

Research Education Core Newsletter

SPEECH
Synergistic Partnership
for Enhancing Equity in
Cancer Health



TEMPLE
UNIVERSITY



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CANCER CENTER

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Summer Cancer Research Institute Orientation, June 5, 2023

We are thrilled to announce that the SPEECH Partnership has been refunded for another five year cycle by CRCHD/NCI! We look forward to ongoing collaboration as we to support the future of cancer disparities research.

Scientific Conferences: The TUFCCC/HC Partnership hosted our 5th Annual SPEECH Regional Cancer Health Disparity Conference on May 18th, 2023.

Trainee accomplishments: These past few months have been full of achievements for our TUFCCC/HC trainees.

Summer Cancer Research Institute 2023: After 8 weeks of seminars and individual labwork, the SCRI 2023 cohort presented their hardwork to their mentors, TUFCCC/HC leaders and faculty, their labmates, and other attendees at the 5th Annual Mini-Symposium.

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5th Annual SPEECH Regional Cancer Health Disparity Conference

The SPEECH Partnership's 5th Annual Regional Cancer Health Disparity Conference was held on Thursday, May 18th 2023 at Temple University's Medical Education and Research Building in Philadelphia, PA. Over 250 individuals attended the SPEECH Conference, which included several talks, Dr. Howard Koh's keynote address, a mentor training workshop and a poster session with 42 exciting presentations.



Congratulations to our 8 Best Poster winners, who are pictured alongside U54 Leaders Drs. Ogunwobi, Ma, Fang, and Erblich, NCI Program Leader Dr. San Miguel, and PSC Chair Dr. Thompson.

Annie Fuller, Rusia Lee, Jason Wasserman, Mashhura Nurilloeva, Nisha Manahil, Thoin Begum, and Madeline Bono.

Prior to the start of the SPEECH Conference, leaders and staff from the U54 Partnership and NCI had the opportunity to tour Fox Chase Cancer Center. Drs. Glenn Rall and Amanda Purdy led a thorough tour of the hospital, research labs, and other key areas within FCCC. It was a great chance to see the impact the Partnership and U54 grant has had over the past 5 years!



To conclude the conference, members of NCI and the U54 team met at Hunter College to tour the facilities at the main campus, as well as labs at the Weill Cornell Research Building, where Dr. Jill Bargonetti, Dr. Frida Kleiman, Dr. Andrew Wolfe, and Dr. Olorunseun Ogunwobi conduct their research. Some SCRI 2022 Alumni were able to join the tour and reconnect with their mentors and peers.

Farewell, Dr. Ogunwobi!



PI and REC Co-Leader, Olorunseun O. Ogunwobi, MD, PhD, joined Michigan State University on Aug. 16. He serves as the chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, which is affiliated with the College of Natural Science, the College of Human Medicine and the College of Osteopathic Medicine. He will also serve as the co-director of the forthcoming Center for Cancer Health Equity Research at MSU.

Dr. Ogunwobi has served as a professor of biology at the Hunter College of The City University of New York since 2014. In addition, he is founding director and former principal investigator of the Hunter College Center for Cancer Health Disparities Research, as well as an adjunct faculty member of the Joan and Sanford I. Weill Department of Medicine, Weill Cornell Medicine.

For more information about Dr. Ogunwobi's accomplishments and new position, please refer to the [story posted by Michigan State University's College of Natural Science](#).

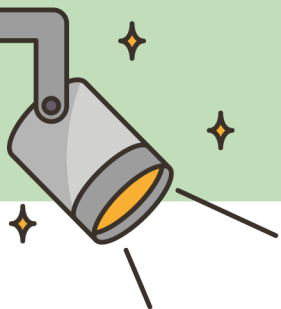


Dr. Ogunwobi working with his lab.



From left to right: REC Coordinators, Emily Kaminsky, MS and Yuku Chen, MPH; REC Co-Leaders, Carolyn Fang, PhD and Olorunseun Ogunwobi, MD, PhD

MENTOR SPOTLIGHTS



Research Education Core Co-Leader, Hunter College: Frida Kleiman, PhD

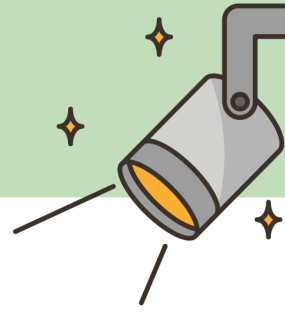


Dr. Frida Kleiman is a Professor in the Chemistry Department with extensive expertise in molecular basis of different cellular responses and their correlation with control of gene expression and cancer. Her research on mRNA processing is aimed at understanding the development, detection and potential treatments of triple negative breast cancer and colon cancer, both of which have high incidence in the African American population.

As a faculty from a minority serving institution and being a female scientist originally from Latin America, she has been in a unique position to understand and provide support in the development of the careers not only of educationally disadvantaged undergraduate and graduate students, but also of other junior and mid-career colleagues at our institutions. Thus, from 2015-2019, she directed the support of competitive research (SCORE) program at Hunter to increase the research competitiveness of faculty in under-resourced institutions. During that period, Hunter got 17 SCORE grants out of the 20 allowable per institution from faculty across the disciplines. Three years ago, along with the Associate Director of the Office of Research Administration, she implemented and directed the Hunter College Path to Success Program (HCPSP), which uses a structured submission approach to provide hands-on mentoring throughout the grant submission process.

Currently, Dr. Kleiman is the Hunter College MPI of The Interdisciplinary Guided Network for Investigation, Translation and Equity (IGNITE) for All of Us Research Program (NIH) and co-PI of the NSF program: Diversifying the National Biology Workforce through New York Trans-disciplinary BioSciences (NY-RaMP). She also serves as the Project Co-Leader for the Colon Cancer project TUFCCC/HC U54 project.

As we enter our 6th year, we are thrilled to announce some leadership changes!



**Principal Investigator,
Hunter College:
Joel Erblich, PhD**



Dr. Joel Erblich is a Professor in the Department of Psychology with extensive expertise in behavioral medicine, cancer prevention and control, and translational epidemiology. He was also a founding member of the Mount Sinai Tisch Cancer Institute and Institute for Translational Epidemiology at Mount Sinai, where he spent a decade focusing on genetic factors related to cancer prevention and control primarily impacting African American smokers. Dr. Erblich's approach has helped to identify the effects of genetic polymorphisms on smoking behaviors and behavioral interventions to manage nicotine dependence. He has an exceptional track record of research, training/mentorship, and administrative leadership. In 2012, Dr. Erblich joined Hunter College to spearhead a new doctoral program in Health Psychology in Clinical Science (HPCS), which is now among the premier behavioral medicine training programs in the country.

Dr. Erblich's research is supported by numerous grants and awards from diverse funding agencies, including the National Cancer Institute (NCI), National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), American Cancer Society, Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program, and Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI), among others. He also serves as the methodologist on several R01 grants in behavioral medicine. He is committed to mentoring students, trainees, and junior investigators in cancer prevention and control. He also directs the newly minted NCI-funded STANDOUT program, which provides summer training and career development to undergraduate students.

MENTEE HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations, RDs!

Two members of the SCRI 2022 cohort, **Juan Pablo Chavez Salas** and **Emilie Procario** have both received their credentials as Registered Dietitians.



Juan Pablo Chavez Salas



Emilie Procario

Awards & Honors

Daaimah Dratsky, MS, RD was included on the NYC Food Policy: 40 Under 40 list which honors policymakers, educators, community advocates, and innovators who are making significant strides to create healthier, more sustainable food environments and to use food to promote community and economic development. The work of these impressive individuals has been more necessary than ever as we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic.



Daaimah Dratsky

Sophia Varriano, PhD graduated from the Sallie Rosen Kaplan Fellowship at the National Cancer Institute. The Fellowship is a highly competitive, one-year program that provides additional mentoring opportunities, networking, seminars, and workshops to help prepare NCI's female postdoctoral fellows for the competitive nature of the job market and help them to transition to independent research careers. While at Hunter College, Sophia was mentored by **Dr. Frida Kleiman**.



Drs. Sophia Varriano and Frida Kleiman

Lin Zhu, PhD delivered the Keynote Address at the APAMSA Region III Conference. Her talk was titled, "Unified in Our Diversity to Improve Health Equity in AANHPI Communities - Health Disparities Research, Community Engagement, and Advocacy". In her talk, Lin shared the current gaps and future directions in AANHPI health disparities research, community engagement, and the roles AANHPI health providers and advocates can plan in reducing health disparities in the diverse AANHPI populations.



Dr. Lin Zhu and Julie Vicisco

MENTEE HIGHLIGHTS



Jayashri Ghosh, PhD was awarded an NIH/NCI R01 Grant for her project, “Development of blood-based methylation biomarkers for CRC risk prediction.”

“We have identified a subgroup of colorectal cancer (CRC) patients as having “Outlier Methylation Phenotype” (OMP) using normal tissue methylome and OMPs are significantly associated with CRC patients over healthy controls and African American CRC patients are more than twice as likely to have OMP than Caucasians. In our current grant application, we propose to develop OMP as a less- invasive CRC screening and prognostic tool by evaluating the consistency of OMP status in a less-invasive (whole blood) tissue with an invasive tissue (normal colorectal mucosa). We will test whether OMPs identified in colorectal tissues can also be identified in whole blood samples using epigenome-wide data from >850K CpGs and analyze the association of OMP in CRC patients with known CRC molecular subtypes and with future clinical outcomes in controls; and study the association of genetic (single nucleotide polymorphisms including ancestry informative markers) factors with OMPs.”

SCRI 2023 Cohort Accomplishments

Alexandra Reyes has started as a Health Disparities Research Intern at Temple University's Center for Asian Health where she will work under the guidance of **Drs. Grace Ma, Lin Zhu,** and **Thoin Begum**. She will also continue to work with her SCRI mentor, **Dr. Alison Brecher**.

Brandon Arroyo has started as a Research Assistant in **Dr. Andrew Wolfe's** lab at the Belfer Research Building.

Tanvir Raihan has started as a Research Assistant at the Cao Lab at Rockefeller University.

Amanda Pisciotta has started as a Research Assistant in **Dr. Mandë Holford's** lab at Hunter College.

Armaan Kalim, Ramneek Kaur, Leuna Sarah and **Zayd Haydar** will all continue as Research Assistants in the labs of their SCRI mentors: **Drs. Kelly Whelan, Raza Zaidi, Grace X. Ma,** and **Tomasz Skorski**, respectively.

Announcement of 2023 Pilot & Pre-Pilot Awardees

Congratulations to the recipients of the SPEECH Pilot & Pre-Pilot Awards!

As part of their award, all recipients will be presenting a webinar to share their research progress with members of the U54 community. If you are interested in attending any of the webinars, please see the schedule below and [join us at 2:00pm via Zoom](#) on the 3rd Wednesday monthly.

For the Zoom ID and password, please contact Emily Kaminsky, MS - Emily.Kaminsky@hunter.cuny.edu and Yuku Chen, MPH - Yuku.Chen@fcc.edu

SPEECH U54 Webinar Schedule:

- **October 18, 2023**
 - **Chidiebere Awah (Pre-Pilot)** - *Combination of Nanocage-Delivered Engineered Destablized 3'UTR of ERBB2 and trastuzumab Deruxtecan as Therapy for Metastatic Trastuzumab Resistant Breast Cancer*
 - **Thoin Begum (Pilot)** - *Assessing Occupational Exposure to Carcinogens and Endocrine Disrupting Chemicals Among Asian American Nail Salon Workers*
- **November 15, 2023**
 - **Alison Brecher (Pre-Pilot)** - *Patient Perceptions of Medical Stigma Associated with Smoking among Black/African American Cancer Patients*
 - **Steven Strong (Pre-Pilot)** - *Towards the Discovery of Cytotoxic Agents for Targeting Prostate Cancer*
- **January 17, 2024**
 - **Kristine Chin (Pre-Pilot)** - *Cancer is a Uniwue and Unusual Burden Among Asian Americans*
 - **Megan Wirtz (Pre-Pilot)** - *Relationships, Intimacy, and Self-Esteem among Sexual and Gender Minority Cancer Survivors*
- **February 21, 2024**
 - **Favour Achimba (Pre-Pilot)** - *Targeting Transient Receptor Potential Channels in Liver Tumor with Teretoxins*
 - **Anne Fuller (Pre-Pilot)** - *The Role of Allergy-Induced Cellular Senescence in Esophageal Carcinogenesis*
- **March 20, 2024**
 - **Xinpei Jiang (Pre-Pilot)** - *Elucidating the Roles of Menin in Antigen Presentation Dynamics in Small Cell Lung Cancer*
 - **Devorah Natelson (Pre-Pilot)** - *Effects of BRCA1/BARD1-Mediated Ubiquitination of HuR on RNA Metabolism in Breast Cancer*
- **April 17, 2024**
 - **Tanisha Maitre (Pre-Pilot)** - *African Genetic Ancestry, POLB Expression and Functionality that Influences Therapeutic Response*
 - **Sandali Perera (Pre-Pilot)** - *Scale-up Generation of Immunotherapeutic Exosomes from M1 Macrophages (M1MAC-Exos) and Novel Combination Therapy with Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors (ICIs) for Improved Treatment of Prostate Cancers*
- **May 15, 2024**
 - **Claudia Wultsch (Pilot)** - *A Bioinformatics Research Platform for Cancer Health Disparities Genomic Data Analysis*
 - **Anthony Ramadei (Pre-Pilot)** - *Combination Therapy of Chemotherapy, Navitoclax and a Long-Non Coding RNA for Triple Negative Breast Cancer Treatment*

Congratulations, SCRI 2023 Cohort!



SCRI 2023 trainees during a visit to Chinatown, Philadelphia after Orientation Day.

After 8 weeks of attending seminars and workshops, mentored lab research, and other related activities, this exceptional cohort of trainees successfully presented their findings at our 5th Annual Summer Cancer Research Institute Mini-Symposium.

In preparation for the event, trainees were required to write an abstract, create a scientific poster, and deliver a presentation to describe to mentors, staff, faculty, other trainees, lab members, and family & friends what they learned and accomplished through their participation in the program.

We are so proud of all the work this cohort has accomplished, and are thrilled to share that 5 Temple University students with be continuing on with the SCRI mentor during the fall semester and 3 Hunter College students will be working in cancer research labs.

The SCRI team would like to thank all the TUFCCC faculty & staff involved insuring trainees had a challenging and rewarding summer!

A special thank you to our SCRI 2023 mentors, listed below alongside their trainee:

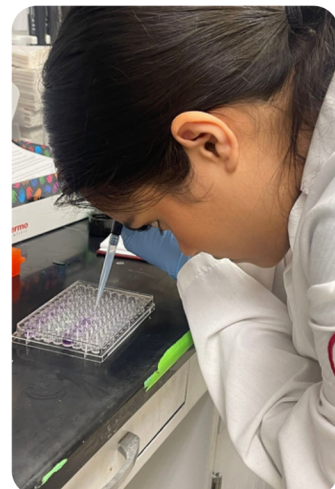
- Brandon Arroyo, Mentor: Prabha Swayam, MBA, PhD
- Emily Chan, Mentor: Jennifer Reese, PhD, FSBM
- Jocelin Guevara, Mentor: Carolyn Fang, PhD
- Zayd Haydar, Mentor: Tomasz Skorski, MD, PhD, DSc
- Armaan Kalim, Mentor: Kelly Whelan, PhD
- Ramneek Kaur, Mentor: Raza Zaidi, PhD
- Elesha McGrath, Mentor: Lucia Borriello, PhD
- Divinia Twum, Mentor: Camille Ragin, PhD
- Nadine Osorio, Mentor: Michael Hall, MD
- Sophia Pisarevskiy, Mentor: Igor Astsaturov, MD, PhD
- Amanda Pisciotta, Mentor: Jonathan Soboloff, PhD
- Tanvir Raihan, Mentor: Seonhee Kim, PhD
- Alexandra Reyes, Mentor: Alison Brecher, PhD
- Leuna Sarah, Mentor: Grace Ma, PhD
- Hannahlisa Smith, Mentor: Linda Fleisher, PhD



SCRI 2023 trainees, mentors, co-leaders, and staff at the 5th Annual SCRI Mini-Symposium.



Divinia Twum and her mentor, Dr. Camille Ragin.



Ramneek Kaur working in Dr. Raza Zaidi's lab.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN APPLYING FOR THE SUMMER CANCER RESEARCH INSTITUTE 2024?



To be eligible for the program, students must be currently enrolled at either Temple University or Hunter College as an undergraduate or graduate student. Applicants should have an interest in pursuing biomedical, clinical, or population-based cancer research. We highly encourage applications from students of all background, particularly those from underrepresented minority groups or underserved backgrounds.

SCRI is held in Philadelphia each summer, on the Temple University and Fox Chase Cancer Center campuses. Participants attend weekly cancer seminars and skill-building workshops, benefit from hands-on research training, receive mentorship from an established investigator in the field, as well as a stipend. The SCRI 2024 program will run from June 10, 2024 to August 2, 2024.

If you are interested in learning more about SCRI 2024, please [register to attend one of our information sessions](#). The information sessions will be held 12:00-1:00 on Thursday 10/19, Wednesday 10/25, Tuesday 11/7, and Thursday 11/16.

If you would like to receive more information about the Summer Cancer Research Institute, please contact Emily Kaminsky at emily.kaminsky@hunter.cuny.edu or Yuku Chen at yuku.chen@fcc.edu.



Application checklist:

- Up to two letters of recommendation are highly encouraged. Please reach out to recommenders well in advance to request a letter.
- Resume or CV
- Unofficial transcripts

What makes a strong application?

- Completely answering all components of the short essay questions
- Research what you want to research!



2023 Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health Equity (PACHE) Meeting



In September, several members of our U54 team attended the 2023 PACHE meeting at the National Cancer Institute in Rockville, MD. **Dr. Carolyn Fang** was invited to give an oral presentation on the success of our REC and SCRI Program, “Building on a Solid Foundation: Success Stories Cancer Education and Training.” Our PIs, **Dr. Grace Ma & Joel Erblich** presented a programmatic overview of the SPEECH Partnership.

Three scientific posters were presented by the U54 team as well:

- **Lin Zhu, PhD** - "Evaluating a Bidirectional Academic Community Partnership with Multiple Racial/Ethnic Communities for Cancer Prevention Initiatives and Cancer Health Disparities Research"
- **Emily Kaminsky, MS** - "Educating the Next Generation of Cancer Researchers: Evaluation of A Cancer Research Partnership Training Program"
- **Thoin Begum, PhD** - "An effective intervention toolkit to promote medication adherence among Asian Americans living with chronic hepatitis B"



NIH NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE www.cancer.gov

Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health Equity (PACHE) Biennial Program Meeting

Building on a Solid Foundation to Strategically Strengthen & Enhance PACHE

September 8, 2023

NIH/NCI Funding Opportunities

The Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD) [CURE program](#) offers unique training and career development opportunities to enhance and increase diversity in the cancer and cancer health disparities research workforce.

- **Diversity Research Supplements**
 - Accepted: October 1 - December 1, February 1 - March 31
 - Eligibility: High School Students, Undergraduates, Post-Baccalaureates, Post-Masters, Graduate Students, Postdoctoral Fellows, Junior Investigators
- **Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Awards (NRSA) for Individual Predoctoral Fellowships to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research (F31)**
 - Due Dates: April 8, August 8, December 8
 - Eligibility: Graduate students pursuing a doctoral degree
- **NCI Mentored Research Scientist Development Award to Promote Diversity**
 - Due Dates: February 12, June 12, October 12
 - Eligibility: Postdoctoral Fellows, Early-Stage Investigators
- **NCI Mentored Clinical Scientist Research Career Development Award to Promote Diversity**
 - Due Dates: February 12, June 12, October 12
 - Eligibility: Postdoctoral Fellows, Early-Stage Investigators
- **NCI Transition Career Development Award to Promote Diversity**
 - Due Dates: February 12, June 12, October 12
 - Eligibility: Postdoctoral Fellows, Early-Stage Investigators
- **Exploratory Grant Award to Promote Workforce Diversity in Basic Cancer Research (R21)**
 - Due Dates: November 17, 2023
 - Eligibility: Investigators from diverse backgrounds



For more information, [please visit the NCI website.](#)

Upcoming Cancer Awareness Months

October

Breast Cancer
Liver Cancer

November

Carcinoid Cancer
Gastric Cancer
Lung Cancer
Pancreatic Cancer

December

HIV/AIDS-Related
Cancer

January

Cervical Cancer

Research Education Core Leaders:
Carolyn Fang, PhD - Fox Chase Cancer Center
Frida Kleiman, PhD - Hunter College

For questions regarding the Research Education Core and any upcoming events, please contact one of our program coordinators:

Yuku Chen, MPH - Yuku.Chen@fccc.edu
Emily Kaminsky, MS - Emily.Kaminsky@hunter.cuny.edu

Stay Connected!



TUFCCC_HC
Research Education Core



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SPEECH

**Synergistic Partnership
for Enhancing Equity in
Cancer Health**

SPEECH is a comprehensive regional cancer health disparity partnership between Temple University/Fox Chase Cancer Center and Hunter College (TUFCCC/HC), funded by the National Cancer Institute grants U54 CA221704 and U54 CA221705. The purpose of SPEECH is to reduce cancer health disparities among underserved minority populations in Pennsylvania-New Jersey-New York City (PNN) region, through cancer disparities research, community outreach, and career development for underrepresented early stage investigators and students.