DEAN’S LETTER – OCTOBER 2020

Dear Weill Cornell Medicine Community,

Now seven months into the pandemic, we continue to adjust to the altered rhythms and routines of our daily lives. Many of our medical and graduate students are learning remotely, while others are engaging in a hybrid curriculum. Lab research is progressing smoothly, with staggered schedules to keep staff occupancy at half their previous levels. Clinical care and research remain central to our efforts, and we are finding that our patients are appreciating our heightened focus on safety as well as the convenience of video visits.

As New York City progresses on its path of recovery, slowly but surely, Weill Cornell Medicine is also moving forward in its mission to care, discover, and teach. One area that we are emphasizing to an even greater extent now is anti-racism and social justice. At the end of June, as the country once again confronted its legacy of systemic racism, I announced a set of actions that were taken immediately to ensure greater equity, fairness, and belonging within our community. Since then, I am pleased to report that progress has been made on a number of fronts.

Office of Institutional Equity
As previously announced, a new Office of Institutional Equity has been established. Led by Jamal Lopez, JD, Senior Director of Institutional Equity, its charge is to investigate reports of discrimination and harassment, lead our institution’s disability accommodation process, advance equity in employment practices, and promote a culture of inclusion and belonging for faculty, staff and students. In August, the office launched a mandatory Unconscious Bias training course to be completed by all faculty and staff by October 30, and updated WCM’s web-based Sexual Harassment training to be completed by November 13. Working with the Office of University Counsel, it has also amended policies related to the investigation of all reported claims of discrimination and harassment, and is currently cultivating relationships with institutional stakeholders to develop a robust staff diversity agenda and resources for our community.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Dr. Said Ibrahim, Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, and the Executive Committee on Diversity and Inclusion are working with WCM’s diversity champions, now resident in each academic department, to develop and implement an action plan for the 2020-21 academic year. Diversity Town Hall meetings are being held monthly for all members of the community as a continuation of the forums that began this past spring with the pandemic. I participated in the September Town Hall on the “Status of Women in Medicine at WCM” and provided an overview of institutional activities related to gender diversity and equity. A new administrative director, Heather Johnson, is now in place to help consolidate and expand the various activities of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion.
Medical Education
Medical Education has launched an “Equity and Inclusion Initiative” in collaboration with a 23-student Anti-Racism Task Force. As part of the initiative, there will be working groups with students, staff, medical education leadership, and faculty, and each will be charged with generating short- and long-term recommendations for thoughtful and sustainable change. The first three groups to be formed are focusing on: an anti-racism curriculum, including greater inclusion of content related to social determinants of health; the learning environment, including investigations of student reports of mistreatment through the medical college’s Teacher-Learner Committee in partnership with the Office of Institutional Equity; and financial equity and literacy, including analysis of WCM’s program to eliminate medical education debt for students with financial need, which is celebrating its first anniversary. Additional groups will be convened in the coming weeks.

Weill Cornell Graduate School
A Social Justice and Anti-Racism Taskforce consisting of more than 30 faculty, staff, postdocs, and students was formed in July and meets weekly. Its five working groups are developing recommendations for meaningful change in: combating racism and social injustice, increasing the recruitment and promoting the success of underrepresented researchers and clinicians, creating open discussion and safe spaces for all community members, and increasing educational outreach to underrepresented local students. The Graduate School also launched a Prep to Train module that will be required for all students and faculty and includes policies, unconscious bias training, and resources for engaging in productive, culturally responsive interactions. A new Trainer-Learner Committee has been set up to respond to student reports of mistreatment. It includes faculty from all graduate programs as well as student representatives.

Office of Faculty
Working with stakeholders throughout the institution, the Office of Faculty has developed a statement of diversity to be included in all faculty job ads and a set of standard procedures for search committees.

Dean’s Office
I have been actively engaging with national leaders in academic medicine through the Association of American Medical Colleges and the Associated Medical Schools of New York. As medical school deans, we are collectively committed to building a stronger culture of anti-racism, diversity, and belonging at our institutions and within medicine and biomedical science more broadly, and we are exploring a variety of strategies to achieve these goals. In addition, Weill Cornell Medicine is working with the leadership of Hunter College to identify ways that we can deepen connections between our two organizations and strengthen the pipeline of underrepresented physicians and scientists.

There are many other ongoing initiatives and programs in diversity and inclusion at Weill Cornell Medicine, as well as additional plans still in the works. Recent accomplishments are highlighted in our Diversity and Inclusion Annual Report. I look forward to providing more information on new developments in the coming months.

Although this fall semester is unlike any that we have experienced before, Weill Cornell Medicine is moving steadily forward, as the following pages can attest. The contributions of every single member of our community have never been so deeply appreciated as they are now, as we
collectively look to the future and seek to create a better world for us all. I also encourage you to exercise your civic right to vote and, if you have not yet done so, to register before the October 9 deadline. Thank you for everything you do for Weill Cornell Medicine.

Sincerely,

Augustine M.K. Choi, MD
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Care

Coronavirus Trials Seek to Pool Data on Convalescent Plasma. An article in *The Wall Street Journal* describes the need for rigorous trials to draw definitive conclusions on the effectiveness of transfusions for COVID-19 patients. **Dr. Melissa Cushing**, Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine in Anesthesiology, provides insight on Weill Cornell Medicine’s (WCM’s) and NewYork-Presbyterian’s (NYP’s) efforts to enroll 1,200 patients in a randomized controlled trial of convalescent plasma.

Doctors Detail Unexpected Recoveries from Long-Term Coma After Cardiac Arrest. Patients who remain in a coma after cardiac arrest typically have almost no chance of making a meaningful recovery if they fail to emerge within a week, according to neurologists. But a new study from **Dr. Nicholas Schiff**, the Jerold B. Katz Professor of Neurology and Neuroscience in the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute, suggests that a small but significant fraction of such patients can recover even after much longer periods of coma. The research, published in the *Annals of Neurology*, describes three patients who became comatose following cardiac arrest but made excellent recoveries despite comas that lasted 17 to 37 days. The national news outlets *Washington Post*, *Fox News*, and *Radio.com* covered the findings.

Injury Patterns in ED Patients May Help Doctors Detect Cases of Physical Elder Abuse. Certain patterns of injury may help doctors distinguish physical elder abuse, which is rarely reported, from unintentional falls, according to new research by **Dr. Anthony Rosen**, Assistant Professor of Emergency Medicine. The study, published in *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, compared 78 confirmed cases of elder abuse with 78 emergency department cases of unintentional falls. While small, the study suggests that hospital emergency departments might be able to use older adult patients’ injury patterns to detect suspected abuse and report it for intervention. Healthcare trades *HealthDay*, *HEALIO* and *HealthLeaders Media* featured the findings.

Drug Prolongs Lives of Patients with a Subtype of Prostate Cancer. A drug that blocks a male hormone receptor prolonged life by nearly a year compared with the placebo in men with nonmetastatic, castration-resistant prostate cancer, according to the final analysis of the results of an international, multi-center Phase 3 clinical trial led by **Dr. Cora Sternberg**, Professor of Medicine, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. Both groups of men were additionally treated with a therapy that reduces the production of the male hormones, called androgens, that stimulate the growth of prostate cancer cells. The findings were covered in healthcare publications *Renal & Urology News*, *HealthDay*, *MDAlert*, *Medscape*, *Urology Times*, *Physician’s Weekly*, *Medpage Today*, and on newswire *Reuters*.

Benefits of PSA Test for Prostate Cancer Substantially Greater than Generally Appreciated. While organizations such as the American Academy of Family Physicians have been lukewarm or opposed to routine use of the prostate-specific antigen (PSA) test, in a commentary published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, **Dr. Jim Hu**, the Ronald P. Lynch Professor of Urologic Oncology, and **Dr. Jonathan Shoag**, Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor of Urology, demonstrate that these recommendations are based on problematic estimates of the benefits and harms of screening. They argue that the evidence suggests more widespread screening will reduce deaths and help men avoid debilitating metastatic disease. Healthcare publications *Renal & Urology News*, *Oncology Nurse Advisor*, and *HEALIO* covered the news.
Strokes Occur More Frequently in Patients with COVID-19 Compared to Flu, but Overall Risk is Low. COVID-19 patients have a higher risk of stroke than patients with influenza, according to a study in JAMA Neurology by Dr. Babak Navi, Associate Professor of Neurology in the Department of Neurology and Associate Professor of Neuroscience in the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute, and Dr. Neal Parikh and Dr. Alexander Merkler, both Assistant Professors of Neurology. But stroke risk with COVID-19 is still low in absolute terms and is largely confined to older patients who already have stroke risk factors, the researchers found. The study was covered by local news outlets KVRR Local News, Fox 6 Milwaukee, and the Jewish Voice, and well as healthcare publications Physician Briefings, Mededge, Medscape, HEALIO, Renal & Urology News, The Clinical Advisor, AMSNY and Health24.com.

Epidemic Modeling Crucial in the Fight Against COVID-19 Pandemic. Mathematical modeling by WCM is helping to guide New York State and New York City leaders as they make decisions that could affect the trajectory of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a tool he created, Dr. Nathaniel Hupert, Associate Professor of Population Health Sciences, has been forecasting the potential impact of COVID-19 on local and regional healthcare systems. The data helps state and city leaders answer questions like when cases of the disease will peak in hospitals and what resources will be needed to successfully care for those patients. National online outlets ProPublica and Axios covered the news, as well as Science News for Students.

COVID-19 and Maternal and Newborn Health. A study by Dr. Christine Salvatore, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, and Dr. Patricia DeLaMora, Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, published in The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health journal, found that mothers with COVID-19 are unlikely to pass the virus to their newborns as long as hygiene precautions are followed. Newswires Reuters and UPI.com covered the study, as well as Bloomberg, HealthDay, LiveScience, Medscape, the Scientist Magazine, and Best Life.

How Doctors Can Comfort Bereaved Families During COVID-19. Dr. Holly Prigerson, the Irving Sherwood Wright Professor in Geriatrics and Professor of Sociology in Medicine, has published guidance on how physicians working on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic can compassionately inform family members of the painful news that their loved one has died. The recommendations, published in the Annals of Internal Medicine, are meant to help physicians experiencing an unprecedented number of deaths in such a short period console family members and provide a link to mental health support. National outlets CNN.com, Newsmax, and DailyPress.net, covered the research, as well as healthcare outlets California Healthline and Physician’s Weekly.

Returning to Care Following the COVID-19 Crisis. As clinical operations transitioned from crisis to recovery to eventual growth, the Division of Communications and Marketing continued to build the community’s confidence in returning to seek care. To keep patients informed, the division sent or facilitated 88 patient emails and 16 physician emails that promoted video visits, new patient experiences, enhanced safety measures, and other important information. The division also launched 12 health podcasts on the patient-facing weillcornell.org, covering topics such as preventative health during COVID-19, promoting wellbeing for the LGBTQ community, and navigating stress during social movements. More than 20 new patient-facing videos, including a patient experience video on what to expect for your next office visit, generated more than 3,000 views. WCM faculty also participated in virtual panel discussions with Crain’s Healthcast on topics including life after COVID-19 and how telemedicine is transforming healthcare, generating more
than 2 million impressions and 1,200 views to date. Finally, to coincide with the opening of the Alexandra Cohen Hospital for Women and Newborns, the division created a new landing page with three videos to showcase the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology's expertise, garnering more than 1,500 page visits.

Discover

Dr. Rainu Kaushal Appointed Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Research. Dr. Rainu Kaushal, Chair of the Department of Population Health Sciences, has been appointed Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Research. In her new role, Dr. Kaushal will lead WCM's clinical research enterprise, which encompasses scientific studies that involve a human component and drives the experimental application and comparative investigations of new medicines, technologies, interventions and healthcare delivery models to patients. Crain’s New York Business covered the announcement.

Dr. John Leonard Named Inaugural Senior Associate Dean for Innovation and Initiatives. Dr. John Leonard, the Richard T. Silver Distinguished Professor of Hematology and Medical Oncology and an esteemed physician-scientist who specializes in lymphoma research and treatment, has been named Senior Associate Dean for Innovation and Initiatives at WCM. Dr. Leonard will lead the institution's efforts to foster a dynamic culture of entrepreneurship and innovation and promote commercialization opportunities for inventions developed by WCM investigators. The announcement was featured in healthcare trade publications Crain’s Health Pulse and Becker’s Hospital Review. Dr. Leonard will also work closely with Dr. Lisa Placanica, the newly appointed Senior Managing Director with the Center for Technology Licensing (CTL). Dr. Placanica will lead technology licensing efforts at WCM, focusing on developing strategies for expanding the institution's licensing opportunities to ultimately translate discoveries to the healthcare marketplace.

Department of Population Health Sciences Established at WCM and NYP/WCMC. WCM and NYP have realigned the Department of Healthcare Policy and Research to address the intersection of research and practice. The newly named Department of Population Health Sciences, led by distinguished health services researcher, information scientist and leader Dr. Rainu Kaushal, aims to improve the health of populations through data-driven research, innovative technology and novel education programs.

Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi Participates in Press Introduction to Legislation to Forgive Student Loans. Dr. Choi, the Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Dean of Weill Cornell Medicine, joined Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) in a virtual press conference on May 5 to introduce the Student Loan Forgiveness for Frontline Health Workers Act, new legislation seeking to alleviate the burden of student loan debt for frontline health care workers and help attract medical professionals in various specialties to lend their expertise to the response to COVID-19.

WCM Professor Serves as Expert for NY Government COVID-19 Town Halls. On April 19, Dr. Michael Niederman, Professor of Clinical Medicine, spoke about COVID-19, masks, contact tracing, and the reality of a vaccine during Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney’s Telephone Town Hall. He also participated in another Telephone Town Hall in June on the same topics. On April
30, Dr. Niederman led a discussion during New York State Senator Liz Krueger’s Virtual Town Hall titled “Chasing COVID: Part 2, Taking Care of Your and Your Family’s Health.”

State Senator Addresses WCM Community Advisory Board. New York State Senator Liz Krueger virtually visited WCM on July 16 and spoke to WCM’s Community Advisory Board about a variety of issues including community/police relations, bail reform, COVID-19, and the forthcoming budget shortfalls in New York State. The Senator also addressed her interactions with constituents regarding their access to care during COVID-19, including community experiences with telemedicine and concerns about mental wellness during the pandemic.

Research Highlights

Tiny Protein Packages Released from Cells May Serve as Biomarkers for Early Blood-Based Cancer Diagnosis. A study from Dr. David Lyden, the Stavros S. Niarchos Professor in Pediatric Cardiology, and published in *Cell*, found that tiny packets called extracellular vesicles and particles (EVPs), released by cancer and immune cells, contain specific proteins that may serve as reliable biomarkers for diagnosing early-stage cancer. These new biomarkers can be used to help discriminate EVPs from other particles isolated from tissue and blood samples, so they can be used for analysis in diagnostic panels for detection of early malignancy. EVPs associated with cancer could also offer scientists valuable targets for drug development. Science trade *Genetic Engineering & Biotechnology News* highlighted the research findings.

Study Identifies Abnormal Gene Activity in Distinct Subsets of Immune Cells in Lupus. Abnormal immune activity in lupus, a chronic disease that can cause rashes, fatigue, joint pain, and kidney failure, seems to occur mostly in small subsets of immune cells in patients, potentially enabling better targeting for future treatments, according to a study from Dr. Virginia Pascual, the Drukier Director of the Gale and Ira Drukier Institute for Children’s Health and the Ronay Menschel Professor of Pediatrics. The findings, published in *Nature Immunology*, bring researchers a step closer to understanding the molecular causes of this complex disorder and point to the possibility of future treatments that work by targeting these lupus-signature cells.

Women Develop Brain Changes Associated with Alzheimer’s Disease Earlier than Men. The hormonal shifts that occur with menopause can increase the risk of brain changes associated with Alzheimer’s disease, according to new research from Dr. Lisa Mosconi, Associate Professor of Neuroscience in Radiology. The study, published in *Neurology*, found that women in mid-life had 30 percent more Alzheimer’s-related plaques than men of the same age. Women also had 22 percent lower brain glucose metabolism and about 11 percent more brain shrinkage. These brain biomarkers were associated with menopause, when the ovaries stop producing the hormones estrogen and progesterone. Regional news outlets KSPR-ABC and the *California Sun* covered the findings, as well as *Healio* and *Medpage Today*.

Study Highlights Vulnerabilities Faced by Home Care Workers During COVID-19 Pandemic. Home health care workers faced increased risks to their physical, mental and financial well-being while providing essential care to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a study by Dr. Madeline Sterling, Assistant Professor of Medicine, and colleagues at Cornell Tech and Cornell University. Published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, the study provides the first rigorous analysis of home care workers’ experiences during the pandemic, highlighting the inequities faced by an already marginalized workforce and suggesting that interventions and policies to protect them are urgently required. *Reuters* and *UPI.com*, as well as healthcare outlets *STAT*, *JAMA*
Sponsored Research Awards

We are pleased to report that the following major competitive awards that are over $1 million were received by Weill Cornell Medicine between April 1 - July 31, 2020:

- **John Blenis, PhD**, Anna-Maria and Stephen Kellen Professor in Cancer Research and Professor of Pharmacology, has received funding from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences for a project entitled “Signal Transduction to P70 S6 Kinase 1,” in the amount of $2,386,560 for the period of August 1, 2020 - July 31, 2024.

- **Jacqueline Burré, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Neuroscience in the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute, has received funding from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke for a project entitled “The Impact of Synaptic Vesicle-binding of Alpha-Synuclein on Neuron Function and Neuropathology,” in the amount of $2,357,677 for the period of June 1, 2020 - May 31, 2025.

- **Ethel Cesarman, PhD**, Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, has received funding from the National Cancer Institute for a project entitled “(PQ 6) New Models of KSHV Oncogenesis and KS Immune Environment,” in the amount of $2,084,695 for the period of May 15, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

- **Gloria Chiang, MD**, Associate Professor of Clinical Radiology, has received funding from the National Institute on Aging for a project entitled “The Effects of Iron on Oxidative Stress and Alzheimer's Biomarkers in Amyloid-Positive and Negative Elderly Normal,” in the amount of $2,799,014 for the period of August 1, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

- **David Cohen, MD, PhD**, Vincent Astor Distinguished Professor of Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases for a project entitled “Them1-Mediated Metabolic Regulation and Pathogenic Role in NAFLD,” in the amount of $2,777,505 for the period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024.

- **Darshana Dadhania, MD**, Associate Professor of Medicine, has received funding from Cornell University - Ithaca for a project entitled “Metagenomic Profiling of Urinary Cell-free DNA to Monitor Urinary Tract Infection after Kidney Transplantation,” in the amount of $1,834,618 for the period of March 10, 2020 - February 28, 2025.

- **Mony De Leon, EdD**, Assistant Professor of Neuroscience in Radiology (Interim), has received funding from the National Institute on Aging for a project entitled “PET Measures of CSF Clearance in Preclinical Alzheimer's Disease,” in the amount of $2,844,776 for the period of August 15, 2019 - March 31, 2022.

- **Maria Diaz-Meco, PhD**, Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, has received funding from the National Cancer Institute for a project entitled “Novel Pathways in the Control of Lineage Plasticity in Neuroendocrine Prostate Cancer,” in the amount of $2,180,639 for the period of May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

- **Jeremy Dittman, MD, PhD**, Associate Professor of Biochemistry and of Neuroscience, has received funding from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke for a project entitled “Analysis of Synaptic Protein Dynamics,” in the amount of $2,031,403 for the period of May 1, 2020 - January 31, 2025.
• **Sabine Ehrt, PhD**, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, has received funding from the National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases for a project entitled “Pathway Analysis in Tuberculosis,” in the amount of $12,320,237 for the period of June 12, 2020 - May 31, 2025.

• **David Eliezer, PhD**, Professor of Biochemistry and of Neuroscience, has received funding from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences for a project entitled “Structure and Function of Protein Disorder in Membrane Trafficking and Organization,” in the amount of $2,117,817 for the period of May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

• **Lorena Fontan-Gabas, PhD**, Department of Medicine, has received funding from the National Cancer Institute for a project entitled “Role of BCL10 Somatic Mutations in Lymphomagenesis and Response to BCR-targeted Therapies,” in the amount of $2,801,466 for the period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2025.

• **Ding Cheng Gao, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology in Cardiothoracic Surgery, has received funding from the National Cancer Institute for a project entitled “To Study the EMT Contributions in Tumor Metastasis and Chemoresistance by Using Lineage Tracing Models,” in the amount of $2,462,410 for the period of July 17, 2020 - June 30, 2025.

• **Mario Gaudino, MD**, Stephen and Suzanne Weiss Professor in Cardiothoracic Surgery, has received funding from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute for a project entitled “Randomized comparison of the clinical Outcome of single versus Multiple Arterial grafts: Quality of Life (ROMA:QOL),” in the amount of $4,164,389 for the period of April 21, 2020 - March 31, 2025.

• **Roy Gulick, MD, MPH**, Rochelle Belfer Professor in Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for a project entitled “Research Training in Infectious Diseases,” in the amount of $2,211,320 for the period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2025.

• **Hugh Hemmings, MD, PhD**, Chairman of Anesthesiology, has received funding from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences for a project entitled “Synaptic Mechanisms of General Anesthetic Action,” in the amount of $1,946,215 for the period of June 10, 2020 - May 31, 2024.

• **Xin-Yun Huang, PhD**, Professor of Physiology and Biophysics, has received funding from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences for a project entitled “Molecular Basis of B1-Adrenergic Receptor Function,” in the amount of $1,525,500 for the period of August 1, 2020 - May 31, 2024.

• **Iliyan Iliev, PhD**, Associate Professor of Immunology in Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases for a project entitled “Mononuclear Phagocyte Networks in Mycobacteria Regulation and Antifungal Immunity,” in the amount of $2,701,260 for the period of May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

• **Julianne Imperato-McGinley, MD**, Abby Rockefeller Mauzé Distinguished Professor of Endocrinology in Medicine, has received funding from the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences for a project entitled “Disparities in COVID Disease Severity and Outcomes in New York City,” in the amount of $1,488,438 for the period of July 15, 2020 - June 30, 2022.
• Stephen Kaminsky, PhD, Professor of Research in Genetic Medicine, has received funding from the University of Sheffield for a project entitled “MSA with University of Sheffield and Weill Cornell,” in the amount of $1,196,628 for the period of August 15, 2019 - August 14, 2021.

• Rainu Kaushal, MD, MPH, has received funding from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute for a project entitled “INSIGHT Network,” in the amount of $1,999,279 for the period of April 1, 2020 - September 30, 2020, as well as for a project entitled “Using Mobile Integrated Health and Telehealth to Support Transitions of Care among Heart Failure Patients,” in the amount of $4,205,943 for the period of May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2024.

• Christina Leslie, PhD, Professor in the Weill Cornell Graduate School, has received funding from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences for a project entitled “Tri-Institutional PhD Program in Computational Biology and Medicine,” in the amount of $2,024,636 for the period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2025.

• Joshua Levitz, PhD, Assistant Professor of Biochemistry and Rohr Family Research Scholar, has received funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse for a project entitled “Genetically-Targeted Photo-Pharmacology for Native Opioid Receptors,” in the amount of $1,397,990 for the period of June 1, 2020 - April 30, 2023.

• Conor Liston, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Psychiatry and of Neuroscience, has received funding from the Hope for Depression Research Foundation for a project entitled “Longitudinal Studies of Synaptic Remodeling as a Therapeutic Target in Depression (Year 2 Renewal),” in the amount of $1,110,285 for the period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2023.

• Randy Longman, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases for a project entitled “TL1A Regulation of Group 3 Innate Lymphoid Cells in Colitis,” in the amount of $1,525,500 for the period of April 10, 2020 - February 29, 2024.

• Neal Lue, MD, PhD, Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, has received funding from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences for a project entitled “Telomere Terminal Extension and Replication: Mechanisms and Links to DNA Repair,” in the amount of $1,578,188 for the period of May 1, 2020 - February 29, 2024.

• Wenjie Luo, PhD, Assistant Professor of Research in Neuroscience in the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research, has received funding from the National Institute on Aging for a project entitled “Essential Roles of DAP12 in Tau Metabolism and Inflammation in Alzheimer’s Disease,” in the amount of $2,118,750 for the period of August 1, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

• Fernando Martinez, MD, Bruce Webster Professor of Internal Medicine, has received funding from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute for a project entitled “Understanding the Origins of Early COPD,” in the amount of $11,317,890 for the period of May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

• Christopher Mason, PhD, Associate Professor of Physiology and Biophysics, of Neuroscience, and of Computational Genomics in Computational Biomedicine, has received funding from the New York University Medical Center for a project entitled
“Clinical and Molecular Heterogeneity in the Myelodysplastic Syndromes,” in the amount of $2,001,720 for the period of April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2025.

- **Timothy McGraw, PhD**, Professor of Biochemistry and of Biochemistry in Cardiothoracic Surgery, has received funding from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases for a project entitled “Insulin Control of GLUT4 Traffic to the Plasma Membrane of Adipocytes,” in the amount of $1,814,460 for the period of July 28, 2020 - June 30, 2024.

- **Douglas Nixon, DPhil**, Professor of Immunology in Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse for a project entitled “Development of Brain Organoids to Study the Impact of HIV-1, Drugs of Abuse and Aging on Cognitive Impairment,” in the amount of $3,698,291 for the period of July 15, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

- **Shahin Rafii, MD**, Arthur B. Belfer Professor in Genetic Medicine and Professor of Medicine and of Reproductive Medicine, has received funding from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute for a project entitled “Adaptable Tissue-specific Endothelial Cells for Organ Regeneration,” in the amount of $7,141,785 for the period of April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2027.

- **Kyu Rhee, MD, PhD**, Associate Professor of Medicine and of Microbiology and Immunology, has received funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation for a project entitled “Metabolomics to identify synergistic TB targets,” in the amount of $2,537,711 for the period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2023.

- **Timothy Ryan, PhD**, Professor of Biochemistry, has received funding from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke for a project entitled “Physiology of Single Synaptic CNS terminals,” in the amount of $1,698,618 for the period of April 15, 2020 - March 31, 2023.

- **Teresa Sanchez Garcia Vao, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine and of Neuroscience, has received funding from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke for a project entitled “Endothelial Sphingolipid Signaling in Neurovascular Ischemic Injury,” in the amount of $1,991,625 for the period of June 15, 2020 - March 31, 2025.

- **Laura Santambrogio, MD, PhD**, Professor of Radiation Oncology, has received funding from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, Yeshiva University for a project entitled “Functional Consequences of Impaired Autophagy in Aging,” in the amount of $2,087,244 for the period of April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2025.

- **Michael Satlin, MD**, Assistant Professor of Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases for a project entitled “Screening for Resistant Enteric Bacteria to Personalize Infection Prevention Strategies in Neutropenic Patients,” in the amount of $2,132,309 for the period of July 6, 2020 - June 30, 2024.

- **Bruce Schackman, MBA, PhD**, Saul P. Steinberg Professor of Healthcare Policy and Research and Professor of Population Health Sciences, has received funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse for a project entitled “Health Economics of Substance Use Disorder, HCV, and HIV Treatment: Evaluating Intervention Outcomes for Individuals, Systems, and Communities,” in the amount of $7,977,631 for the period of July 15, 2020 - April 30, 2025.
• Art Sedrakyan, MD, PhD, Professor of Population Health Sciences, has received funding from the United States Food & Drug Administration for a project entitled “Novel Approaches to Advance Coordinated Registry Networks (CRNs),” in the amount of $13,770,000 for the period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2025.

• Martin Shapiro, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine, has received funding from the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases for a project entitled “Disparities in the Diffusion of Direct-Acting Antiviral Therapy for Hepatitis C among Baby Boomers: A Mixed-Methods Study,” in the amount of $2,840,583 for the period of August 1, 2020 - June 30, 2024.

• Dikoma Shungu, PhD, Professor of Physics in Radiology, has received funding from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke for a project entitled “Mechanistic Assessment of N-Acetylcysteine as an Antioxidant Therapy for Myalgic Encephalomyelitis/Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (ME/CFS) Through Dose Response and Treatment Target Engagement,” in the amount of $2,918,663 for the period of July 15, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

• Heidi Stuhlmann, PhD, Harvey Klein Professor of Biomedical Sciences and Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology, has received funding from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development for a project entitled “Training Program in Developmental and Stem Cell Biology,” in the amount of $1,210,540 for the period of May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2025.

• Scott Tagawa, MD, Professor of Medicine and of Medicine in Urology, has received funding from the United States Department of Defense for a project entitled “Heating Cold Prostate Tumors with PSMA-targeted Alpha Therapy and Pembrolizumab,” in the amount of $3,119,537 for the period of September 30, 2020 - September 29, 2024.

• Derek Tan, PhD, Tri-Institutional Professor in Biochemistry, has received funding from the National Institute of General Medical Sciences for a project entitled “Tri-Institutional PhD Program in Chemical Biology,” in the amount of $1,446,170 for the period of July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2025.

Technology Licensing
The Weill Cornell Medicine office of the Center for Technology Licensing received 44 new invention disclosures from April through August 2020. Additionally, 143 patent applications were filed, and 52 patents were issued in this time period. The office’s marketing and business development efforts resulted in eight commercial licenses and 16 confidential disclosure agreements.

Teach
Weill Cornell Graduate School (WCGS).

• Fall 2020 Relaunch. The WCGS Academic Planning Committee, comprised of faculty, staff, and students from across PhD and MS programs, worked over the summer to address the comprehensive requirements of the New York State Reopening New York – Higher Education Guidelines. The report, with input from the Office of Research, Human Resources, Facilities, and Student Health, outlined plans to ensure that our campus can support a hybrid curricular model for our PhD students, and for MS students in
Computational Biology, Clinical Epidemiology, Health Sciences for Physician Assistants, and Clinical & Translational Investigation in their return to campus. All WCGS programs continue to offer didactic coursework remotely, but in-person experimental, research, and clinical learning is underway. The Graduate School is coordinating closely with Student Health Services and Housing to continue to monitor student needs.

- **Welcoming our New Students.** WCGS is proud to welcome 228 new degree-seeking students (68 new PhD students and 160 MS students) to our community this fall. The incoming PhD class represents a diverse and accomplished group consisting of 41 women and 27 men. They speak more than 20 languages and hail from 16 countries, including the United States, China, India, the Republic of Korea, Canada, Columbia, and Ghana. Of the 48 domestic students, 31% are from underrepresented backgrounds. This is the fifth consecutive year the percentage of incoming domestic students from underrepresented backgrounds has exceeded 20%. In terms of scholarly achievement, more than half have earned honors and awards from the Mayo Clinic, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, National Institutes of Health, National Science and Engineering Research Council, Phi Beta Kappa, Sigma Delta Pi, and dozens of other prestigious organizations. Collectively, they have completed 200,000 hours of research. Thirty have published articles, book chapters, and other academic works, and 36 have presented research at academic and medical symposia.

- Our 160 new Masters students represent six of our MS programs including Clinical & Translational Investigation, Computational Biology, Health Policy and Economics, Biostatistics and Data Science, Health Informatics, and our joint Executive MBA/MS in Healthcare Leadership program with Cornell’s Johnson College of Business. This diverse group comes to Weill Cornell from nine countries, including the United States, China, India, the Republic of Korea, Ghana, and Canada. Our new students are extremely accomplished, having completed more than 29,000 hours of research and 27 scholarly publications and presentations. They have received numerous awards and scholarships from the Siemens Foundation, National Science Foundation, and American Society for Clinical Pathology.

- **Social Justice and Anti-Racism Task Force.** Reporting to the Dean of the Graduate School, the Social Justice and Anti-Racism Task Force was initiated in July 2020 and is jointly led by **Christopher Bourne** (PhD student, Immunology and Microbial Pathogenesis), **Dr. Björn Kafsack** (Assistant Professor, Microbiology and Immunology), and **Dr. Monica Guzman** (Associate Professor, Pharmacology). It has convened a group of more than 30 engaged and committed faculty, staff and students to think critically about anti-racism and equity in recruitment, curricular activities, community engagement, and anti-bias and mentor training across our Graduate School community. Five working groups are meeting weekly to evaluate our current programs and identify priorities for new initiatives.

- **Physician Assistants Program Resumes Clinical Skills Training.** With the support of institutional leadership, program leadership, and the faculty of the Physician Assistants program, all PA students in the class of 2020 have successfully finished their training, despite the challenges of clinical rotations in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. The PA class of 2021 has embarked on clinical rotations, and the class of 2022 is completing its didactic training, which includes clinical skills training.
• **Addressing Student Wellness.** Student mental health and wellness continue to be of paramount importance for the Graduate School, and we are pleased to announce that Dr. Judith Cukor, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, is rolling out a series of offerings to complement the services provided to all students by the recent expansion of the Student Mental Health Program. In addition to the increased staffing of psychiatrists and psychologists available to students at WCM and WCGS, Dr. Cukor is launching discussion groups co-led by students focusing on issues including imposter syndrome, time management, and managing difficult conversations. Additionally, Dr. Cukor is developing a series of workshops for faculty to help them identify students in distress, provide practical steps to support struggling students, and discuss coping strategies for Principal Investigators.

• **Weill Cornell IMSD Program Welcomes New Students.** The Weill Cornell Initiative to Maximize Student Development (IMSD), an NIH-funded initiative aimed to increase the number of PhD students from underrepresented backgrounds, welcomed four new students on July 1, as well as Dr. Ethel Cesarman as a co-Program Director and Principal Investigator. As Vice-Chair for Education and Professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Dr. Cesarman is an accomplished scientist, educator, and mentor. Additionally, over 30 first-year PhD students have joined the Esprit de Corps Program, a mentorship program to help students navigate graduate school during their first year, while building community among a diverse cohort of students.

Weill Cornell Medical College (WCMC).

• **New Admissions Deans Appointed at WCMC.** Dr. Kevin Holcomb, Associate Professor of Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology and a prominent gynecologic oncologist with a longstanding commitment to medical education and leadership, has been named Associate Dean for Admissions at WCMC. Dr. Jessica Peña, Assistant Professor of Medicine and of Medicine in Radiology and an expert in cardiology and a dedicated mentor of students, residents and fellows, has been appointed to the newly created position of Assistant Dean for Admissions. Higher education trade publications *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *The Journal of Blacks in Education* featured the announcement.

• **We Need More Black Doctors. Here Are 5 Ways Medical Schools Can Help Ease the Shortage.** In an op-ed in *USA Today*, Dean Augustine M.K. Choi addresses the disparities in healthcare and the need for greater diversity in the healthcare workforce. Dr. Choi identifies key steps that medical schools can take right now to increase the pipeline of Black doctors and improve medical outcomes for underserved communities. The piece also appeared in local news outlets *Visalia Times Delta, Argus Leader, Lansing State Journal, The Asbury Park Press, Green Bay Press Gazette* and *Delawareonline.com*.

• **Online Matriculation Ceremony Marks a Unique Start to Medical School for Class of 2024.** The WCMC Class of 2024 – 106 students in total – gathered virtually on August 18 for an online matriculation ceremony that welcomed them to the start of their medical training at the institution. At the ceremony’s heart was a reading by faculty members of the Hippocratic Oath, which new doctors recite as they graduate from medical school. Though the students themselves won’t formally take the oath until graduation day, they were asked to listen and consider its significance and meaning to their medical education and careers. Nearly 600 people – students, faculty, friends, and family – watched the ceremony live online, with more than 700 subsequent views on YouTube.
The incoming class has a wide range of backgrounds and experiences, adding to a culture of diversity and inclusion at WCM that will enrich patient care, biomedical discovery and learning. Students were born in 17 different countries and have attended 49 different undergraduate colleges. Twenty-two percent are first-generation college students. Eight students have already earned graduate degrees, and many have lived, studied, and worked in countries around the world.

- **Celebrating the First Anniversary of a Successful Debt-Free Scholarship Program.** Weill Cornell Medicine celebrated the one-year anniversary of launching its debt-free initiative, which expanded the institution’s scholarship offerings to provide debt-free education to all medical students with demonstrated financial need. The program replaces student loans with scholarships that cover tuition, housing and other living expenses. Since the program’s launch last September, both the total number of applicants increased as well as the number of underrepresented in medicine (URM) applicants—defined by the AAMC as racial and ethnic populations that are underrepresented in the medical profession relative to their numbers in the general population. The Class of 2024 is now made up of 29 percent URM students, an increase of more than 5 percent from the previous year, and of the class’s 87 medical students, 74 percent qualified for the debt-free program, also an increase of 5 percent from last year. Coverage of the debt-free anniversary on social media, including Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter, garnered 21,000 impressions, or views.

- **WCM Partners with New York Academy of Sciences (NYAS) on STEM Event.** On July 29, WCM, in partnership with NYAS, hosted an online panel discussion on the topic “Everything You Want To Know About Medical School.” WCMC students Koby Amankwah (MD ’23) and Tahj Blow (MD ’23) spoke to attendees from around the world about their journey to medical school, and provided advice to those wishing to pursue a similar path. Attendees were given the opportunity to ask questions during this interactive panel.

**Global Health Education**

- In May 2020, the Office of Global Health Education (OGHE) held its first virtual International Fellows Reception to acknowledge those in the Class of 2020 who took an international elective (https://international.weill.cornell.edu/whats-happening). Two OGHE donors, James Blankenship, MD ’80 and Mr. Jeffrey Lynford, addressed the class. Of the 27 students who were approved for an international elective, 11 students successfully completed the experience, traveling to Costa Rica, Peru, Tanzania, France, and Austria. Sixteen students who were hoping to take an international elective were unable to travel abroad due to the pandemic.

- Nine students in the Class of 2023 took an “international elective” this past summer by conducting research within the US under the guidance of a mentor. Research projects conducted locally this summer included a longitudinal cohort study exploring the relationship between sex and cardiac diastolic dysfunction (Weill Bugando); a study on traditional healer practices and connecting locals to HIV testing (Uganda); evaluation of a mobile app-based data collection platform to be used by community health workers (Myanmar); and a systematic review of the prevalence of specific HPV genotypes in African countries.

- Electives were canceled for 72 international students from diverse medical schools around
the world who had planned to take clinical electives at WCM and affiliated hospitals in Queens and Manhattan between March and June.

- In September, OGHE hosted several virtual events, including a Global Health Career Seminar at which Elizabeth Triche, MD ’09 spoke of her work in Ethiopia and Saipan, and a Global Health Grand Rounds presented by Dr. Roy Gulick, who gave an update on COVID-19 research.

- This summer, Dr. Madelon Finkel, Professor of Population Health Sciences and Director of OGHE, gave an invited keynote presentation at a virtual conference on teaching medical students in the age of COVID-19, hosted by our partner, Chulalongkorn University Medical College in Bangkok, Thailand. She also wrote a piece for Physicians, Scientists, and Engineers (PSE) for Healthy Energy, entitled “The COVID-19 Pandemic May Offer a Ray of Hope for Global Energy: Will We Seize the Moment?” (https://bit.ly/3hef3BT).

- The OGHE Summer Newsletter is available online at https://bit.ly/2Zm5lqN.

**Family Medicine Program.** Three students from Qatar participated in a summer elective program organized by Asaf Cohen, MD, Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and of Clinical Medicine, Dana Spivak, MD, Assistant Professor of Family Medicine in Clinical Medicine, and Moitri Savard, MD, Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics and of Clinical Medicine. Students who participate in the elective often apply for residency in Family Medicine.

**Alumni Connections**

- Weill Cornell Medical College alumnus Dr. Anthony Fauci (MD ’66) spoke at Commencement on May 28 to congratulate the Class of 2020, who were earning their degrees amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Fauci, the Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and a member of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, inspired the new physicians and scientists, saying “Now more than ever, we need your talent, your energy, your resolve and your character.”

- The Weill Cornell Medical College Alumni Association (WCMCAA) also honored Henry Masur, MD ’72 with the Award of Distinction at Commencement. Established in 1949, the annual Award of Distinction recognizes alumni who have demonstrated exceptional achievement in education, research or patient care, and who have brought honor and acclaim to the Medical College. Similarly, the WCGS administration honored Kornelia Polyak, MD, PhD ’95 with their Award of Distinction.

- The WCMC Alumni Association has continued to hold its popular Alumni-to-Student Knowledge (ASK) sessions. In May 2020, during the peak of the virus in New York City, the Alumni Association replaced its typical programming with three COVID-19 themed sessions: “Lessons from Past Health Crises;” Perspectives from the Front Lines of COVID-19;” and “Military Perspectives on Trauma.” Eight alumni speakers and over 90 students participated. This fall, the Alumni Association plans to hold three more ASK sessions exploring careers in obstetrics and gynecology, plastic surgery, and otolaryngology.

- Between May and August, nearly 100 students and alumni attended eight different Alumni Career Talks (ACT) sessions via Zoom featuring the following alumni: Joel Schrock, PhD ’14, MBA ’15 (Pfizer); Susannah Calhoun, PhD ’17 (Novartis); Cristina Ghenoiu, PhD ’12 (Epirium); Clair D. Geary, PhD ’19 (Christine Mirzayan Science and Technology Policy Fellowship); Dane Samilo, PhD ’18 (AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellowship);
In addition, the Office of Alumni Relations co-hosted its first event with the BioVenture eLab on August 12 called “What’s the Buzz About? How to Successfully Launch and Market Biomedical Products” featuring three alumni from the medical communications industry: Cali Howitt, PhD ’09 (BGB Group); Gina Marrone, PhD ’16 (Fingerpaint); & Jamie McBean, PhD ’14 (Klick).

Lastly, on August 6, WCGS alumni - Suzanne Burstein, PhD ’17; Susannah Calhoun, PhD ’17; Alisa Dong, PhD ’17; and Dane Samilo, PhD ’18—participated in an alumni round table discussion with NYC high school students as part of the on-campus Catalyst Program.

David Rogers Health Policy Colloquium. Established by Dr. Rogers (MD ’48) in 1987, this colloquium presents distinguished speakers on a wide variety of health policy topics. In May, speakers included Sara E. Abiola, PhD, JD, Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management at Columbia University, who spoke about creating a just and sustainable food system in the context of climate change; Holly J. Humphrey, MD, President of the Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, who described her life in medicine; and Peter Fleischut, MD, Senior Vice President and Chief Transformation Officer, and Shauna Coyne, Director of Telehealth, both from New York-Presbyterian, who presented on COVID and telehealth.

Diversity

WISE R Shifts to a Virtual Format in 2020. WISER is a collaborative pipeline program between Cornell’s Ithaca campus and WCM, which provides historically underrepresented and/or low-income students with biomedical research and field experience. Six Cornell University undergraduates with an interest in basic science, medical or health disparities research participate in the six-week summer program. Students worked directly with their WCM faculty mentor or the Diversity Research Coordinator on a research project. The cohort watched lectures given by WCM graduate students and faculty, as well as national speakers. They completed an online virology course and attended this year’s virtual Tri-I SPARC Jr. conference on “Social Determinants of Health.” They also obtained information on different careers paths and advice on how to navigate admission processes. This year’s program concluded with each student’s final presentation of their research and a closing virtual reception including mentors and WCM faculty.

Office of Diversity and Inclusion Holds Installment of Popular Breaking Bread Series. Breaking Bread is traditionally a facilitated dinner dialogue to discuss critical and timely topics across the spectrum of diversity and inclusion. Titled “The Fierce Urgency of Now,” a virtual event on June 30 explored how the WCM community is answering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s famous call in the current era. It was co-facilitated by Dr. Renee Alexander, former Associate Dean of Students at Cornell University, and Dr. Linnie Golightly, Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion. Dr. Alexander shared the quote, “There is nothing stronger than an idea whose time has come,” by Victor Hugo to begin the conversation, which delved into anti-racist work in the WCM community and supporting the movement in the era of COVID-19.

Annual SPARC Tri-I Diversity Retreat Held on June 13. The retreat offered a nurturing space to reflect on and imagine a way forward after the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic and the
murder of Mr. George Floyd. Dr. Mindy Fullilove, Professor of Urban Policy and Health at the New School and the co-author of *From Enforcers to Guardians: A Public Health Primer on Ending Police Violence* gave a keynote address on collective recovery. Dr. Sandrine Tunezerwe, a leadership and equity, diversity and inclusion consultant and CEO of the Collective Base, facilitated the retreat and led 79 participants through virtual, interactive workshops. The two experts in understanding community and personal trauma guided the group toward imagining ways to achieve positive goals and move toward recovery. The event was sponsored by the Weill Cornell Medicine Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Diversity Center of Excellence and Weill Department of Medicine, Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Rockefeller University Center for Clinical Translational Science, and Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center Office of Diversity Programs.

**Faculty**

**Office of Faculty**

- In an effort to increase opportunities for hiring a more diverse professorate, the Office of Faculty, in collaboration with the Offices of Diversity and Inclusion and Human Resources, has revised language for advertisements for open faculty positions and is developing new procedural guidelines for faculty search committees.

- Fall programming in *Faculty Development* will include a workshop on promotion for junior faculty, how to deliver virtual lectures, the physician-scientist career pathway, and faculty wellness in the time of COVID.

- The *Mentoring Academy Council*, consisting of representatives of all academic departments, is currently reviewing mentoring practices for WCM faculty across all career tracks and pathways.

- The *Leadership in Academic Medicine Program (LAMP)* is a Weill Cornell Medicine faculty development program that selects talented junior faculty members who have or are interested in leadership positions. It provides them with skills needed for academic success, including time management, negotiation, building a team and effective presentation techniques. LAMP graduated 38 faculty members from 14 different departments in June. This cohort brings the total number of faculty who have completed the annual course to 260.

**Awards and Honors**

WCM faculty have received a variety of awards and honors in recent months:

- **Lewis Cantley, PhD**, the Meyer Director of the Sandra and Edward Meyer Cancer Center, has won the 2020 Dr. Paul Janssen Award for Biomedical Research. The annual award from Johnson & Johnson honors the work of an active scientist in academia, industry or a scientific institute for her or his significant, transformational contribution toward the improvement of public health.

- **Silvia Formenti, MD**, Chair of the Department of Radiation Oncology, Professor of Radiation Oncology, and Sandra and Edward Meyer Professor of Cancer Research, and **David Cohen, MD, PhD** have been elected to the Association of American Physicians (AAP). Election to the AAP is considered one of the top honors in the field of health and medicine, recognizing physician-scientists who have demonstrated excellence in the
pursuit of medical knowledge and in the advancement of basic and clinical science
discoveries and their application to clinical medicine.

- **Ari Melnick, MD**, the Gebroe Family Professor of Hematology/Oncology, has been
awarded the American Society of Hematology's (ASH) 2020 Ernest Beutler Lecture and
Prize for advancing treatment of acute myeloid leukemia through epigenetic research. The
award and lecture, named for Dr. Ernest Beutler, past president of ASH, honors two
physician-scientists for major advances related to a single topic in the basic sciences or
clinical science and translational research.

- **Rahul Sharma, MD**, Chair of the Department of Emergency Medicine, and **Adam
Stracher, MD**, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Primary Care for the Weill Cornell
Physician Organization, have been selected for the Crain’s 2020 Notable in Health Care
in New York City list.

**Weill Cornell Medicine in Qatar (WCM-Q)**

**World Health Organization Designates WCM-Q A Collaborating Center.** A research group at
WCM-Q was designated as a World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Center for
combating COVID-19 and other infectious diseases in the region. Under the new designation, the
Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group (IDEG) at WCM-Q will support WHO’s regional and global
efforts to promote health and well-being by providing scientific research and advice to inform
policy decisions and public health programs in the Eastern Mediterranean Region. Led by **Dr. Laith Abu-Raddad**, Professor of Population Health Sciences at WCM-Q, IDEG has a special
focus on viral hepatitis, which is especially prevalent in the region and one of the leading causes
of deaths globally. The group contributed to efforts in combatting the spread of HIV/AIDS,
reproductive tract infections, and, more recently, COVID-19. In addition, Dr. Abu-Raddad became
a Member of the WHO’s Expert Group on Defining a WHO Process to Validate Elimination of Viral
Hepatitis as a Public Health Threat.

**WCM-Q Launches COVID-19 Live Webinar Series.** WCM-Q has launched a live webinar series
to allow the healthcare community in Qatar to discuss the challenges posed by the COVID-19
pandemic, its impact, recommended responses, and treatment protocols. Developed by WCM-
Q’s Division of Continuing Professional Development, the series also addresses an urgent need
to support the ongoing learning of the local healthcare community while social distancing
measures are being observed. The live webinars are accredited locally by the Qatar Council for
Healthcare Practitioners—Accreditation Department and internationally by the Accreditation
Council for Continuing Medical Education. Two additional online webinar series developed by
WCM-Q include Biostatistics for Healthcare Practitioners Live Webinar Series and the WCM-Q
Grand Rounds Live Webinar Series.

**WCM-Q Student Research Published in BMJ Global Health.** Two WCM-Q students are named
as joint first co-authors on a research study into the changing pattern of herpes infection, which
has been published in the UK medical journal *BMJ Global Health*. Fourth-year medical students
**Wajiha Yousuf** and **Hania Ibrahim** conducted the study at the Infectious Disease Epidemiology
Group over a two-year period, guided by their supervisors **Manale Harfouche**, WCM-Q Research
Specialist, and **Dr. Laith Abu-Raddad**. The study, titled “Herpes simplex virus type 1 in Europe:
systematic review, meta-analyses and meta-regressions,” suggests that fewer young people are
being exposed to herpes simplex type 1 – also known as oral herpes – and that the prevalence
amongst the population in Europe is falling by 1 percent per year (https://gh.bmj.com/content/5/7/e002388).

WCM-Q Collaboration with Max Planck Institute Sheds Light on Treatment-Resistant Cancers. Researchers at WCM-Q have devised a new way of testing cancer treatments to reveal how some tumors are able to resist chemotherapy drugs and continue to spread, in collaboration with the Max Planck Institute for Heart and Lung Research in Germany, the Inovotion biomedical research institute in France, and Hamad Medical Corporation in Qatar. The study, titled “Metabolic Signatures of Tumor Responses to Doxorubicin Elucidated by Metabolic Profiling in Ovo,” was featured on the front cover of the leading scientific journal Metabolites. The team at WCM-Q now aims to partner with peers at Hamad Medical Corporation to conduct clinical research projects that will bring the new testing strategy to cancer patients (https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7408021/).

WCM-Q Researchers Help Reprogram Bacteria Cells to Deliver Anti-Cancer Drugs. WCM-Q researchers worked with scientists at the University of Oxford, University of Sheffield, and University of Greifswald to help construct reprogrammable cells from three species of bacteria, Escherichia coli, Pseudomonas putida, and Ralstonia eutropha. In the study, titled “Chromosome-free bacterial cells are safe and programmable platforms for synthetic biology,” the research team used reprogrammed SimCells to synthesize catechol (a potent anticancer drug) from salicylic acid to inhibit lung, brain, and soft-tissue cancer cells in the lab. They also demonstrated that SimCells can be used as a “safe agent” to manufacture and deliver therapeutic drugs because they cannot replicate and do not interfere with the host genome as they do not have chromosomal DNA (https://www.pnas.org/content/117/12/6752).

Partners

NewYork-Presbyterian and Affiliate Hospitals Excel Locally and Nationally. On July 28, US News & World Report released its 2020-21 ranking of best hospitals in the United States. NewYork Presbytarian (NYP) rose from #5 to #4 in the nation and remained #1 in New York. This was the 20th consecutive year that NYP was the top-ranked hospital in New York. Several of our affiliated hospitals were also ranked highly:

- **Lincoln Hospital** was recognized as a high-performing hospital for congestive health failure and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.
- **Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center** was recognized as the #2 hospital for cancer care in the nation. It also earned high rankings in nine specialties.
- **Hospital for Special Surgery** was ranked #1 in orthopedics and #4 in rheumatology nationwide.
- **Houston Methodist Hospital** was ranked as the #1 hospital in Texas and in the top 20 nationwide.

After stepping up and providing exceptional care at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, WCM’s New York metropolitan affiliates spent the summer gradually converting inpatient units from temporary ICUs to safe inpatient beds and opening up ambulatory care units in adherence with social distancing and disinfecting guidelines.

**Cayuga Medical Center (CMC).** CMC received the American Heart Association’s Target: Stroke Honor Role-Elite Award by meeting quality measures designed to reduce the time between the patient’s arrival at the hospital with ischemic stroke and treatment with the clot-buster tissue plasminogen activator.
CMC has launched the Cayuga Health Sampling Center in Ithaca for tracking COVID-19 cases. It includes data from the following counties: Broome, Cortland, Chemung, Onondaga, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, and Yates.

NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital (NYPBMH). Rohan Ramakrishna, MD, Associate Professor of Neurological Surgery at Weill Cornell Medicine, has been appointed chief of neurological surgery at NYPBMH. He has served as director of the Brain Metastases Program at Weill Cornell Medicine since 2016 and co-director of the William Rhodes and Louise Tilzer-Rhodes Center for Glioblastoma at NewYork-Presbyterian since 2017. He will continue in these capacities and plans to integrate the brain metastases program across both Upper East Side and Brooklyn campuses.

Vivian Bea, MD, Assistant Professor of Surgery, has been named Chief of Breast Surgical Oncology at NYPBMH. In her new role, she will strive to reduce breast cancer disparities in the Brooklyn community through education and outreach. She has previously developed culturally competent education and training programs about breast cancer risk and prevention. Dr. Bea was selected as one of the 40 Under 40 Leaders in Minority Health by the National Minority Quality Forum. She is also the founder of Girls Loving OurSelves Successfully (G.L.O.S.S.), a mentoring program for underrepresented middle and high school girls.

NewYork-Presbyterian Queens (NYPQ). NYPQ has received the American Heart Association’s Mission: Lifeline Quality Achievement Award. Mission: Lifeline is a national initiative to advance the system of care for patients with acute, high-risk, time-sensitive, life- and/or quality-of-life-threatening disease states, such as severe heart attacks. NYPQ earned the award by meeting specific criteria and standards of performance for quick and appropriate treatment through emergency procedures to re-establish blood flow to blocked arteries in heart attack patients coming into the hospital directly or by transfer from other facilities.

Robert M. Minutello, MD, Associate Professor of Clinical Medicine and an interventional cardiologist with a long history at NewYork-Presbyterian and Weill Cornell Medicine, has been named director of the cardiac catheterization lab and director of the structural heart disease program at NYPQ, where he will also lead the new Heart Valve Center. The Heart Valve Center at NYPQ is the only center in Queens to offer transcatheter aortic valve replacement, which allows doctors to implant a device into a heart valve without open heart surgery.

Philanthropy

Thanks to the hard work and dedication of our donors, leaders and friends, we closed fiscal year 2020 with nearly $300 million raised in new gifts and commitments. It was an extraordinary year in fundraising, especially as we consider the challenges we have faced as a city and nation these last few months.

We have continued to receive tremendous support from the Weill Cornell Medicine community during this time of crisis, and we are grateful to our Board of Overseers, faculty, alumni and friends for their many generous gifts.

During the spring and summer months, our donors continued their support of Weill Cornell Medicine’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic through gifts at all levels. As of the end of September, more than $19.2 million has been raised for meal services, child and family care, employee relief, personal protective equipment (PPE), and research and testing activities, in addition to many in-kind donations. Additionally, several Overseers have come forward with
generous funding to help offset the revenues lost during the pandemic. This leadership has been inspiring and is helping us to stabilize as we look forward to growth in each of our missions.

These times, which are truly historic, will define our institution — and our country — for the foreseeable future. We will come out of this moment as a different institution, but stronger for having experienced it together with the generous support of our entire Weill Cornell Medicine community.

**WCM Insights Webinar Series: Leading the Conversation on Healthcare.** In July, we launched our WCM Insights Webinar Series, featuring our leading faculty speaking on today’s critical health topics, providing an opportunity to engage and inform our donors, alumni and friends. Past and upcoming programs in the series include the following:

- **Health Equities and Racial Disparities: The Pandemic Within a Pandemic** (July 30), moderated by Dr. Said Ibrahim, Senior Associate Dean for Diversity and Inclusion, and Chief of the Division of Healthcare Delivery Science and Innovation, and featuring:
  - Dr. Joy Howell, Assistant Dean of Diversity and Student Life, and Associate Professor of Clinical Pediatrics
  - Dr. Veronica Rouzier, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics in Medicine and Chief of Pediatrics at GHESKIO, Haiti
  - Dr. Monika Safford (MD ’86), Director of the Cornell Center for Health Equity and Chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine

- **Peas in a Pod: Mental Wellness for the Entire Family** (August 6), moderated by Dr. Francis Lee, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry, Professor of Psychiatry and Pharmacology, and Professor of Neuroscience, Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute, and featuring:
  - Dr. Shannon Bennett, Assistant Professor of Psychology in Clinical Psychiatry
  - Dr. Susan Evans, Professor of Psychology in Clinical Psychiatry

- **COVID Clinical Trials: Antibodies, Immunity and Vaccine Development** (August 20), moderated by Dr. Carl Nathan, Chairman of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, and the R.A. Rees Pritchett Professor of Microbiology, and featuring:
  - Dr. Marshall Glesby, Associate Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases and Professor of Healthcare Policy and Research
  - Dr. Roy Gulick, Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases and the Rochelle Belfer Professor in Medicine
  - Dr. Kristen Marks, Associate Professor of Medicine

- **Renewal at the Epicenter: COVID and the Road Ahead** (September 9), moderated by Dr. Joseph Cooke, Vice Chair of the Department of Medicine and Associate Professor of Clinical Healthcare Policy and Research, and featuring Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi

- **“The New Frontline: Innovations in Emergency Medicine and Telehealth”** (September 30), moderated by Dr. Rahul Sharma, Chairman of the Department of Emergency Medicine, Professor of Clinical Healthcare Policy and Research, and Professor of Clinical Emergency Medicine, and featuring:
  - Dr. Peter Greenwald, Assistant Professor of Clinical Emergency Medicine
o Dr. Heather Yeo, the Frank Glenn Faculty Scholar in Surgery, the Nanette Laitman Clinical Scholar in Healthcare Policy and Research/Clinical Evaluation, Associate Professor of Surgery and Assistant Professor of Healthcare Policy and Research

• **“Healthy at Home: Building Strength, Nutrition and Resilience”** (October 8), moderated by Dr. Joel Stein, Chairman of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine and Professor of Rehabilitation Medicine, and featuring:
  o Dr. Jaspal Ricky Singh, Director of Interventional Spine, Co-Director of the Center for Comprehensive Spine Care and Associate Professor of Clinical Rehabilitation Medicine
  o Janet Lau, certified registered dietitian-nutritionist in the Integrative Health and Wellbeing Program at Weill Cornell Medicine

• **“The Perfect Score: COVID Testing and a Flattened Curve”** (October 15), moderated by Dr. Rainu Kaushal, Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Research, Chair of the Department of Population Health Sciences, the Nanette Laitman Distinguished Professor of Population Health Sciences and a professor of medicine and of pediatrics, and featuring:
  o Dr. Melissa Cushing, Director of Clinical Laboratories, Vice Chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, and Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine in Anesthesiology
  o Dr. Nathaniel Hupert, Co-Director, Cornell Institute for Disease and Disaster Preparedness at Weill Cornell Medicine, and Associate Professor of Population Health Sciences and of Medicine
  o Dr. Massimo Loda, Chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, the David T. Thompson Professor of Pathology and Professor of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

**EVENTS**

The Office of External Affairs hosted an **Ask Our Experts** webinar on June 18, moderated by Dr. Orli Etingin, the Lisa and Sanford B. Ehrenkranz Professor in Women’s Health, Professor of Clinical Medicine and Professor of Medicine in Clinical Obstetrics and Gynecology. The webinar, “Managing Life in a Pandemic: The Intersection of Health, Sleep and Anxiety,” featured:

- Dr. Ana Krieger, Chief of the Division of Sleep Neurology in the Department of Neurology, and Professor of Clinical Medicine, of Medicine in Clinical Neurology and of Clinical Genetic Medicine
- Dr. Francis Lee, Chairman of the Department of Neurology, Professor of Psychiatry and Pharmacology, and Professor of Neuroscience in the Feil Family Brain and Mind Research Institute

**UPCOMING**

Upcoming fall virtual events include the following:

- The eighth annual **Appel Alzheimer’s Disease Research Institute Symposium** will be held on October 20, hosted by Dr. Augustine M.K. Choi and Dr. Li Gan, Director of the Helen and Robert Appel Alzheimer’s Disease Research Institute and the Burton P. and
Judith B. Resnick Distinguished Professor in Neurodegenerative Diseases. The Appel Symposium highlights groundbreaking research and discoveries by leading investigators, and provides a platform for discussing advances in Alzheimer’s disease and other neurodegenerative disorders. Speakers will include:

- Dr. Jonathan Kipnis of Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis
- Dr. Bruce Miller of the UCSF Weill Institute of Neurosciences in San Francisco
- Dr. Reisa Sperling of Harvard Medical School and the Center for Alzheimer Research and Treatment in Boston

The sixth annual Gale and Ira Drukier Lecture will be held on October 20, featuring Dr. Stanley Plotkin, professor emeritus in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Pennsylvania. The event will also feature the following winners of the 2020 Drukier Prize in Children’s Health Research:

- Dr. Stephen Patrick, Director of the Vanderbilt Center for Child Health Policy at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
- Dr. Sallie Permar, founding Director of the Children’s Health and Discovery Institute at Duke University School of Medicine. Dr. Permar is the incoming Chair of the Weill Cornell Medicine Department of Pediatrics, effective December 1.