REACHING THE PEAK:
A SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY CAREER SUMMIT

BIOGRAPHIES

DANA ACTON, Director, Science Policy and Legislative Affairs, American Association for Cancer Research (AACR)

Dana previously worked for more than a decade in the office of Rep. Nita M. Lowey, Chairwoman of the House Appropriations Committee. From 2015-2020, she served as Legislative Director and the Chairwoman's point person on the Subcommittees on Agriculture and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, handling investments in medical research and public health. Dana is a graduate of American University and Rutgers School of Law, and was a Henry J. Raimondo Legislative Fellow at the Eagleton Institute of Politics.

SALVATORE AIELLO, MD/PhD Candidate, Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine & Science

Salvatore Aiello graduated from the University of Michigan in 2014 with a double major in Biomolecular Sciences and Spanish and a minor in Writing. He has a master's degree in Biomedical Sciences from Rosalind Franklin University, where he is currently a fifth year MD/PhD candidate. He is researching resuscitation science methodologies, such as ventricular fibrillation waveform analysis, to improve out-of-hospital cardiac arrest survival.

AQSA ALI, Sustainable Innovation & Life Sciences Intern, Takeda Pharmaceuticals

Aqsa is spending her summer supporting the R&D Sustainable Innovation & Life Sciences Leadership at Takeda Pharmaceuticals. She received her bachelor’s degrees in Psychology and Sociology from The University of Texas at Austin and is currently an Industrial/Organizational Psychology master's student at The University of Texas at Arlington. Her interests lie within organizational change/development and providing evidence-based recommendations to organizations aiming to undergo change processes.

JOSHUA AMMIRATO, Sustainable Innovation & Life Sciences Intern, Takeda Pharmaceuticals

As a member of the R&D Learning Accelerator at Takeda Pharmaceuticals, Josh is focused on community engagement and analytics—but also supports programming initiatives to foster a culture of curious, continuous learnings amongst the organization. Josh has a year and a half of experience on the team and in the Pharmaceutical Industry. Prior to his time at Takeda, he has worked in NGO roles abroad as well as local government in the US. He comes from a background in the humanities, including languages and cross-cultural collaboration with a focus on spatial data sciences.
JOEL L. BEETSCH, PhD, Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Eisai, Inc.

Joel Beetsch currently holds the position of Vice President of Corporate Affairs at Eisai Incorporated (USA). In this position, Dr. Beetsch leads the US efforts around strategic Communications, Government Affairs, Public Policy, Patient Advocacy, and Corporate Philanthropy. Using a highly collaborative approach across both internal and external stakeholders, Joel and his team will execute a coordinated patient-focused Eisai US Corporate strategy working with multiple patient, provider, payer, and policy stakeholders and organizations to foster safe and effective solutions to healthcare challenges. These efforts drive the assurance that patient access to healthcare solutions and medical innovation are valued and advanced. The Corporate Affairs team is poised to impact and shape the healthcare environment through cross-functional collaboration, strong partnerships with an array of influential external stakeholders, and a never-ending commitment to improve the lives of patients.

During his 20-year tenure in the biopharmaceutical industry, Dr. Beetsch has held several Medical and Corporate Affairs positions. Joel has professional interests in patient-focused care coordination, health policy, and the use of health information technology. Joel serves as the co-chairperson for the steering committee of the Susan G. Komen Big Data for Patients (BD4P) initiative and is engaged with the Clinical Trials Transformation Initiative (CTTI) efforts to connect patients and patient groups to the research and development process. Joel also serves as the President of the National Advisory Board for Family Reach, a non-profit organization dedicated to alleviating the financial burden of cancer.

Dr. Beetsch earned his Doctorate in Neurobiology/Biochemistry from the Boonshoft School of Medicine at Wright State University and further training at the Washington University School of Medicine. Joel lives in Mendham, New Jersey with his wife and two daughters.

MARIE A. BERNARD, MD, Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity (COSWD), National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Marie A. Bernard, MD is the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Chief Officer for Scientific Workforce Diversity (COSWD). As COSWD, she leads NIH’s efforts to assure optimal scientific creativity and innovation, both intramurally and extramurally, through a diverse scientific workforce. Dr. Bernard also co-leads NIH’s newly announced UNITE initiative to end structural racism. Prior to being selected as the COSWD in May 2021, she was deputy director of the National Institute on Aging (NIA). As NIA’s senior geriatrician, she served as the principal advisor to the NIA director. She also led a broad range of activities, including co-chairing two Department of Health and Human Services Healthy People 2020/2030 objectives – 1) Older Adults, and 2) Dementias, including Alzheimer’s disease. She co-leads the NIH-wide Inclusion Governance Committee that ensures appropriate inclusion of individuals in clinical studies, including by sex/gender, race/ethnicity, and inclusion of children and older adults. She also co-chairs the Women of Color Committee of the NIH-wide Working Group on Women in Biomedical Careers. Her national leadership in geriatrics research, teaching, and clinical practice has been recognized by the Clark Tibbits award from the Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (2013), and the Donald P Kent award from the Gerontological Society of America (2014). Her work within NIH has been recognized with NIH Director’s awards (2018 and 2019), including the NIH Director’s award for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in 2020.

Until October 2008, she was the endowed professor and founding chairman of the Donald W. Reynolds Department of Geriatric Medicine at the University of Oklahoma College of Medicine, and Associate Chief of Staff for Geriatrics and Extended Care at the Oklahoma City Veterans Affairs Medical Center. She has held numerous national leadership roles, including chair of the Department of Veterans Affairs National Research Advisory Committee, chair of the Clinical Medicine (now Health Sciences) Section of the Gerontological Society of America, board member of the American Geriatrics Society, president of the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education, and president of the Association of
Directors of Geriatric Academic Programs. She has lectured and published widely in her area of research, nutrition and function in older adults, with particular focus on underrepresented minority populations.

SYDELLA BLATCH, PhD, Program Officer, National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS), National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Sydella Blatch, PhD, was a teaching-based professor at a small university, before transitioning to administrative roles focusing on career development. Currently, she serves as a Program Officer at the National Institute of Health's (NIH) National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS). In this role, she oversees research and training grants and other programs, many related to strengthening and diversifying the biomedical research workforce. Prior to that she provided career support to graduate students and postdocs at NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease (NIAID) and was Director of Professional Development at the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB). While an Assistant and Associate Professor of Biology at Stevenson University, Sydella taught eight different courses, mentored over 20 undergraduates in research, and in service, chaired the university's Faculty Development Subcommittee, was a member of the Assessment Advisory Board, and coordinated research for the Department of Biology and the New Student Seminar for the School of the Sciences. Her research was in animal physiology, specifically the interactions between B-vitamins and microbes in fruit flies. She remains passionate about professional development, mentoring and diversity, having earned a total of ten awards or honors in leadership, diversity or teaching.

NAOMI CHARALAMBakis, PhD, Senior Science Policy Analyst, Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB)

Naomi Charalambakis, PhD, is a Senior Science Policy Analyst for the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology (FASEB), a coalition of 29 scientific societies collectively representing over 130,000 individual biological and biomedical researchers. In this role, she leads the efforts of FASEB's Animals in Research and Education working group, developing policy statements, tracking congressional legislation and agency directives related to animal use in federal research, and creating resources for the lab animal community. This includes preparing comments to federal Requests for Information. Additionally, Dr. Charalambakis serves as the staff liaison for the FASEB Shared Research Resources Task Force, coordinating with volunteers across the country to guide policy discussions pertaining to core facilities. Dr. Charalambakis launched her policy career at FASEB in November 2018, after graduating with her doctorate in Anatomical Sciences and Neurobiology from the University of Louisville School of Medicine where she utilized mouse transgenics to evaluate the role of retinal input on inhibitory interneurons in the visual thalamus. As a PhD Candidate, Dr. Charalambakis spent the summer of 2015 as a science policy intern at Research!America, and co-founded and served as Director of the first science policy University of Louisville student organization.

JENNIFER CHOW, Senior Policy Advisor, Global Engagement Team, Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Jennifer Chow leads the global engagement team within USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, which is responsible for shaping and advancing US government policy and strategic priorities, and ultimately influencing the global donor agenda, for food and water security, nutrition, and resilience. Ms. Chow has held various roles within the agency, including as a nutrition policy advisor, civil society liaison, and Feed the Future interagency coordinator. She works with civil society, industry, UN and other government counterparts to advance good development, increase food security and nutrition, and bring diverse coalitions together to advance sustainable livelihoods. Jennifer is committed to contributing value in peoples' lives, and previous to her work at USAID, helped to advance global health research and
development efforts in the US and around the world. She currently co-raises two children, a bearded dragon, and nine chickens with her partner in Durham, North Carolina.

**LAUREN CITRON, Legislative Director, Congressman Bobby L. Rush (D-IL)**

Lauren Citron serves as the Legislative Director for Congressman Bobby L. Rush (D-IL), where she oversees the Representative's legislative strategy and handles the health, education, labor, housing, Social Security, budget, appropriations, and small businesses portfolios. She previously worked for Congressman Steve Cohen (D-TN), where she handled health, agriculture, veterans, and Social Security issues, as well as the mail program. Lauren graduated from the University of Virginia with a Master's of Public Policy (MPP) and a B.A. in Economics.

**KAREN CORREA, PhD, Vice President, Head of Global Clinical Operations, Takeda Pharmaceuticals**

Dr. Karen Correa is the Vice President, Head of Global Clinical Operations at Takeda, where she is responsible for the advancement of the portfolio and execution of global clinical trials. Her 29 years of clinical research experience cover a large range of settings and venues including, benchwork, clinical site, CRO, as well as both large and small pharma organizations and has spanned across multiple therapeutic areas. She also leads the “Diversity in Clinical Trials” initiative and has instituted innovative processes at Takeda. Dr. Correa's passion does not end at the offices of Takeda Pharmaceuticals but extends to her participation as a board member of CAMcare Health Corporation, a Federally Qualified Healthcare Center providing healthcare services to underprivileged communities in New Jersey.

**TREVOR DeMORDAUNT, Master’s Student, Bloomberg School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University**

Trevor DeMordaunt is a Master's student at Johns Hopkins studying spinal bone infection and bone graft materials. While majoring in Neuroscience as an undergraduate, Trevor researched cognitive development and autism to better understand how the brain affects behavior. Applying this knowledge while working full-time as a behavioral therapist, Trevor decided to pursue more rigorous research training at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He is currently working in the Witham Spinal Fusion Laboratory in the Department of Neurosurgery at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. For his thesis research, he is investigating novel bone graft materials, utilizing a novel model of spinal implant-associated infection to better study ways to improve surgery outcomes for patients.

**SARAH GRACE DENNIS-LITTLE, PhD, Postdoctoral Scholar, Department of Surgery, Medical University of South Carolina**

Sarah Grace Dennis-Little obtained her Bachelors of Science in Biomedical Engineering in 2013 from Tulane University and went on to receive her PhD in Bioengineering from Clemson University in 2018. She is now a postdoctoral scholar at the Medical University of South Carolina, Department of Surgery and is also pursuing an MBA.

**UROS V. DJEKIC, PhD, Director, Therapeutic Area Lead, Cardiovascular & Metabolism/Transplant, Global Regulatory Affairs, Region North America, CSL Behring**

Uros V. Djekic, PhD currently serves as Director, Therapeutic Area Lead, Cardiovascular and Metabolism/Transplant within Global Regulatory Affairs’ North America region at CSL Behring; he provides leadership, oversight and direction for developing and executing on regional regulatory strategy and operational tasks for projects in the portfolio.
Immediately before this role, Dr. Djekic held regulatory policy positions at the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) and industry, in which he led and contributed to policy development for complex, cross-cutting as well as product-specific, regulatory policy issues to support and advance R&D and business goals (e.g. PFDD, RWE, Expanded Access, rare diseases and orphan drugs). Prior to this, Dr. Djekic held positions of increasing responsibility at FDA, primarily engaging in review of pre and post-market regulatory submissions as well as regulatory policy development related to transfusion-transmitted disease detection and safety of the US blood supply. Dr. Djekic received his PhD from the Cell Biology department at the University of Alabama, Birmingham and his BS in physiology and neurobiology from University of Maryland, College Park.

**KAFUI DZIRASA, MD, PhD, K. Ranga Rama Krishnan Endowed Associate Professor of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences, Duke University Medical Center**

Kafui Dzirasa completed a PhD in Neurobiology at Duke University. His research interests focus on understanding how changes in the brain produce neurological and mental illness, and his graduate work has led to several distinctions including: the Somjen Award for Most Outstanding Dissertation Thesis, the Ruth K. Broad Biomedical Research Fellowship, the UNCF-Merck Graduate Science Research Fellowship, and the Wakeman Fellowship. Kafui obtained an MD from the Duke University School of Medicine in 2009, and he completed residency training in General Psychiatry in 2016.

Kafui received the Charles Johnson Leadership Award in 2007, and he was recognized as one of Ebony magazine’s 30 Young Leaders of the Future in February 2008. He has also been awarded the International Mental Health Research Organization Rising Star Award, the Sydney Baer Prize for Schizophrenia Research, and his laboratory was featured on CBS 60 Minutes in 2011. In 2016, he was awarded the inaugural Duke Medical Alumni Emerging Leader Award and the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers: The Nation's highest award for scientists and engineers in the early stages of their independent research careers. In 2017, he was recognized as 40 under 40 in Health by the National Minority Quality Forum, and the Engineering Alumni of the Year from UMBC. He was induced into the American Society for Clinical Investigation in 2019.

Kafui has served as an Associate Scientific Advisor for the journal Science Translational Medicine, a member of the Congressional-mandated Next Generation Research Initiative, the Editorial Advisory Board for TEDMED, and on the NIH Director’s guiding committee for the BRAIN Initiative. He currently serves on the NIH Director’s NExTRAC Advisory committee and Brain Initiative Multi-council working group.

Kafui is an Associate Professor at Duke University with appointments in the Departments of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Neurobiology, Biomedical Engineering, and Neurosurgery. His ultimate goal is to combine his research, medical training, and community experience to improve outcomes for diverse communities suffering from Neurological and Psychiatric illness.

**DARÓN FREEDBERG, PhD, Senior Scientist, Laboratory of Bacterial Polysaccharides, Office of Vaccines Research and Review, Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research, Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**

Darón Freedberg received his bachelor’s degree in 1990 from UCSD in Chemistry, where he studied stereodynamics with Jay Siegel. In 1994, he earned his PhD at UCLA where he studied conformational isotope effects and helium encapsulated in Buckyballs, under Frank Anet. After a postdoctoral fellowship studying protein structure and dynamics at the NIH with Dennis Torchia, he took a position at the FDA. Since 1997, he has been combining his experience in stereochemistry, conformational analysis, structure and dynamics. He is now a Principal Scientist who reviews
pharmaceutical polysaccharide-based vaccines and leads a research team in NMR studies of oligo- and polysaccharide structure-function relationships.

**CAITLIN GRZESKOWIAK, PhD, Senior Director, Research and Innovation, Epilepsy Foundation**

At the Epilepsy Foundation, Dr. Grzeskowiak leads the Research and Innovation Programs, including: the Epilepsy Venture Fund, a new venture philanthropy funding mechanism, the Epilepsy Foundation’s Epilepsy Digital Experience Navigator (EDEN), a real-world data and epilepsy management platform, and HEP2, a clinical observation study for patients with refractory epilepsy, among other research projects. Dr. Grzeskowiak has been with the Epilepsy Foundation since 2020. Prior to joining the Epilepsy Foundation, she worked on outreach programs and broad science policy initiatives at Research!America. Dr. Grzeskowiak completed her postdoctoral training at Stanford University School of Medicine and was selected for the Stanford Ignite program, a certification through the Stanford Graduate School of Business that teaches innovators to formulate, develop, and commercialize their ideas. She earned her PhD in Molecular and Human Genetics from Baylor College of Medicine focusing on platform technology development for large, scale, high-throughput genetic screening.

**LISHU HE, Graduate Student, Pharmacology & Toxicology, Medical College of Wisconsin**

Lishu He received her Bachelor of Science in Biology and Visual Culture from Syracuse University in Syracuse, NY. Right now, she is a 4th year PhD student pursuing a PhD in Pharmacology & Toxicology at the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, WI and a Master of Science in Law at Northwestern University Pritzker School of Law in Chicago, IL. Her dissertation research focuses on the effects of histone methyltransferases on DNA damage repair in pancreatic cancer and development of novel epigenomic-based therapeutics.

**NICK HEATH, PharmD, Sustainable Innovation & Life Sciences Leadership, Takeda Pharmaceuticals**

Nick Heath is a member of the Learning Accelerator at Takeda Pharmaceutical Company. His role is focused on providing learning opportunities to employees in the R&D organization and introducing new ways of learning, thinking and collaborating. Nick aims to foster a culture of continuous learning by equipping R&D employees with a courageous, curious mindset. He has his Doctorate in Pharmacy and has spent his career focused in oncology early development pharmacovigilance (drug safety). He joined Takeda in 2015 as a part of the Postdoctoral Pharmacy Fellowship Program focused in Pharmacovigilance.

**JOSH HENKIN, PhD, Founder, STEM Career Services**

After years of successfully mentoring science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) job seekers, in 2014 Josh founded STEM Career Services, a career coaching company aimed at helping STEM graduates start and sustain careers outside of academia. Josh speaks and conducts workshops at conferences, universities, and institutes across the country and provides career coaching to STEM graduates at all career levels. These efforts earned Josh two elected terms on the National Postdoctoral Association (NPA) Board of Directors, where he sat on the executive committee and served as the nonprofit’s treasurer. In addition, Josh is an American Association for the Advancement of Science AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellowship and AAAS Career Development Center Subject Matter Expert/Career Coach. He has created several online courses for the CDC and is invited to deliver workshops and panel discussions at AAAS events.
Concurrent with his work at STEM Career Services, Josh is a Senior Program and Portfolio Manager with Tunnell Consulting, a science and technology consulting company. Josh provides technical and programmatic support to the Biomedical Advanced Research & Development Authority (BARDA) and Department of Defense (DoD) vaccine and therapeutic development programs. Currently, Josh is working on developing numerous COVID-19 vaccines under Operation Warp Speed.

Prior to these roles, Josh worked at Medtronic as a Principle Field Scientist in its cardiac rhythm disease management division, where he managed a portfolio of investigator-initiated clinical trials to promote innovative research with implantable cardiac devices. And before this as an AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow, Josh worked with the DoD as a scientific advisor for the Undersecretary of Defense for Laboratories and Basic Sciences, creating policies and managing basic science research programs.

A lifelong athlete, Josh played rugby for 20 years at the collegiate, national, and international levels. He has authored research articles on muscle, exercise physiology, and fitness, is a certified strength and conditioning coach, and has started several companies in the exercise and fitness space. He holds a BS in business administration, a MS in nutritional sciences, and a PhD in cell and molecular biology - all from the University of Vermont.

**CHRIS JACKSON, PhD Candidate, University of California, Berkeley; Workshops Director, Engineers & Scientists Acting Locally (ESAL)**

Chris is a PhD candidate at UC Berkeley and the Workshops Director for Engineers & Scientists Acting Locally, where he leads efforts to develop training programs for scientists and engineers to engage effectively in local policy. As a science policy advocate, he has also held volunteer and leadership roles with the Journal of Science Policy & Governance, the Science Policy Group at Berkeley, and the Berkeley Energy & Resources Collaborative. Chris frequently writes and advocates for public policy related to science, energy, climate, immigration, and equity.

**SOPHIA KASKA, PhD, Manager of Science Initiatives and Outreach, Research!America**

Dr. Kaska received her Bachelors of Science in Biochemistry at the University of Kansas and a dual major PhD in Pharmacology and Toxicology and Environmental Toxicology at Michigan State University. For her predoctoral research, she investigated the molecular changes in the ventral tegmental area of the brain underlying comorbid opioid addiction and depression. To further her interests in opioid pharmacology and drug discovery, she began her postdoctoral research in Medicinal Chemistry at the University of Kansas and subsequently completed her research at the University of Kentucky in Pharmaceutical Sciences (due to a laboratory relocation). Her postdoctoral research focused on the pharmacological characterization of novel opioid compounds using in vitro methods. Dr. Kaska began working at Research!America in February 2021 where she manages the Civic Engagement Microgrant program and provides organizational and logistical support for a Science CEO group. Her long-standing passion for science outreach, policy, and advocacy was developed throughout her numerous volunteer and leadership roles in university organizations as both a graduate student and postdoctoral researcher. Dr. Kaska continues her dedication to science policy by actively serving on the Science Policy Committee of a scientific society.
LaTASHA H. LEE, PhD, MPH, Vice President, Social and Clinical Research & Development, National Minority Quality Forum

LaTasha H. Lee, PhD, MPH is responsible for the oversight and implementation of research projects and programs focused on reducing patient risk and identifying optimal care to reduce health disparities and bring about health equity. She also provides input into the overall strategy for research partnerships and health equity research for NMQF. Tasha is working on several projects focused on disproportionate COVID-19 rates and outcomes of individuals in communities of color and diversity in clinical research.

Prior to joining the NMQF LaTasha was Senior Manager of Partnership Engagement of the Sickle Cell Disease Clinical Trials Network (SCD CTN) at the ASH Research Collaborative. Tasha was tasked with the development of a patient engagement strategy and development of a business plan for a clinical trials network for SCD, to change the culture and conduct of clinical research for this devastating disease. In a prior role, Tasha was Senior Manager of Sickle Cell Policy and Programs at the American Society of Hematology (ASH) where she was responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of projects, programs, and activities related to ASH’s Call to Action on Sickle Cell Disease (SCD). She focused on developing the overall strategy of legislative or regulatory issues related to SCD.

A knowledgeable, skilled and energetic scientist and public policy advisor with experience on Capitol Hill, Dr. Lee has worked very closely with Congress and federal agencies to monitor biomedical research and access to care policy related to various diseases impacting communities of color. She earned her PhD in Integrative Biology with a concentration on Neuroscience from Florida Atlantic University, a MPH in epidemiology from The George Washington University (GWU), and a Bachelor’s in Biology from Florida A&M University. Dr. Lee is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at GWU School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the recipient of numerous awards including the 2018 National Minority Quality Forum’s 40 Under 40 Leaders in Minority Health, Congressional Black Caucus Health Braintrust Staff Leadership Award in recognition of efforts to end health disparities and the Distinguished Alumni Award from Florida Atlantic University.

JULIA LEFLER, PhD Candidate; Micrograntee, South Carolina - Policy, Engagement, Advocacy and Research, Medical University of South Carolina

Julia Lefler is a fourth year PhD student at the Medical University of South Carolina in the department of biochemistry and molecular biology. Julia's research centers on understanding the complex tumor microenvironment in pancreatic cancer. She hopes her work will reveal novel strategies to treat this particularly lethal cancer type. In addition to her research training, her passion for science beyond the bench has led to her role as a science communications intern as well as the co-leader of the campus science policy group, SC-PEAR (South Carolina Policy, Engagement, Advocacy and Research). Her main goal in advocacy work is to make science more accessible to her community. She hopes to combine her training as a cancer biologist and her aptitude for conveying complex scientific concepts to create and advocate for meaningful policy.

ALYSSA LOZANO, MS, Doctoral Student, University of Miami

Ms. Alyssa Lozano, MS received her Masters of Science in Prevention Science and Community Health at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. She works in the area of the promotion of behavioral health and family functioning among various groups of Hispanic youth, including sexual and gender minorities. Her research interests include a focus on qualitative research to inform intervention development. Specifically, she is interested in the development of
family-based preventive interventions which address family functioning and reduce and prevent inequities in substance use and mental health outcomes among groups of Hispanic youth.

JOSEPH LUTZ, PhD, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs, University of Kentucky

Dr. Lutz received his Bachelors of Science in Biochemistry from the University of Bath, United Kingdom, and his PhD in Pharmaceutical Sciences from the University of Kentucky. His predoctoral research focused on studying neuroprotective natural products targeted at nicotinic receptors against alcohol induced neurotoxicity. He subsequently joined the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) where he completed his postdoctoral training in the Human Addiction Psychopharmacology lab, where he investigated various aspects of human subjective responses to alcohol including their reliability, their potential use to classify heavy drinkers in various at-risk groups, and their ability to predict abuse liability and drinking in the lab. He then became Program Manager of a multi-investigator research group administering several NIH funded research projects focused on neuroimaging of mental illness. During his postdoc, he was an active member of the UIC Postdoctoral Association (even served as President for a year) allowing him to find his passion for postdoc career & professional development and helping the next generation of scientists and scholars. He therefore applied and became the Associate Director of Postdoctoral Affairs at UIC where he ran the UIC postdoc office for a year. He then returned to his alma mater to become the inaugural Director of Postdoctoral Affairs at the University of Kentucky and establish the Office of Postdoctoral Affairs on September 1st, 2019.

JOANNE LY, Biomedical Engineer PhD Candidate; Graduate Professional Success STEM, University of California Irvine

Joanne is a Biomedical Engineering PhD Candidate at the University of California Irvine. Her thesis focuses on quantifying oral feeding abilities in premature infants. Outside of the lab Joanne serves as the Multimedia Director of GPS-STEM at UC Irvine, leading podcast production and marketing material creation. Joanne was awarded the 2021 Research!America Data visualization (Science Meets Science) microgrant to develop and execute a 4-part webinar series: “Beyond the Bench: Visualizing and Communicating Data to the Public and Policymakers.” In addition to her work in GPS-STEM, she chairs the Young Professionals Committee for DeviceAlliance in Orange County where she organizes career development training for early career medtech industry members.

KRIS MA, PhD, Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Family Medicine, University of Washington

Kris Ma, PhD (pronouns: she/her/hers) is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Family Medicine at University of Washington. She is trained as a clinical psychologist and earned her PhD in Clinical-Community Psychology from DePaul University in Chicago. She studies how behavioral health can be integrated into primary care to improve access and quality of mental and behavioral health services. She also has practiced as a behavioral health provider in a family medicine clinic. Her goal is to make evidence-based mental and behavioral health treatment accessible and equitable for all.

LUCINDA MAINE, PhD, RPh, Executive Vice President & Chief Executive Officer, American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACP)

Lucinda Maine serves as Executive Vice President and CEO of the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy. As the leading advocate for high quality pharmacy education, AACP’s vision is that academic pharmacy will work to transform the future of healthcare to create a world of healthy people. Dr. Maine previously served as Senior Vice President for Policy, Planning and Communications with the American Pharmacists Association (APhA). She served on
the faculty at the University of Minnesota where she practiced in the field of geriatrics and was an associate professor and associate dean at the Samford University School of Pharmacy. Her current interests include innovations in health professions education, including interprofessional education, and global human resources for health. Dr. Maine is a pharmacy graduate of Auburn University and received her doctorate at the University of Minnesota. Her research includes projects on aging, pharmacy manpower and pharmacy-based immunizations. Lucinda has been active in leadership roles in the profession. Prior to joining the APhA staff she served as Speaker of the APhA House of Delegates and as an APhA Trustee. She currently serves on the Executive Committee for the American Foundation for Pharmaceutical Education.

DAN McCALLEY, PhD Candidate; Micrograntee, South Carolina – Policy, Engagement, Advocacy and Research, Medical University of South Carolina

Dan McCalley is a 5th year PhD candidate at the Medical University of South Carolina in the department of neuroscience. His research aims to develop novel treatments for alcohol and substance use disorders. Specifically, Dan is working on optimizing a form of non-invasive brain stimulation, Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), to better treat individuals with alcohol use disorders. TMS is a highly effective treatment for depression, and Dan hopes to extend this success into the space of alcohol and substance use disorders. Dan is an openly LGBTQIA+ scientist living in Charleston, South Carolina. As such, he quickly came to appreciate the role that scientists can have in policy making and advocacy, especially as it applies to local LGBTQIA+ issues. He and Julia Lefler started a science policy group, known as SC-PEAR (South Carolina – Policy, Engagement, Advocacy, and Research) to help students get involved in science communication, to engage with the Charleston community, and to advocate for science-based policies in our community.

MICHELLE McMURRY-HEATH, MD, PhD, President and CEO, Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO)

Michelle McMurry-Heath assumed the leadership of the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) as President and CEO on June 1, 2020. A medical doctor and molecular immunologist by training, Dr. McMurry-Heath becomes just the third chief executive to steward the world's largest biotechnology advocacy group since BIO's founding in 1993. BIO represents 1,000 life sciences companies and organizations from 30 countries. The organization's mission is to discover and deploy scientific breakthroughs that improve human health, environmental stewardship, and sustainable agriculture.

The common thread in McMurry-Heath's work across academia, government and industry has been her focus on broadening access to scientific progress so more patients from diverse backgrounds can benefit from cutting-edge innovation. Driven by her own past family experiences navigating clinical trials and funding uncertainties within the rare disease community, McMurry-Heath calls "the distribution of scientific progress the social justice issue of our age."

She comes to BIO from Johnson & Johnson where she served as Global Head of Evidence Generation for Medical Device Companies and then Vice President of Global External Innovation and Global Leader for Regulatory Sciences. She was also instrumental in bringing J&J’s incubator, JLabs, to Washington, DC. She led a global team of 900 with responsibilities in 150 countries around the globe.

Prior to her time at J&J, Dr. McMurry-Heath was also a key science policy leader in government. The Obama–Biden transition team tapped her to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the National Science Foundation's policies, programs and personnel. President Obama then named her associate science director of the FDAs Center for Devices
and Radiological Health under Commissioner Peggy Hamburg. In that role, she championed clinical trial evolution, the use of real-world evidence in product evaluation, and an embrace of the patient's voice in health research so new medical products deliver outcomes that matter to them.

McMurry-Heath was the founding director of the Aspen Institute’s Health, Biomedical Science, and Society Policy Program, where she promoted personalized medicine and bolstered international preparation for pandemic disease threats. She received her early training in science policy from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and later served as Senator Joe Lieberman’s top legislative aide for science and health. In that role, she drafted legislation to protect the country from biological attacks.

McMurry-Heath received her MD/PhD from Duke’s Medical Scientist Training Program, becoming the first African-American to graduate from the prestigious program. She spent 12 years working at the research bench before taking policy and leadership roles in government and industry. McMurry-Heath lives in Washington, D.C. with her husband Sebastian Heath, a veterinarian, and their daughter, Isabella. To relax, she enjoys yoga, snorkeling and her daughter’s sporting events.

REBECCA MESEROLL, PhD, Health Science Policy Analyst, Office of Portfolio Analysis, National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Rebecca Meseroll is a Health Science Policy Analyst in the NIH Office of Portfolio Analysis (OPA), where she coordinates analysis, research and development, and office operations. Prior to joining OPA in 2016, she was a postdoctoral fellow in the NIH Intramural Research Program. She holds a PhD in biological sciences from Dartmouth and a B.S. in Biochemistry from Binghamton University.

ANDREA D. MORGAN, Graduate Research Assistant, Behavioral and Systems Neuroscience Program, Oregon Health & Science University

Andrea Morgan is from Southern California, where she started off in addiction research in a master’s program. Because she was living in a ghetto, she became very interested in pain, trauma, and the overlap in the structures/systems involved in all three research areas. That ultimately led her to Oregon Health & Science University, where she’s currently a 4th year student in the Behavioral and Systems Neuroscience program. Her current program is heavily focused on addiction and trauma/stress, so she continues to learn about the neurological processes involved in both and is able to apply certain concepts to the pain field. However, she’s found her place in science in investigating non-somatic influences (e.g., light, scent) on descending pain modulation in the context of chronic pain disorders using behavioral assays and immunohistochemistry. She also collaborates with electrophysiologists to identify underlying neural circuitry that may eventually be targeted in drug design. Her expertise is in natural rodent behavior, use of behavioral assays in a lab setting, and likely (but unintentional) factors that ultimately impact results.

SUDIP PARIKH, PhD, CEO, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS); Executive Publisher, Science Family of Journals

Sudip Parikh, PhD, became the 19th chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and executive publisher of the Science family of journals in January 2020. Parikh has spent two decades at the nexus of science, policy, and business.

Immediately prior to joining AAAS, Dr. Parikh was senior vice president and managing director at DIA Global, a neutral, multidisciplinary organization bringing together regulators, industry, academia, patients, and other stakeholders.
interested in healthcare product development. He led strategy in the Americas and oversaw DIA programs that catalyzed progress globally toward novel regulatory frameworks for advanced therapies not amenable to existing regulations. Prior to DIA, Sudip was general manager of the Health and Consumer Solutions business unit and vice president at Battelle, a multibillion-dollar research and development organization. He led a $150 million business unit with over 500 scientific, technical, and computing experts performing basic and applied research, developing medicines and healthcare devices, and creating advanced analytics and artificial intelligence applications to improve human health. Previously, Parikh led Battelle's global AgriFood business unit. Headquartered in London and Geneva, this unit provided environmental fate research and agriculture product development services from laboratories throughout Europe and the United States.

From 2001 to 2009, Parikh served as science advisor and professional staff to the United States Senate Appropriations Committee, where he was responsible for negotiating budgets for the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority, and other scientific and health agencies. A key legislative liaison to the research and development ecosystem, Parikh was on the frontlines of many science policy issues debated during that time, including embryonic stem cell research, cloning, disease surveillance, bioterrorism, cyber security, and doubling the NIH budget.

An active member of the scientific advocacy community, Parikh serves as a board member and officer for several impactful organizations, including Research!America, Friends of Cancer Research, and ACT for NIH. He has received multiple public service awards, including recognition from the American Association of Immunologists, the National AIDS Alliance, the Coalition for Health Services Research, and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Sudip is committed to early STEM education and, as a parent of three energetic young children, he prioritizes volunteering as a mentor for Science Olympiad teams at two elementary schools. Early in his career, Parikh was a Presidential Management Intern at the NIH. He was awarded a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship while earning his PhD in macromolecular structure and chemistry from the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, Calif. There, he used structural biology and biochemistry techniques to probe the mechanisms of DNA repair enzymes bound to DNA. The son of Indian immigrants who worked in the textile and furniture manufacturing plants of North Carolina, Parikh completed undergraduate studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, first as a journalism major before switching into materials science.

NICOLE PARKER, PhD, Senior Associate, Lewis-Burke Associates, LLC

Dr. Nicole Parker leads advocacy efforts for Lewis-Burke's biomedical research portfolio in areas concerning federal research policy, biomedical research workforce policy, and health care policy, with a focus on the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other grantmaking agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). She utilizes her prior experience as a biomedical researcher to connect with clients seeking to expand their biomedical research and health-funding portfolios. Prior to Lewis-Burke, Nicole served as a Science Policy Analyst at Ripple Effect, a management consulting firm that provides professional consulting services for federal, private, and non-profit clients. While at Ripple Effect, Nicole worked on several projects within the Office of the Director (OD) at NIH, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), and the Center for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). She graduated from the University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC) in 2011, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, with a minor in sociology and obtained her PhD from Johns Hopkins in 2017 in Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. While obtaining her doctoral degree, she completed a certificate in Risk Sciences and Public Policy, a certification specifically designed for research scientists interested in bridging science and policy. Nicole also was awarded the Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Graduate Fellowship at The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine while in graduate school. During her fellowship she worked with the
Board on Higher Education and Workforce and focused on efforts to improve graduate STEM training and the support of women in STEM.

DANIEL PHAM, PhD, Associate Director, Milken Institute Center for Strategic Philanthropy

Dr. Daniel Pham is an associate director at the Milken Institute Center for Strategic Philanthropy. He utilizes his expertise in scientific research, neuroscience, science policy, and advocacy to advise philanthropic partners on opportunities to make the biggest impact in various fields of science and health. Daniel previously worked at the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, relaying the needs of more than 12,000 scientists to the U.S. Congress, state and local governments, and federal scientific agencies such as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation. He is the founder of Project Bridge, a student group that encourages scientists to engage with the public and their political representatives. Daniel received his bachelor's degree in neuroscience from UCLA and a doctorate in neuroscience from Johns Hopkins University.

LAUREN POWELL, MPA, PhD, President & CEO, The Equitist, LLC; Vice President, U.S. Health Equity & Community Wellness, Takeda Pharmaceuticals

Recently named among Fortune’s 40 Under 40 in Healthcare, Dr. Lauren Powell is the President & CEO of The Equitist, LLC and concurrently serves as the Vice President, U.S. Health Equity & Community Wellness for Takeda Pharmaceuticals. In this role she spearheads efforts to drive health equity through building trust, and investing in building generational community wellness in diverse under-resourced communities across the US.

For more than a decade, Dr. Powell has been immersed in broad and progressive leadership positions where she’s been unapologetically outspoken about racial injustices and health inequities. Her professional and personal experiences spearheading equity efforts in healthcare, state government, academia, and public health, make her a nationally sought after leader, speaker, and consultant on all things health equity.

Formerly the Director of Health Equity for the Commonwealth of Virginia, Dr. Powell was the youngest Black woman and the first with a PhD to serve in this powerful role where she led statewide strategic plans and initiatives towards pushing Virginia’s 8.5 million residents closer to health equity.

Dr. Powell has an established track record as a community-engaged, social epidemiologist with doctoral training on leveraging data for equity. She earned a Master in Public Administration at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical and Population Health Research at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Dr. Powell deeply values mentorship and community engagement. She actively seeks opportunities to help mold and encourage the next generation of leaders in health equity.

Prior to her graduate school matriculation, she held positions coordinating clinical research studies at a number of prestigious medical institutions including: The Johns Hopkins Schools of Medicine and Public Health, the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, and the National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health.

Dr. Powell has been featured on several national and international news sources and outlets including: Marie Claire, Politico, The Guardian, Huffington Post, NPR, BBC, CNBC, PBS NewsHour, NowThis, Newsy, and Cheddar.
GUILLERMO PRADO, PhD, Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs; Dean, Graduate School; Professor, Nursing and Health Studies, Public Health Sciences, and Psychology, University of Miami

Dr. Guillermo (Willy) Prado is Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs; Dean of the Graduate School; and Professor of Nursing and Health Studies, Public Health Sciences, and Psychology at the University of Miami. His research broadly focuses on the development, evaluation, and dissemination of parenting interventions for Hispanic youth and their families. Prado’s research has appeared in over 140 peer-reviewed articles and chapters. He has been PI, Co-I, mentor, or consultant of over $100 million dollars of NIH grant funding. His research has been recognized by numerous organizations, including the National Hispanic Science Network, the Society for Prevention Research, and the Society for Adolescent and has been featured in several domestic and international news outlets, including the Miami Herald, NBC, and CNN en Español. Prado is currently the Director of the Investigator Development Core of the NIH funded Center for Latino Health Research Opportunities. He is also the President of the Society for Prevention Research; a member of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Committee on Prevention and Control of Sexually Transmitted Diseases in the United States; and a Board Member of Research!America.

JAMES P. QUINN, PhD, Neurology Research Fellow, Alzheimer’s Clinical & Translational Research Unit (ACTRU), Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School

James Quinn is a neurology research fellow in the Alzheimer’s Clinical & Translational Research Unit (ACTRU) at Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School under the supervision of Dr. Becky Carlyle and Dr. Steven Arnold. His research involves studying the neuronal signaling molecules, neuropeptides, in dementia pathogenesis to unravel disease mechanisms, identify new diagnostic biomarkers, and define novel therapeutic targets. He has recently started a new project characterizing novel TDP-43 antibodies as a diagnostic biomarker of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in collaboration with AC-Immune. His PhD research at the University of Manchester in the UK focused on the role of tau proteolysis in dementia pathogenesis, identifying granzyme A as a novel protease of tau and characterizing cellular effects of tau fragments and their role in the brains of patients with dementia. James is passionate about community engagement and public outreach of scientific research. He also works to improve the landscape for early career researchers with the Alzheimer’s Association. When he isn’t in the lab you can find him exploring the US and the world (when allowed), cycling, bouldering and listening to live music.

ERIN REAGAN, PhD Candidate, University of Pennsylvania; President, Penn Science Policy and Diplomacy Group; Eastern Hub Co-Chair, National Science Policy Network (NSPN)

Erin is a 5th year PhD candidate at the University of Pennsylvania, as well as the President of the Penn Science Policy and Diplomacy Group. PSPDG is a student-group with a mission to provide training and opportunities for hands-on experience in the fields of science policy, science diplomacy, and science communication to early career researchers at the University of Pennsylvania. As President of PSPDG, Erin has grown the organization from a few rag-tag enthusiasts with no experience to a large and dynamic community with extensive yearly programming ranging from introductory seminars to advanced skill-building workshops and opportunities for members to apply their skills in the real world, interacting with members of the public and officials at the state, national, and international level. As Co-Chair of the Eastern Hub for the National Science Policy Network, Erin provides professional development resources to early career researchers and supports the growth and sustainability of student groups like PSPDG from across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic United States.
MICHELLE RUBIN-ONUR, PhD, Senior Regulatory Specialist, Software, AI & Machine Learning Lead, AcKnowledge Regulatory Strategies

Michelle received her PhD in Integrative Molecular and Biomedical Sciences from Baylor College of Medicine, and her BA in biology from the University of St. Thomas, in Houston, Texas. In addition to her graduate research in microbiology, Michelle studied science policy and ethics, and interned with The Baker Institute for Public Policy at Rice University. Michelle joined AcKnowledge in 2018, and has become an expert in software as a medical device (SaMD), as well as the regulations around machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) in medical devices. In 2019, she published an article through the Regulatory Affairs Professional Society (RAPS), “Navigating a Dynamic Regulatory Landscape in the Age of Artificial Intelligence (AI): FDA’s approach to AI and Machine Learning.” As a Senior Regulatory Specialist at AcKnowledge Regulatory Strategies, Michelle has worked with all device classes (I-III), authored Pre-Submissions and premarket submissions, and successfully supported many Breakthrough Device applications. She is particularly keen to work in the area of digital health, including SaMD, wearable technology, and mobile medical applications.

JAIME S. RUBIN, PhD, Vice Chair for Investigator Development, Professor of Medical Sciences, Department of Medicine, Columbia University Medical Center

Jaime S. Rubin, PhD, is Vice Chair for Investigator Development and Professor of Medical Sciences in Columbia University's Department of Medicine. Over the past few years, the Department of Medicine's national ranking of NIH funding rose from 16th to 2nd place. She founded and continues to direct the graduate level course "Funding and Grantsmanship for Research and Career Development Activities." This course, which is attended by junior faculty and other new investigators, postdoctoral scientists, clinical fellows, and students from across the University's academic programs, provides attendees with a detailed understanding of extramural support available for research and career development activities as well as the grant application submission and review processes. She has given related invited presentations at national conferences and at peer institutions, as well as at less research-intensive universities and colleges working towards increasing their extramural research funding.

She is also committed to increasing the diversity of the scientific research workforce and related efforts include providing career development programming for the National Research Mentoring Network, a component of the Diversity Program Consortium (DPC), a trans-NIH multi-institutional effort whose overarching goal "is to develop, implement, assess, and disseminate innovative and effective approaches to engaging, training, and mentoring students; enhancing faculty development; and strengthening institutional research training infrastructure to enhance the participation and persistence of individuals from underrepresented backgrounds in biomedical research careers."

She received a BS in physics sigma pi sigma from The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art (New York, NY) and then received the MSc and PhD degrees from the Ontario Cancer Institute/University of Toronto (Canada). Her PhD thesis, published in the journal, Nature, described the first molecular identification and characterization of a human DNA repair gene. She has held a number of senior level positions at Columbia University's Medical Center, including Acting Associate Dean for Graduate Affairs, having served as the founding Director of the Office of Graduate Affairs, and Acting Associate Vice President/Acting Associate Dean for Research Administration, having served as one of the founders of the Office of Research Administration. She served as the founding Associate Program Director and Administrative Director of the Doris Duke Clinical Research Fellowship, including developing an International Fellowship in Global Health Research which served as a national model. Other career development activities include serving as Associate Director for Career Development on a number of NIH-funded pre-doctoral, post-doctoral, and junior faculty training grants, as well as an Advisory Board member of TRANSFORM (TRaining And Nurturing Scientists FOr Research
that is Multidisciplinary), the education and career development arm of Columbia's Clinical and Translational Science Award (CTSA).

THE HONORABLE DONNA SHALALA, PhD, Professor, University of Miami; U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, 1993-2001; U.S. Representative, 2019-2021

The Honorable Donna Shalala served as Secretary of Health and Human Services (1993–2001) in the Clinton Administration. She also served in the U.S. House of Representatives (2019–21) and as Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in the Carter Administration (1979–1970). One of the most honored academics of her generation, Dr. Shalala served as President of the University of Miami, President of Hunter College of the City University of New York and Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In 2007, President George W. Bush handpicked Shalala to co-chair with Senator Bob Dole the Commission on Care for Returning Wounded Warriors, to evaluate how wounded service members transition from active duty to civilian society. In 2009 she was appointed chair of the Committee on the Future of Nursing at the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. President Bush presented her in 2008 with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian award. Secretary Shalala has been elected to seven national academies: National Academy of Education; the National Academy of Public Administration; the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; the American Philosophical Society; the National Academy of Social Insurance; the American Academy of Political and Social Science; and the National Academy of Medicine. She earned her PhD degree from The Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

FAIZA SIDDIQUI, PhD, Research Associate, Department of Internal Medicine, University of South Florida

Faiza Siddiqui, PhD, received her Bachelor's and Master's in biotechnology in Delhi, India. She worked as a postdoctoral fellow at the Pennsylvania State University for 3 years followed by 2 years of postdoctoral training at University of South Florida. She is currently working as a Research Associate in the Department of Internal Medicine at University of South Florida. She has spent more than a decade studying the bug that causes malaria. It amazes her every day how intelligent this tiny parasite is and how smartly it evades all our check points for malaria control. She is passionately hopeful that one day together we will be able to eliminate it completely. Apart from research, what interests her is science communication and how essential it is to relay the message of science to the common people.

JOHN SINIFF, Executive Vice President, Subject Matter; Former Opinion Editor at USA Today

John is a veteran journalist who brings a newsroom’s approach and perspective to Subject Matter’s diverse campaigns and content. He works with clients across an expansive menu of issues and needs, whether developing effective content strategy or directing executive communications. John specializes in storytelling that is authentic, informative, persuasive and actionable. A graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, John began his career as an editor in El Paso before moving to USA Today in Washington. In his 20-year career at USA Today, John was Page One Editor and Cover Story Editor, shaping the daily coverage across USA Today’s print and digital platforms. John also directed the Op-Ed Page for nearly a decade while serving on the newspaper’s Editorial Board, thus helping to guide and inform wide-ranging debates on the issues of the day. John’s work—some his bylines, some written for clients—has appeared in The New York Times, The Washington Post, USA Today, CNN, Time, Newsweek, Fortune and Art News, among others. He loves cooking, gardening and good wine but has a strong aversion to buzzwords. He’s married with three young boys and a 6-month-old pandemic pup in Northern Virginia.
LAWRENCE A. TABAK, DDS, PhD, Principal Deputy Director, National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Dr. Tabak is the Principal Deputy Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Deputy Ethics Councilor of the Agency. He previously served as the Acting Principal Deputy Director of NIH (2009), and prior to that as Director of the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research from 2000-10.

Dr. Tabak has provided leadership for numerous trans-NIH activities, including the NIH’s American Recovery and Reinvestment Act implementation, the NIH initiative to enhance rigor and reproducibility in research, and the NIH-Wide Strategic Plan. He co-chaired working groups of the Advisory Committee to the Director of NIH on the Diversity of the Biomedical Research Workforce and the Long-Term Intramural Research Program (LT-IRP) Planning. Dr. Tabak also served as the interim program director of the trans-NIH effort to study the environmental influences on child health outcomes (ECHO program).

Prior to joining NIH, Dr. Tabak was the Senior Associate Dean for Research and Professor of Dentistry and Biochemistry & Biophysics in the School of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Rochester in New York. Dr. Tabak is a former NIH MERIT recipient and an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine (formerly, the IOM).

AFRA TOMA, PhD Student, Joint Biomedical Engineering Program, Emory University and Georgia Institute of Technology

Afra Toma, M.S., is currently a PhD student in the Joint Biomedical Engineering program at the Georgia Institute of Technology and Emory University. She graduated with her B.S. and M.S. degrees in Biomedical Engineering from Florida International University and University of Florida, respectively. As Toma is co-advised by Dr. Steven Goudy and Dr. Nick Willett, her project focuses on developing biomaterials-based immuno-regenerative therapies for orofacial clefts and enhancing oral wound healing via local delivery of immunomodulatory drug. By leveraging the effects of immunomodulation for oral cavity healing, Toma’s research can make substantial progress for translational, clinically relevant treatment options for pediatric patients following surgical intervention. As she progresses through her PhD, Toma aspires to master trades that will allow her to empower the scientific community as a researcher, leader, and role model. Apart from spending time in the lab, Toma enjoys photography, hiking, and painting.

M. ROY WILSON, MD, MS, President, Wayne State University

M. Roy Wilson, MD, MS, was unanimously elected President of Wayne State University by the Board of Governors on June 5, 2013. He assumed the presidency on August 1, 2013. Prior to joining Wayne State, Dr. Wilson served as deputy director for strategic scientific planning and program coordination at the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (NIMHD) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Previously, Dr. Wilson was dean of the School of Medicine and vice president for health sciences at Creighton University, president of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, chancellor of the University of Colorado Denver/Anschutz Medical Campus and chair of the Board of Directors of University of Colorado Hospital. Immediately prior to joining NIH, Dr. Wilson chaired the Board of Directors of Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science and was acting president during part of that time.

Dr. Wilson’s research has focused on glaucoma and blindness in populations from the Caribbean to West Africa. He holds elected memberships in the National Academy of Medicine (Institute of Medicine), the Glaucoma Research Society, the American Ophthalmological Society, and the Society of Medical Administrators. He has served on the
executive committee of the NIH-funded Ocular Hypertension Treatment Study and chaired the Data Monitoring and Oversight Committee of both the NIH-funded Los Angeles Latino Eye Study, and the African-American Eye Disease Study. Dr. Wilson was a member of the advisory councils of both the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities and the former National Center for Research Resources, and currently serves on the Advisory Council of the NIH Director as well as the NIH Director's National Advisory Committee on Diversity in the Biomedical Research Workforce (Co-chair). He has served on the governing boards of many national organizations including the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), where he served as Chair (2017-2018).

Dr. Wilson received his undergraduate degree from Allegheny College, an M.S. in epidemiology from the University of California, Los Angeles, and an M.D. from Harvard Medical School. He was selected for the list of Best Doctors in America for a consecutive 14 years by Best Doctors Inc. and was a finalist for the Los Angeles Business Journal's Healthcare CEO of the Year in 2011.

His additional honors include the American Academy of Ophthalmology's Senior Achievement Award, the Distinguished Physician Award from the Minority Health Institute, the Herbert W. Nickens Award from the Association of American Medical Colleges, the NIH Director's Award, the President's Award from the American Glaucoma Society, the Lifetime Research Award from the W. Montague Cobb Institute, the Justice Award from the Arab-American Civil Rights League and the Detroit branch of the NAACP, and the Excellence in Educational Leadership Award from the Detroit Regional Chamber.

**KELLEY YAN, MD, PhD, Dorothy L. and Daniel H. Silberberg Assistant Professor of Medicine and of Genetics & Development, Columbia University Irving Medical Center**

Kelley Yan is a physician-scientist with a background in clinical GI, structural biology, and stem cell biology. She received her MD and PhD degrees from the Mount Sinai School of Medicine and then completed her clinical training in GI and postdoctoral fellowship in intestinal stem cell biology at Stanford University as a California Institute for Regenerative Medicine MD Scholar. She is currently the Silberberg Assistant Professor of Medicine and of Genetics & Development at Columbia University. Her lab uses multidisciplinary approaches to study the behavior of intestinal stem cells with the ultimate goal of manipulating them for therapeutic benefit. She is the recipient of the NIH Director's New Innovator (DP2) Award, Burroughs Wellcome Fund Career Award for Medical Scientists, the ASCI Young Physician-Scientist Award, Louis V. Gerstner Foundation Scholars Award, Lisa Dean Moseley Foundation Award, and the Irma T. Hirschl Research Award.

**ELIAS ZERHOUNI, MD, Professor Emeritus, Radiology and Biomedical Engineering, Johns Hopkins University; Director, National Institutes of Health (NIH), 2002-2008**

Elias Zerhouni, M.D., Professor Emeritus Radiology and Biomedical Engineering, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Dr. Zerhouni was most recently the President, Global Research & Development, and a member of the Executive Committee for Sanofi from January 2011 to July 2018. Dr. Zerhouni’s academic career was spent at the Johns Hopkins University and Hospital where he was professor of Radiology and Biomedical engineering and senior adviser for Johns Hopkins Medicine. He served as Chair of the Russell H. Morgan Department of Radiology and Radiological Sciences, Vice Dean for Research and Executive Vice Dean of the School of Medicine from 1996 to 2002 before his appointment as Director of the National Institutes of Health from 2002 to 2008. In that position he oversaw the NIH’s 27
Institutes and Centers with more than 18,000 employees and a budget of $29.5 billion (2008). In November 2009, President Obama appointed Dr. Zerhouni as one of the first presidential U.S. science envoys. Dr. Zerhouni also served as senior fellow to the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation from 2009 to 2010 and senior advisor to the CEO of Sanofi. Dr. Zerhouni has founded or co-founded five start-up companies, authored more than 200 publications and holds several patents. He has assumed positions on several Boards, including most recently, the board of the Lasker Foundation, Research!America and the NIH Foundation. He is also a member of the U.S. National Academy of Medicine and the U.S. National Academy of Engineering. He received the prestigious Legion of Honor medal from the French National Order in 2008, and was elected in 2010 as a member of the French Academy of Medicine and appointed as Chair of Innovation at the College de France in 2011.

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