

Research & Innovation Newsletter



BIOVENTURES

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SCICOM

INTERNATIONAL COMPLIANCE & CONFLICT OF INTEREST

April 2026

Congratulations!



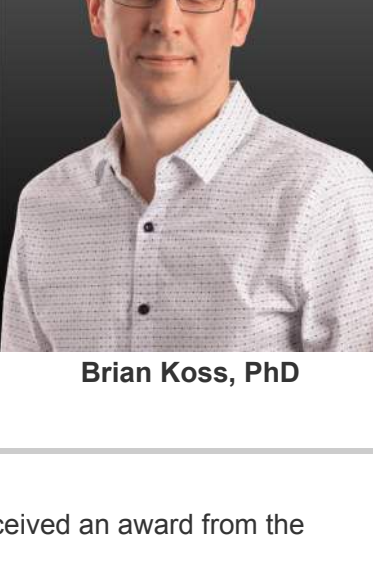
Fen Xia, MD, PhD

Fen Xia, MD, PhD, & Brian Koss, PhD, received an award from the National Institutes of Health.

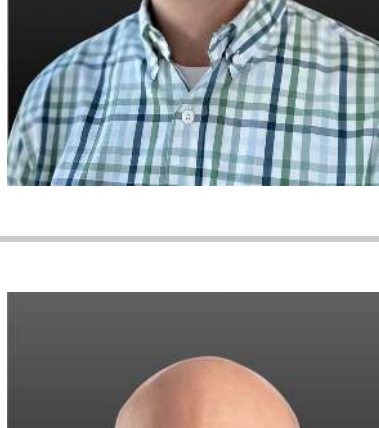
Title: Exploring host GSK3β-53BP1 axis in immune control of solid tumor progression

Period: 05/01/2026 – 04/30/2031

Total: ~\$3.1 million



Brian Koss, PhD



James Craig Forrest, PhD

James Craig Forrest, PhD, received an award from the National Institutes of Health.

Title: Defining the pathogenesis of gammaherpesvirus and Plasmodium coinfections

Period: 04/01/2026 – 03/31/2031

Total: ~\$2.3 million



Paul Drew, PhD

Paul Drew, PhD, received an award from the National Institutes of Health.

Title: Role of Oligodendrocyte-Lineage Cells in FASD

Period: 05/01/2026 – 01/31/2031

Total: ~\$2.7 million

News and Updates

UAMS AWARDS REPORT FY26 (As of Q3)	
Awarded \$	\$109,293,170
Number of Awards	264
Number of Funding Proposals	573

Join the UAMS Showcase of Medical Discoveries – Drug Discovery and Emerging Therapies

When: May 13, 2026
Time: 4:00 - 6:00 PM
Location: 12th Floor, Jackson T. Stephens Spine& Neurosciences Institute

[Add to Calendar](#)

Showcase Presenters


Mohamed Abdohamed, PhD



Santay Alshariq, DVM, MS


Darin Akdeniz


Rayman Ali, M. Pharm.


Shohtanish Bismagani, PhD


Pony Cawson, PhD


Peyton Cook


Dian A. Dixon, PhD


Abdelrhman Foadi, PhD


Brendan Fox, PhD


Rana Elshiboby, B. Pharm, MS


Mokarram Hossain, PhD


Darin Jones, PhD


Sooha Khator, PhD


Joyeta T. Khan


Sayam Mish, PhD


Tudor Moldoveanu, PhD


Rajiv Pathak


Mohamed Elzari, PhD


Veronica Piedra, BSc


Qiu Qiu, PhD


Mohammad J. Rahman, MS


Gyan Sabakhal, PhD


Ashish Sharma, PhD


Rami A. Shabro, M. Med., PhD


Saloni Sood, M.Tech


Daniel Stuckey, B.S. in Chemistry


Alan J. Tackett, PhD


Amit K. Tiwar, PhD, DABT


Alejja Urbanski, PhD


Yong Zhu, PhD

SciCom Seminar Series — Final: Microsoft Word Tips & Tricks

When: May 27, 2026
Time: 12:00 - 1:00 PM
Speaker: Eric Rathman, MS, ELS

Virtual Seminar
[Add to Calendar](#)

UAMS Receives Recommendation for Continued Full AAALAC Accreditation

The Association for the Assessment of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC) visited the UAMS campus on March 17 to evaluate our animal use program. The site visitors were greatly impressed with our program and recommended a continuation of full accreditation.

Research Highlights From the Northwest Campus

Hanna Jensen, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Clinical Research in the Departments of Surgery and Radiology and the M2 Cardiovascular Module Course Director, reports that our students continue to produce valuable research in the medical field. Andrew Coles, Camron Collins, and Grace Wood, who are third-year medical students at our UAMS Northwest campus, all contributed to recently published research articles that you can read by clicking the buttons below.

- [Read Article on Liver Research](#)
- [Read Article on Breast Cancer](#)

From BioVentures

First Founder's Forum Meeting and Kick-off

BioVentures, in partnership with **ARise**, brought together emerging innovators and entrepreneurs for the first **Founder's Forum**, a program designed to support UAMS-affiliated startup founders and teams working to translate research into real-world impact.

[More information](#)

New Podcast Episode with Dr. Kevin W. Sexton

Episode 18 – [INVENTOR SPOTLIGHT] Dr. Kevin W. Sexton: SURGEON, Scientist, Innovator

In this episode of the BioVentures Podcast, we sit down with Dr. Kevin W. Sexton (surgeon, scientist, and former BioVentures president) to explore his journey from clinical practice to successful health tech innovation. Dr. Sexton shares how early exposure to entrepreneurship and key mentorship moments led him to develop predictive healthcare software later acquired by a Fortune 500 company and reflects on the lessons learned from both successes and failures along the way.

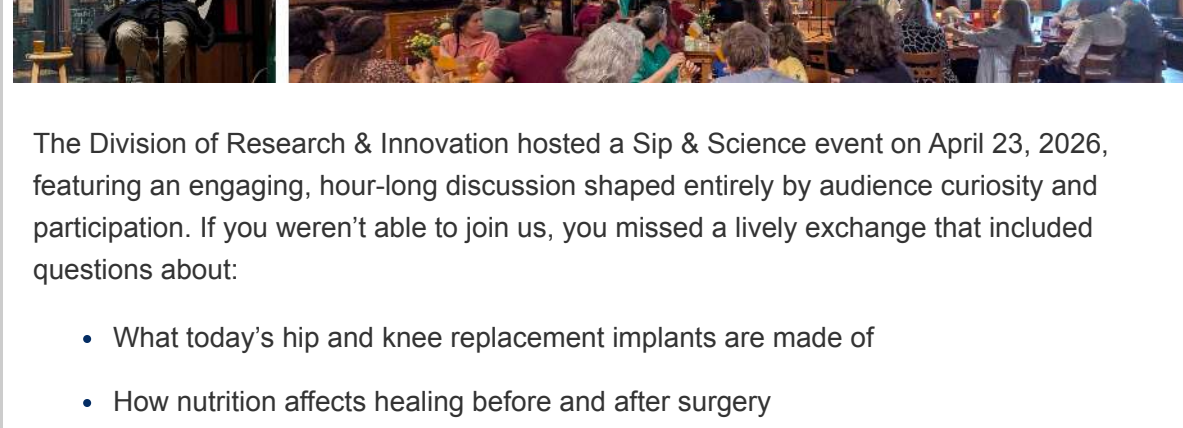


[Click to Listen Episode 18](#)

Our presentation dives into the realities of translating research in healthcare - from navigating complex adoption barriers and aligning stakeholders, to choosing between software and medical device solutions. Dr. Sexton emphasizes the importance of focusing on real problems, understanding customer needs, and creating true value in the market. He also discusses emerging trends in digital health, including the growing role of AI, faster development cycles, and the evolving landscape of software as a medical device. Whether you're a researcher, clinician, or aspiring entrepreneur, this episode offers practical insights on commercialization, startup strategy, and how innovation can become a meaningful part of an academic career.

[More BioVentures Updates](#)

Sip & Science Recap – See What You Missed!



The Division of Research & Innovation hosted a Sip & Science event on April 23, 2026, featuring an engaging, hour-long discussion shaped entirely by audience curiosity and participation. If you weren't able to join us, you missed a lively exchange that included questions about:

- What today's hip and knee replacement implants are made of
- How nutrition affects healing before and after surgery
- The impact of protein, supplements, and collagen on joints and bones
- Concerns about vitamins, steroids, and newer weight-loss medications
- Barriers to care, including transportation, access, and social factors
- Opportunities for patients to participate in clinical research

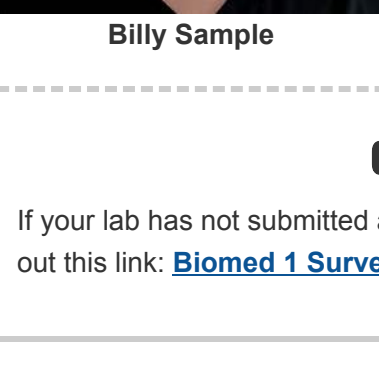
The evening also included a memorable personal story, as one speaker shared how bringing two rats home unexpectedly turned into searching for labs willing to take in more than a hundred rats.

We look forward to welcoming you to the next Sip & Science event for more thoughtful discussion and community-driven questions.

From the R & I Team

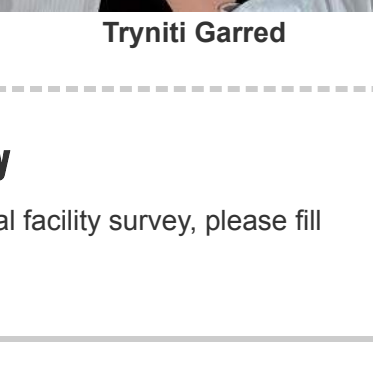
Division of Laboratory Animal Medicine (DLAM)

Congratulations, Tryniti and Billy!



Billy Sample

Billy Sample and Tryniti Garred passed their Assistant Laboratory Animal Technician (ALAT) certification exam!



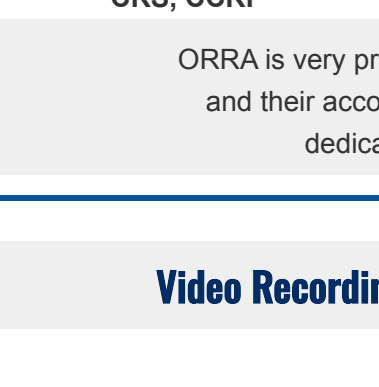
Tryniti Garred

Complete a Biomed 1 Survey

If your lab has not submitted a response to the Biomed 1 animal facility survey, please fill out this link: [Biomed 1 Survey](#).

Office of Research Regulatory Affairs (ORRA)

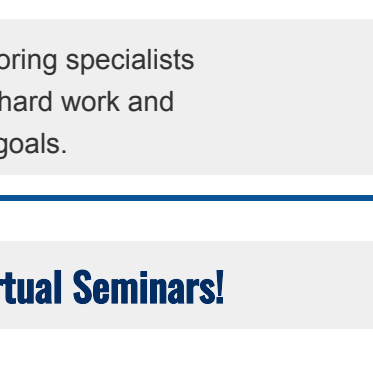
Congratulations, Crystal and Ashley!



Crystal Smith, MSW, MA, CRS, CCRP

Crystal Smith, MSW, MA, CRS, recently passed the Society of Clinical Research Associates (SOCRA) exam and can now add "Certified Clinical Research Professional (CCRP)" to her credentials.

Ashley Clark, MPH, recently passed the UAMS Certified Research Specialist exam and can now add "CRS" to her credentials.



Ashley Clark, MPH, CRS

ORRA is very proud of our clinical research monitoring specialists and their accomplishments and recognizes the hard work and dedication necessary to achieve these goals.

Video Recordings Available for Recent Virtual Seminars!

1. [SciENcy Common Forms – Tips and FAQs](#): Nicole Schartz, Ph.D.
2. [AI for Discovery – Accelerating UAMS Research](#)
3. [UAMS Research Security Program](#): Nicole Schartz, Ph.D. ([PowerPoint Slides](#))
4. [Working with the UAMS IRB](#): Edith Paal
5. [Working with the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs](#): Andrea Ham, BS, CRA
6. [Essentials of Grant Writing](#): A National Postdoctoral Appreciation Week Workshop: Peggy Epes, Ph.D., ELS

[Archived Seminars](#)

Useful Links

- [Grant Life Cycle](#) [Research Portals](#) [Core Facilities](#) [Feedback/Questions](#)

Follow us!

University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences

Division of Research and Innovation

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4301 W. Markham St.
Little Rock, AR 72205

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