



THE OHIO STATE
UNIVERSITY

DOROTHY M. DAVIS HEART AND
LUNG RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Quarterly Newsletter



Spring 2026



*Holly Sucharski-Argall, PhD & Michael Alexander-Leeks
at the 2026 American Heart Association
STEM Goes Red Event*

A Message from the Director -



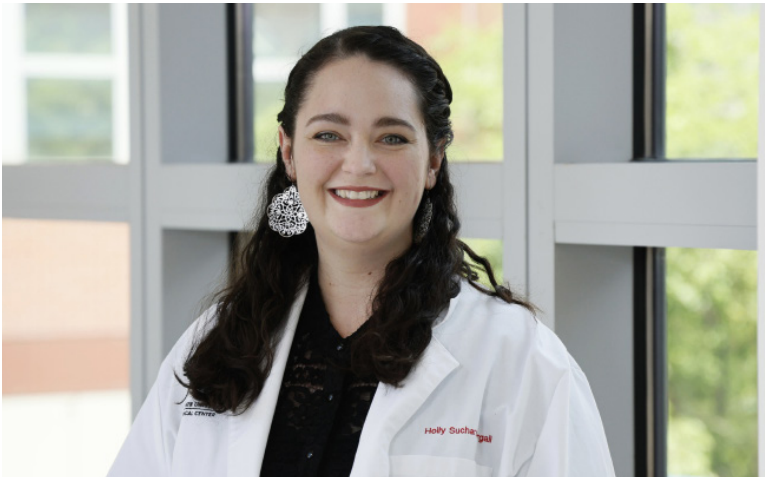
Thomas J. Hund, PhD
Professor, Departments of Internal Medicine and Biomedical Engineering
Director and William D. and Jacquelyn L. Wells Chair, Dorothy M. Davis Heart and Lung Research Institute



The Dorothy M. Davis Heart and Lung Research Institute (DHLRI) Administrative Suite began a new chapter over the past quarter, one that honors an incredible legacy while building fresh momentum for continued success ahead. After more than a decade of extraordinary service to DHLRI and Ohio State, Penny Jones has retired, leaving a legacy defined by service-oriented leadership, steady operational excellence, and a deep commitment to our people and mission. Penny helped guide the institute’s day-to-day operations and strategic direction, led financial and administrative management, and supported a complex research footprint spanning multiple campus buildings. She also championed initiatives that strengthened our community, including launching the DHLRI Pathway to Progress Committee and advancing a culture of safety through proactive, institute-wide improvements. With sincere gratitude for Penny’s lasting impact, we’re thrilled to welcome a new “changing of the guard.” **Michael Alexander-Leeks** has been appointed Administrative Director to lead the DHLRI administrative team, bringing more than 10 years of experience in healthcare operations and strategy, program growth, and cross-functional leadership. We’re also delighted that **Holly Sucharski-Argall, PhD**, has joined DHLRI to oversee our core lab operations, bringing valuable frontline experience as a researcher and firsthand familiarity with core facilities at DHLRI and across campus. Her perspective will help ensure these shared resources continue to deliver outstanding service and scientific support for our investigators. Please join us in thanking Penny for her remarkable service and in warmly welcoming Michael and Holly to their new roles at DHLRI.



Michael Alexander-Leeks



Holly Sucharski-Argall, PhD

Kudos: Celebrating Research Excellence

From January through April, the DHLRI advanced discovery and impact across the full spectrum of cardiovascular and pulmonary science. Our teams secured major federal and foundation support, published influential new findings, and expanded clinical innovation—while continuing to build community through vibrant seminar programming, campus partnerships, and hands-on STEM outreach. The highlights below reflect the energy and excellence of our investigators, trainees, and staff across research, education, and engagement.

The OSU Wexner Medical Center (OSUWMC) became the first institution in the U.S. to enroll a patient in a trial using a plant compound showing promise in slowing the growth of smaller aortic aneurysms. The study is led by **Kristine Orion, MD** (Vascular Surgery). Across DHLRI, clinical and translational trial activity remained robust this quarter, with actively recruiting studies and ongoing investigator-initiated work spanning cardiovascular and pulmonary medicine, electrophysiology and heart failure, surgical innovation, prevention, and advanced imaging. Dedicated research teams continue to support screening and enrollment to connect eligible patients with novel therapies and technologies. **Karolina Zareba, MD** (CVM) and **Salvatore Savona, MD** (CVM) successfully launched Ohio State’s first Cardiopulmonary Neuromuscular Clinic.



Rama K. Mallampalli, MD [Pulmonary, Critical Care and Sleep Medicine (PCCSM)] received a prestigious 7-year NIH R35 Outstanding Investigator Award from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, one of the NIH’s most competitive mechanisms for sustained, high-impact research. This long-term award provides stable, flexible support to accelerate discovery and enable bold, programmatic advances in understanding and treating lung inflammation and injury. Read more here: <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/mediaroom/pressreleaselisting/nih-lung-inflammation-and-injury-grant>



Latha Ganesan, PhD (Immunology and Rheumatology) received a \$3.8M NIH R01 from NIAID for “Clearance of Gut-Derived LPS by Hepatic Stabilin Receptors: Mechanisms and Implications,” with co-investigators **Haitao Wen, MD, PhD** and **Murugesan Rajaram, PhD** (Microbial Infection and Immunity).



E. Douglas Lewandowski, PhD (Endocrinology, Diabetes and Metabolism) and team published in *Circulation Research*: “CPT1a Expression Is a Critical Cardioprotective Response to Pathological Stress That Enables Rescue by Gene Transfer.” Read more here: <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/mediaroom/pressreleaselisting/lewandowski-research>



Qing Lin, MD, PhD (Cardiac Surgery) was awarded an NIH R01 (NIGMS) for “The mast-cell-specific Mrgprb2 signaling in wound healing and scar formation,” and also received an American Heart Association grant for “Mechanistic Role of N2-like Neutrophils in Pulmonary Vascular Remodeling.”

Mahmood Khan, PhD (Emergency Medicine) and collaborators published in *Theranostics*: “Safety and Engraftment of Aligned Cardiac Patches Loaded with hiPSC-CMs in a Large Animal Model of Myocardial Infarction.” Read more here: <https://wexnermedical.osu.edu/departments/innovations/heart-vascular/cardiac-patch-to-reverse-heart-failure>



Megan Lancaster, MD, PhD [Cardiovascular Medicine (CVM)] received a Clinical and Translational Science Pilot Program Award from the OSU Clinical and Translational Science Institute.

Congratulations to **Matthew Corriere, MD** (Vascular Surgery) on receiving a collaborative Healthy State Alliance Momentum Grant for “Agent-Supported, Preference-Informed Roadmaps for Individualized Navigation of Peripheral Artery Disease (ASPIRIN-PAD).”



Multiple investigators were featured in university and public-facing media this quarter, including **Laxmi Mehta, MD** (CVM), **Kedryn Baskin, PhD** [Physiology & Cell Biology (PCB)], **Christopher Breuer, MD** [Nationwide Children’s Hospital (NCH)], **Bryan Tillman, MD, PhD** (Vascular Surgery), **Onur Kanisicak, PhD** (Emergency Medicine), **Mahmood Khan, PhD** (Emergency Medicine), **Matthew Henn, MD** (Cardiac Surgery), **Daniel Gallego-Perez, PhD** (BME/Plastic Surgery), **Salvatore Savona, MD** (CVM), **Curt Daniels, MD** (CVM), and **Elizabeth Jordan, GC** (CVM).



Divya Sridharan, PhD (Emergency Medicine) received an American Heart Association Career Development Award: “Deciphering host-transplant crosstalk in stem cell-mediated cardiac repair.”



Matthew Ringel, MD, Chair of the Department of Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics (MMT), received The Ohio State University 2026 Distinguished Scholar Award from the Enterprise for Research, Innovation and Knowledge (ERIK), recognizing his sustained, high-impact contributions to research and scholarship. As Dr. Ringel noted, “Anything that I’ve accomplished is only because of surrounding myself with superb people, colleagues, students, staff, and other trainees, who are incredibly talented and work really hard.”



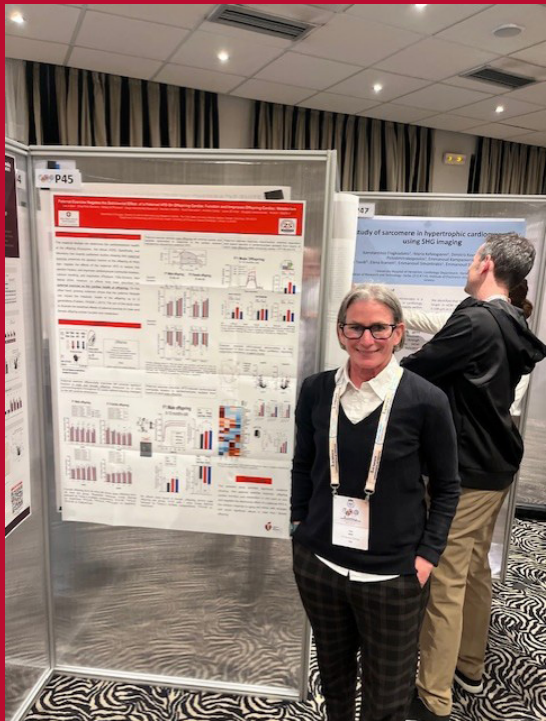
Richard Gumina, MD (CVM) was elected to the Association of University Cardiologists (limited to 175 academic cardiologists nationwide).

Laxmi Mehta, MD (CVM) received the American College of Cardiology’s 2026 Distinguished Fellow Award.



Brad Rovin, MD (Nephrology) was appointed Chair of the Lupus Foundation of America’s Medical–Scientific Council.

Qin Ma, PhD (Biomedical Informatics) was elected a 2026 Fellow of the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering “for advancing AI applications in single-cell studies, bioinformatics education, and immuno-oncology research with significant scientific contributions and leadership.”



Lisa Baer presenting a poster at the 3rd Olympiad in Cardiovascular Medicine in Kalamata, Greece.

Thomas Hund, PhD [CVM and Biomedical Engineering (BME)], **E. Douglas Lewandowski, PhD** (Endocrinology), **Kristin Stanford, PhD** (Surgery), an Loren Wold, PhD (Cardiac Surgery) were invited speakers at the 3rd Olympiad in Cardiovascular Medicine International Symposium on Experimental & Clinical Cardiology in Kalamata, Greece.



Lorena Rosas, PhD (Mora/Rojas labs) received the Keynote Symposium Future of Science Fund Scholarship at the Fibrosis Keystone Symposia in Banff, Alberta, Canada. Dr. Rosas was also recognized with an OSU Excellence in Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award from the Office of Academic Enrichment.

Alexander Winkle (Hund Lab) was awarded an American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship for research on mechanisms of heart failure and maladaptive cardiac remodeling. Read more here: <https://bme.osu.edu/news/2026/02/phd-candidate-earns-american-heart-association-predoctoral-fellowship>



Happenings: Events & Community Engagement

Research in Progress (Spring semester) featured talks from **John Stafford, PhD** (Endocrinology), **Patricia Sime, MD** (Virginia Commonwealth University), **Sabhya Rana, PhD** (Neuroscience), **Robert “Nate” Helsley, PhD** (University of Kentucky), **Laszlo Farkas, MD** (PCCSM), **Megan Lancaster, MD, PhD** (CVM), **Junichi Sadoshima, MD, PhD** (Rutgers New Jersey School of Medicine), **Ramiah Jacks, PhD** (Surgery), **Bryan Smith, PhD** (MMT), **Maneesh Bhargava, MBBS, PhD** (PCCSM), **Yanbo Fan, MD, PhD** (Vascular Surgery), **Kiran Nakka, PhD** (PCB), **Marlene Rabinovitch, MD** (Stanford Children’s Health), and **Marios Arvanitis, MD** (CVM).



Working Wednesday resumed for the Spring semester with sessions featuring the Ohio Supercomputer Center, the College of Medicine Grants Management Office post-award team, a research compliance conversation with ERIK, and a discussion with **Rebecca Vanderpool, PhD** (CVM) and **Tim Huerta, PhD** (Research Information Technology) on clinical research data.

John Horack, PhD, Vice President of Research for The Ohio State University, along with Dawn Larzelere, Associate Vice President for ERIK Operations, and Matt Sikora, Executive Assistant, visited DHLRI for a tour.



DHLRI members participated in the OSU AI Research Summit (March 3–4). DHLRI speakers and moderators included **Loren Wold, PhD** (Cardiac Surgery), **Rizwan Ahmad, PhD** (BME), **Xia Ning, PhD** (Biomedical Informatics), **Ping Zhang, PhD** (Biomedical Informatics), **Rebecca Vanderpool, PhD** (CVM), **Philip Popovich, PhD** (Neuroscience), **Qin Ma, PhD** (Biomedical Informatics), **Matthew Corriere, MD** (Vascular Surgery), and **Thomas Hund, PhD** (CVM / BME).

DHLRI participated in the American Heart Association STEM Goes Red event, hosting more than 200 middle school-aged girls for a hands-on session focused on the heart and genetics (DNA extraction from strawberries, zebrafish embryo microscopy, and a cardiac arrhythmia simulation).



Wandi Zhu, PhD (Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics) showing students Zebrafish embryos through the microscope

Transitions



Penny Jones, DHLRI Administrative Director, retired after 11 years of dedicated service to the university. We celebrated Penny at a January going-away reception, and in recognition of her lasting impact, the Annual Staff Excellence Award has been renamed in her honor.

Michael Alexander-Leeks joined the DHLRI Administrative Team as the new Administrative Director.

Holly Sucharski-Argall, PhD joined DHLRI as the new Core Labs Manager.

Please join us in welcoming the newest members of the DHLRI community who joined our institute this quarter:

- **Rosie Wu, PhD** – Cardiac Surgery
- **Bryan Smith, PhD** – Molecular Medicine and Therapeutics
- **Paula Reventun Torralba, PhD** – Cardiovascular Medicine
- **Xiaowen Bai, PhD** – Anesthesiology
- **Megan Keiser, PhD** – Neurological Surgery
- **Jordi Torrelles, PhD** – Infectious Diseases
- **Shinsuke Nirengi, PhD** – Surgery
- **Dmitri Kudryashov, MD, PhD** – Physiology & Cell Biology
- **Zhentao Zhang, PhD** – Cardiac Surgery
- **Maria Mihaylova, PhD** – Biological Chemistry and Pharmacology

Previous Annual Reports and Quarterly Newsletters can be found at: <https://medicine.osu.edu/departments/davis-heart-lung-research-institute/message-from-the-director>

The DHLRI website has also been updated for the quarter, including new featured stories, featured publications, a new events & outreach schedule, and administrative staff updates.

Please reach out to Izabelle Lange, Editor, (Izabelle.Lange@osumc.edu) with any submissions for next quarter’s newsletter. Photos to accompany your announcement are appreciated.