

## **Congratulations to Awardees of the 2021 Fall LRCP/LAWSON Catalyst Research Grant Competition**

The London Regional Cancer Program & LAWSON Catalyst Grants for Translational Cancer Research review panel recently recommended funding for ten research projects submitted to the 2021 Fall Competition. This program, open to all primary and cross-appointees in the Department of Oncology at Western University (and their collaborators), supports translational cancer research with potential to attract and retain external funding and to lead to clinical applications that reduce the burden of cancer. We gratefully acknowledge our community fundraisers and generous donors and the diligent efforts of the London Health Sciences Foundation for the support required to offer these Catalyst Research Grants to our cancer researchers.

The Review Panel has approved funding for the following awards. Please join me in congratulating the successful applicants to the LRCP & LAWSON Catalyst Grants Program for Translational Cancer Research:

**Dr. Silvia Penuela** (Depts of Anatomy & Cell Biology, Oncology). **Co-Applicant: Dr. Kathryn Roth** (Dept. of Otolaryngology)  
PANX3 channels regulate squamous cell carcinoma progression  
Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Keith Samitt Translational Cancer Research Grant (Undesignated))

**Dr. Richard Malthaner** (Depts. of Surgery, Oncology). **Co-Applicants: Drs. Rajni Patel** (Dept. of Electrical & Computer Engineering), **Mehdi Qiabi** (Dept. of Surgery), **Rahul Nayak** (Dept. of Surgery)  
Lung nodule wireless palpatory  
Amount Funded: \$19,035 (Keith Samitt Translational Cancer Research Grant (Undesignated))

**Dr. Sam Asfaha** (Depts. of Medicine, Oncology, Pathology and Lab Medicine).  
Single-cell RNA-seq analysis of inflammatory cells in colitis-associated cancer  
Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Keith Samitt Translational Cancer Research Grant (Undesignated))

**Dr. Pencilla Lang** (Dept. of Oncology). **Co-PIs: Sarah Mattonen** (Depts. of Medical Biophysics, Oncology), **Dr. Jonatan Snir** (Depts. of Medical Biophysics, Oncology); **Co-Applicant: Edward Wang** (MD/PhD student, Dept. of Medical Biophysics)  
Too big or too many: Predicting dosimetry of stereotactic radiation to multiple lung lesions  
Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Keith Samitt Translational Cancer Research Grant (Undesignated))

**Dr. Armen Parsyan** (Depts of Surgery, Oncology, Anatomy & Cell Biology). **Co-Applicant: Dr. Vasudeva Bhat** (Post-Doctoral Associate, Dept. of Anatomy & Cell Biology, Western University)

Identification and Validation of Novel Genes Associated with Radiation Resistance in Triple Negative Breast Cancer Based on CRISPR-Cas9 Genome-Wide Knockout Screening

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Translational Breast Cancer Research focus)

**Dr. Matthew Hebb** (Depts. of Surgery, Oncology). **Co-Applicants: Drs. Eugene Wong** (Depts. of Physics & Astronomy, Oncology), **Susanne Schmid** (Dept of Anatomy & Cell Biology), **John Ronald** (Dept. of Medical Biophysics)

A novel breast cancer brain metastasis PDX rat model for the evaluation of an experimental electrotherapy

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Translational Breast Cancer Research focus)

**Dr. Len Luyt** (Depts. of Oncology, Chemistry, Medical Imaging)

The development of biased agonists targeting the ghrelin receptor as cancer cachexia therapeutics in pancreatic cancer

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research focus)

**Dr. Saman Maleki** (Depts. of Oncology, Pathology & Lab Medicine, Medical Biophysics). **Co-Applicants: Drs. Jeremy Burton** (Dept. of Microbiology & Immunology), **Ting Lee** (Dept. of Medical Biophysics), **John Ronald** (Dept. of Medical Biophysics)

Bacterial-based therapy with *Akkermansia muciniphila* to modulate tumor and gut microbiome and activate T-cells in pancreatic cancer

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Translational Pancreatic Cancer Research focus)

**Dr. Fred Dick** (Depts. of Pathology & Lab Medicine, Oncology)

Investigating early steps in high grade serous ovarian cancer dissemination

Amount Funded: \$25,000 (Translational Ovarian Cancer Research focus)

**Dr. Mehdi Qiabi** (Dept of Surgery, Oncology), **Co-Applicants: Sarah Mattonen** (Depts. of Medical Biophysics, Oncology), **Rahul Nayak** (Dept of Surgery), **Narinder Paul** (Dept. of Medical Imaging), **Richard Malthaner** (Dept. of Surgery, Oncology)

Radiomics for early-stage esophageal cancer

Amount Funded: \$18,390 (Translational Esophageal Cancer Research focus)

We graciously acknowledge the generous support of the Breast Cancer Society of Canada, The London Run for Ovarian Cancer, Lexus of London Golf Classic, The Baker Centre for Pancreatic Cancer, Mr. Keith Samitt and our other generous supporters of cancer research in London and the greater Southwestern Ontario region. We would also like to thank the members of the peer-review committee for their time, effort and diligence in conducting the reviews, which is essential for ensuring that these funds support the highest quality translational cancer research.

We appreciate the work of our 2021 Catalyst Grants Review Panel Members from the LRCP and Western: **Drs. Matt Cecchini (Scientific Officer), David Litchfield, Jim Lacefield, Caroline Schild-Poulter, Michael Boffa, Alison Allan, Eric Winkvist, Trevor Shepherd, Lina Dagnino, Stephen Welch, Stewart Gaede, David D'Souza, Alejandro LazoLanger, Vikram Velker, Chris Pin, & Rod DeKoter.**

We are grateful to Gail McConnell (Cancer Research Laboratory Program, LRCP & LAWSON) for providing essential administrative support!

Congratulations and well done!

Dr. Glenn Bauman, Chair-2021 Catalyst Grant Review Panel  
Dept. of Oncology  
Director, Centre for Translational Cancer Research

Dr. Karin Hahn, Chair/Chief  
Department of Oncology

Gabriel DiMattia, PhD,  
Interim Director, Cancer Research Laboratory Program

London Regional Cancer Program  
Lawson Health Research Institute