and the opportunities to work in multiple areas of Neonatal research. Dean Wilmott recruited me here when he was the Chairman of Pediatrics. Dean Jacobs appointed me to Associate Dean in July 2022.

What do you consider meaningful about your professional career?

I have had the opportunity to do all the major aspects of clinical care and research. I take care of the smallest, most vulnerable babies in the NICU, but also get to work on research that helps make their lives a little better. I initially worked on translational research through my NIH K08 award and grants, but have been able to work on clinical research trials and on new ways to extract data from the medical record. I have also had the opportunity to help review grants for NIH, and to help work with the compensation committee for SLUCare, and these have allowed me to understand multiple aspects of research and the challenges of physician scientists. I hope to bring these experiences to the role of Associate Dean of Clinical Research.

Tell us a little about your personal life:

I have been married to my wife Jennifer for 24 years. We met in medical school and she is an adolescent medicine physician on the undergraduate campus at Washington University. We have two daughters, who luckily got to grow up near their cousins after our move. My oldest Sophia is a freshman at Tufts University in Boston, and my younger daughter Samantha is a junior at Ladue. They both play a lot of field hockey, so watching it is my hobby. We have a goldendoodle named Miles that also takes up a lot of my time.



Faculty Spotlight

Dr. Melissa Berrien Elliot, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Molecular Microbiology and Immunology (MMI)



How long have you worked at SLU? I started as an Assistant Professor in MMI beginning in November 2023. Though, I did my Ph.D. training in MMI from 2009-2014, so it feels like coming home!

Why did you want to become a scientist and what is your favorite part of the job? I have always been fascinated by the natural world and have always had a scientific mind, which was nurtured by my parents and by my mentors in high school and college. My favorite part of being a scientist is discovering something new and translating our knowledge into new therapies that help patients.

So far in your career, what do you consider to be your greatest achievement? My greatest achievement is obtaining a tenure track faculty position at SLU while raising 2 small children with my husband.



What is the most helpful advice you've received? Science is a marathon, not a sprint. Most people will burn out if they try to work too fast or too hard for too long. Steady wins the race!

If you were stranded on a deserted island, what one band or musician would help keep your sanity? I think I would be sure to have the Beatles with me. Lots of albums with lots of different vibes.

If you could have dinner with one person, living or dead, who would it be? I'd like to have dinner with my dad. He passed away before I started college, and I would like to meet him as an adult. If not my dad, then Cleopatra! What a boss!

If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be? I think it would be pizza. It is quite versatile!



What book are you currently reading?

Sadly, the only way to fit in fun reading is by listening to audible on my commute in. I am currently listening to *A Wing and A Prayer* by Harry H. Crosby. HBO inspired me with their *Masters of Air* series and I wanted to learn more about the navigator!

