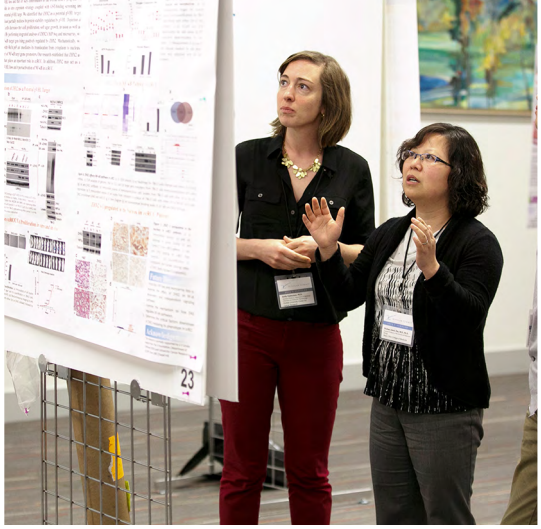
10 YEARS
10 YEARS
10 YEARS

V FOUNDATION®
VICTORY OVER CANCER

CANCER RESEARCH
SUMMIT

10 YEARS
10 YEARS
10 YEARS

MAY 12-14, 2026




Welcome V Grantees!
Welcome V Grantees!


V SUMMIT 2023


We're 100% in for Victory Over Cancer®.
Aparna Bhaduri, Ph.D.
V Foundation-Funded Cancer Researcher
DR. APARNA BHADURI
"The only way to achieve Victory Over Cancer® is to give everything we've got. That's why the V Foundation gives 100% of every dollar donated directly to cancer research."
Aparna Bhaduri
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Welcome

It is truly a pleasure to welcome you to the V Foundation for Cancer Research and to the 2026 V Summit.

This is one of my favorite moments of the year, because we get to bring this community together in one place. Not just to share science, but to connect, to learn from each other, and to step back and remember why this work matters.

We are in a complicated moment for research. Funding is tighter, expectations are higher, and the pace of discovery is moving faster than ever. That combination can feel both exciting and challenging at the same time. And yet, in the middle of all of that, you are doing the work. You are asking hard questions, taking real risks, and continuing to push forward. I want you to know how proud we are of that!

At the V Foundation, we have always believed that progress comes from investing in bold ideas and in the people willing to pursue them. That belief has never felt more important than it does right now. The impact of this community is real, and it continues to grow because of the work you are doing every day. This year, we mark the special occasion of the 10th V Summit. Ten years of bringing together the most outstanding early-career cancer researchers to build community and share science. From 2015-2025, the V Foundation has funded 335 V Scholar and early-career investigators. This community of scientists is nothing short of amazing! This group of grantees has generated over 26,000 publications that have yielded over **1.7 million** citations. In addition, they have received over 1,900 grants with an aggregate funding total of **$3.95 billion**. We are thrilled and honored to have all of you in this outstanding group of cancer researchers.

This Summit is designed with you in mind. Over the next two days, you will spend time with other extraordinary grantees who are approaching cancer from different angles, and that kind of cross talk matters. You will meet our staff, our Board, and members of our Scientific Advisory Committee, the people who are deeply invested in your success. You will also have the opportunity to practice how you communicate your science. The skills you will learn here matter. Not just for this moment, but for everything that comes next in your career.

My hope is that you leave here feeling more connected, more confident, and better prepared for what you will face as a researcher. This work is not easy, and none of you are doing it in isolation. You are part of a community that believes in you and is committed to helping you succeed.

Cancer remains one of the biggest challenges we face, and there is still so much work to do. But I remain optimistic, because I know who is doing that work.

Thank you for what you are building, for the risks you are willing to take, and for the impact you are already having on patients and families.

We are proud to be in this work with you. Let's make this an incredible Summit!

Susanna F. Greer, Ph.D.
Chief Scientific Officer
The V Foundation for Cancer Research

Presenters & Panelists

Kara Bernstein, Ph.D.

George W. Raiziss II Professor of Biochemistry and Biophysics, University of Pennsylvania

Dr. Bernstein graduated with a degree in biology from Bryn Mawr College and obtained a Ph.D. in genetics and development from Yale University. She did post-doctoral work at Columbia University. In 2011, Dr. Bernstein moved to the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, where she established a productive and well-funded lab focusing on error-free mechanisms of DNA repair. In 2022, she moved to the University of Pennsylvania Abramson School of Medicine and established her lab in Biochemistry and Biophysics, where she holds the George W. Raiziss Professorship and serves as the Section Chief of the Genome Stability and DNA Repair Research Program in Abramson Family Cancer Research Institute. Dr. Bernstein is also a Co-Director of the Center of Excellence in Environmental Toxicology Graduate Training Program. Her lab focuses on proteins that contribute to breast and ovarian cancer development and studies how accurate repair of DNA double-strand breaks is regulated. Dr. Bernstein has authored more than 60 scientific papers and has been continuously funded by the National Institutes of Health since 2002.

Fun Fact: I was a high school doubles tennis champion in central New Jersey.

Presenters & Panelists

Chanda Douglas-Ward, SPHR, SHRM-CP, MBA

Vice President of Human Resources, The V Foundation

Chanda Douglas-Ward is a human resource professional with more than 30 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. After holding positions in various non-profits and doing some consulting on her own, Chanda joined the V Foundation in July 2021. She is responsible for overseeing and managing all aspects of HR to include Talent Acquisition, Benefits Administration, Training and Development, Employee Engagement, DEI Initiatives, Performance Management and Strategic Workforce Planning and Development.

Prior to joining the V Foundation, Douglas-Ward worked at Alamance Community College in Graham, NC. She served as the Director of Human Resources and oversaw all aspects of HR. She provided counsel and direction to over 250 full-time faculty and staff as well as 300+ adjunct faculty and part-time staff. Prior to Alamance Community College, Douglas-Ward served as Human Resources Director at Saint Augustine's University; Vice-President and promoted to Senior Vice President of Human Resources at the Mid-Atlantic Affiliate of the American Heart Association; Human Resources Director at All Kinds of Minds in Chapel Hill, NC; Human Resources Director for two community health centers — Advance Community Health in Raleigh, NC and Piedmont Health Services in Chapel Hill, NC; and Human Resources Director at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center in Research Triangle Park, NC.

Douglas-Ward earned her B.A. degree in Public Policy Analysis with a concentration in Health Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She pursued additional study to obtain her Master of Business Administration from Elon University. She is a certified Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) and Society for Human Resources Management Certified Professional.

Douglas-Ward currently resides in Durham, North Carolina with her husband, Gregory, and her son, Jonathan. She is a native of Rocky Mount, NC. She enjoys traveling, spending time with family and friends, writing and listening to all genres of music.

Fun Fact: I love all things football (high school, college and professional). I have one son who has played at the high school and college level.

Presenters & Panelists

Michael Emanuele, Ph.D.

Professor, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Dr. Michael Emanuele is a Professor in the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Department of Pharmacology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Growing up in New Jersey, he earned his Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry and Cell Biology from Bucknell University. After graduation, he worked as a research technician at the University of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Emanuele pursued his Ph.D. at the University of Virginia in Todd Stukenberg's lab, investigating the fundamental mechanisms of cell division using cell biological and biochemical approaches. As a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Stephen Elledge's lab at Harvard Medical School and Brigham and Women's Hospital, he pioneered innovative genetic and proteomic methodologies to dissect complex ubiquitin signaling networks with unprecedented resolution.

Since establishing his independent laboratory at UNC in 2013, Dr. Emanuele has built a research program focused on understanding how ubiquitin-mediated protein degradation regulates cell cycle progression in both normal and cancer cells. His lab aims to uncover fundamental mechanisms of cell cycle control and identify therapeutic vulnerabilities in cancer, with particular emphasis on how cancer therapeutics remodel cellular proteomes and create opportunities for combination therapies. His work is supported by grants from the National Institutes of Health and private foundations, and he is known for his enthusiasm for science and his ability to inspire and connect with colleagues and trainees.

Fun Fact: Enjoys bikes, coffee and pizza.

Seth Liston, CPA

Senior Director of Finance, The V Foundation

Seth Liston serves as Controller and Senior Director of Finance at the V Foundation, where he brings nearly 15 years of experience in finance, accounting, and financial leadership within the healthcare sector.

Throughout his career, Seth has supported organizations through complex financial initiatives, including IPO readiness, carve-out audits and divestitures, and the development and oversight of multi-million-dollar capital budgets. His work reflects a strong command of financial reporting, systems strategy, and scalable financial operations.

Driven by a passion for using finance as a force for impact, Seth is especially focused on how strong financial systems and transparent reporting can support innovation and progress across the healthcare landscape — work that is now meaningfully connected to the V Foundation's Fight Cancer mission.

In his personal time, Seth enjoys exploring the outdoors and spending time with his family.

Fun Fact: Former collegiate swimmer for the University of North Carolina Wilmington (Go Seahawks!)

Presenters & Panelists

Melanie Peffer, Ph.D.

Author, Science Communication Consultant, Research Scientist, MKPEF4, University of Colorado Boulder

Dr. Melanie Peffer is a best-selling author, passionate biology educator, and accomplished science communicator whose work to help people rethink and find joy in biology has inspired thousands worldwide. In two decades of teaching introductory biology, students consistently praise her ability to bring the real world into the classroom in an engaging, creative manner.

Dr. Peffer is an in-demand public speaker and gave a TED talk (How Rethinking Biology Can Positively Change Your Life), developed a TED-ED lesson (The Artist Who Won a Nobel Prize...in Medicine), and regularly gives professional development workshops on various aspects of science communication.

Dr. Peffer is an accomplished writer and recently published her first textbook, Biology for Life with Cengage learning. Her first book, Biology Everywhere, spent time on the Amazon.com best-seller list and won an EVVY gold award for educational text in 2022 from the Colorado Independent Publishers Association. As the 2021 High Plains Library District Writer in Residence, she wrote a children's spinoff of Biology Everywhere called On the River, which won EVVY gold in the children's category in 2022.

Dr. Peffer teaches introductory molecular biology courses at the University of Colorado and leads a learning sciences research laboratory. Her research focuses on how people learn, understand, and engage with biology content. For example, she is studying how quilts can be used to tell science stories for science communication.

Fun Fact: I play flute and piccolo in a local community band and am a frequent soloist.

Kris C. Wood, Ph.D.

Professor, Dept. of Pharmacology and Cancer Biology, Duke University

My laboratory seeks to define tumor survival dependencies and understand the evolutionary forces that shape them. In one area, we have worked to define dependencies driven by oncogenic signals, lineage and metabolic states, and drug therapies. In a second area, we have worked to understand the mechanisms that shape tumor evolution under the selective pressure of drug treatments, with the long-term goal of creating therapies that select against resistance. A common theme in nearly all of our studies is the coupling of large-scale, unbiased genomic and pharmacological approaches with mechanistic studies using the classic tools of biochemistry and molecular and cellular biology. Collectively, our studies have led to new concepts in functional tumor evolution, the creation of multiple successful biotechnology companies, and the discovery of mechanism-based therapies that have progressed successfully into the clinic.

Presenters & Panelists

Min Zhang, M.D., Ph.D.[2]

Professor, University of California, Irvine

Dr. Min Zhang, M.D., Ph.D., is a Professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics at the University of California, Irvine; Director of the Biostatistics Shared Resource at the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center; and an Adjunct Professor of Statistics at Purdue University. After completing medical training with a residency in oncology, Dr. Zhang earned a Ph.D. in Neuroscience, followed by a second Ph.D. in Biological Statistics and Computational Biology from Cornell University. Over the past two decades, her research has focused on the development of new machine learning methodologies for high-dimensional clinical and multi-omics data, with a strong emphasis on cancer prevention and early detection through understanding the molecular mechanisms. Dr. Zhang serves on the editorial Board of Communications Biology and as a statistical advisor for Nature Medicine. Building on an NIH BD2K-funded Big Data training initiative, she has led the NCI-funded R25 program, "Big Data Training for Cancer Research" since 2020.

Scientific Advisory Committee

Justin Balko, Pharm.D., Ph.D.

Ingram Professor of Cancer Research, Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Primary Expertise: Breast Cancer, Biomarkers, Immunology

Justin M. Balko obtained his Doctorate in Pharmacy from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 2004. After completion of his Ph.D. in the Clinical and Experimental Therapeutics track of the Pharmaceutical Sciences program at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, KY, he joined the laboratory of Carlos L. Arteaga, M.D., in 2009 as a postdoctoral research fellow. Dr. Balko is currently an Ingram Professor of Cancer Research and Professor of Medicine and Pathology, Microbiology, and Immunology, and co-leads the VICC Breast Cancer Research Program. His laboratory focuses on identifying biomarkers and mechanisms of drug sensitivity or resistance in breast cancer and other tumor types, ways to enhance response rates to immunotherapy by targeting cancer-specific signals of immune suppression, and the biological mechanisms of immune-related adverse events to immunotherapies. His laboratory receives or has received funding from the NIH/NCI/NHLBI, the Department of Defense, The IBC Network Foundation, the V Foundation for Cancer Research, The Mary Kay Foundation, Stand Up 2 Cancer/AACR, Breast Cancer Research Foundation, and Susan G. Komen.

Nancy E. Davidson, M.D. *She/her*

Immediate Past Chair of the V Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee; Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer, Fred Hutch Cancer Center; Professor, University of Washington; Raisbeck Chair for Collaborative Research

Primary Expertise: Breast Cancer, Clinical Trials, Epigenetics

Dr. Davidson is a world-renowned breast cancer researcher who serves as the Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at Fred Hutch Cancer Center where she holds the Raisbeck Endowed Chair for Collaborative Research. She is Professor and former chief of the Division of Medical Oncology at the University of Washington School of Medicine. She was president of American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) from 2007-2008 and of American Association of Cancer Research (AACR) from 2016-2017.

Dr. Davidson completed her M.D. from Harvard Medical School, internship at the University of Pennsylvania, residency at Johns Hopkins, and medical oncology fellowship at NIH's National Cancer Institute. She served as a faculty member in the Department of Oncology at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine from 1986-2009 and held the Breast Cancer Research Chair of Oncology from 1995-2009. From 2009-2016 she served as Hillman Professor of Oncology, Associate Vice Chancellor for Cancer Research and Director of the Cancer Institute at the University of Pittsburgh. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Scientific Advisory Committee

H. Shelton "Shelley" Earp, M.D.

Lineberger Distinguished Professor of Cancer Research; Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology

Primary Expertise: Cancer Signaling, Immunology, Cell Biology

Shelton "Shelley" Earp, M.D., is Lineberger Distinguished Professor of Cancer Research and Professor in the Departments of Medicine and Pharmacology at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 2024, he stepped down as the Director of the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center, a role he had occupied for 24 years. In this role, he recruited multiple faculty members across basic, clinical and population cancer research and served as principal investigator of the UNC Lineberger Cancer Center Support Grant. His laboratory has been continuously funded by NIH for over 40 years and conducts clinical, translational, and basic cancer research, studying the signals that regulate cell growth, differentiation, and the innate immune system. His group has identified and studied genes involved in these cellular decisions. He has authored over 210 biomedical research papers. He has been the recipient of multiple UNC teaching, faculty, and alumni awards, most recently the University of North Carolina System O. Max Gardner Award. He chaired national review committees for the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute, served as President of the American Association of Cancer Institutes and on multiple NCI Cancer Center External Advisory Boards. He served as the chair during his second term on the NCI Board of Scientific Advisors and completed his service in 2025.

Fun Fact: He left his high school as a junior. He still doesn't have a high school diploma.

Michael B. Kastan, M.D., Ph.D.

Chair of the V Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee; William and Jane Shingleton Professor, Pharmacology and Cancer Biology; Professor of Pediatrics, Duke Cancer Institute

Primary Expertise: Pediatric Oncology/DNA Damage & Repair, Experimental Therapeutics

Michael Kastan, M.D., Ph.D. is the William and Jane Shingleton Professor of Pharmacology and Cancer Biology and Professor of Pediatrics. Before moving to Duke in 2011, he had been Professor of Oncology, Pediatrics, and Molecular Biology at Johns Hopkins and Chair of Hematology-Oncology and Cancer Center Director at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. His laboratory research concentrates on DNA damage and repair, tumor suppressor genes, and causes of cancer related to genetic predisposition and environmental exposures. His discoveries have made a major impact on our understanding of how cancers develop and how they respond to chemotherapy and radiation therapy. He has received numerous honors for his highly cited work, including election to the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Medicine, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and receiving the AACR-G.H.A. Clowes Memorial Award for outstanding contributions to basic cancer research. He has served as Chairman of the Board of Scientific Counselors of the National Cancer Institute, on the Boards of Directors of the American Association for Cancer Research and the American Association of Cancer Institutes, as Editor-in-Chief of the journal Molecular Cancer Research, and as Editor of the textbook Clinical Oncology.

Scientific Advisory Committee

Joseph O. Moore, M.D.

Retired Medical Director, Duke Raleigh Hospital; Professor Emeritus of Medicine, Duke Cancer Institute

Primary Expertise: Hematologic Malignancies

Dr. Joseph O. Moore is Professor of Medicine in the Division of Hematologic Malignancies and Cell Therapy at Duke University Medical Center. He is a recipient of the R. Wayne Rundles Award for Excellence in Cancer Research and was selected to appear in Woodward/White's The Best Doctors in America yearly from 1993 to the present and is recipient of the Arnold Gold Award for Humanism in Medicine. He is the author of numerous scientific articles and textbook chapters. Dr. Moore was Jim Valvano's primary oncologist at Duke University Medical Center and he is an original member of the V Foundation Board of Directors and the V Foundation Scientific Advisory Board.

Dr. Moore's clinical focuses include acute and chronic myeloid and lymphoid leukemia, soft tissue and bone sarcomas, Hodgkin lymphoma, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, ITP, hemolytic anemia and neuroendocrine tumors. His research interests include clinical trials and research in the diagnosis and treatment of acute myeloid and lymphoid leukemia, malignant lymphoma, and chronic myeloid and lymphoid leukemia. Additionally his interests include patient care and support programs and protocols, drug development and evaluation, soft tissue sarcoma, neuroendocrine tumors, carcinoid, delivery of continuing medical education and telemedicine Research Program in Malignant Lymphoma and the Lymphocytic Leukemias (Acute and Chronic). Dr. Moore serves as Duke's Principal Investigator (PI) on numerous ongoing investigational protocols.

Dr. Moore received his B.S. from Emory University and his M.D. from Johns Hopkins Hospital, where he completed his internal medicine residency. Moore arrived at Duke University as a Fellow in the Division of Hematology and Oncology in 1975. He was admitted to the medical staff in July 1977 and this continues to the present day. He is a mentor to Duke Undergraduates, Medical Residents, Fellows and other Medical Trainees. He continues as a member of the V Foundation Board of Directors and the Scientific Advisory Board to date.

Scientific Advisory Committee

William Nelson, M.D., Ph.D., D.Sc.

Marion I. Knott Professor of Oncology and Director of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins

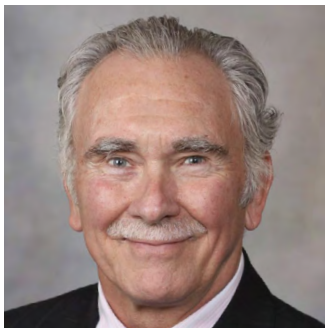
Primary Expertise: Genitourinary Cancers, Drug Discovery and Development

Dr. Nelson is the Marion I. Knott Professor of Oncology and Director of the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins. He currently holds Professorships in Oncology, Medicine, Pharmacology, Pathology, Radiation Oncology, Urology, and Environmental Health Sciences, as well as adjunct appointments at the Howard University School of Medicine and the Taipei Medical College.

Dr. Nelson's laboratory discovered one of the first genes subject to epigenetic silencing in human cancer, leading to DNA-based prostate cancer diagnostic tests approved by the US Food and Drug Administration-the first such tests in common use. In addition, working with longtime collaborators Angelo M. DeMarzo, Srinivasan Yegnasubramanian, Elizabeth A. Platz, William B. Isaacs, and others, Dr. Nelson's research has transformed understanding of the how prostate cancers arise. The team has identified the major precursor to prostate cancer, 'proliferative inflammatory atrophy,' implicated DNA topoisomerases in generation of somatic genome translocations in prostate cancer cells, indicted heterocyclic amine carcinogens from overcooked meats in pathogenesis of some prostate cancers, and highlighted intra-glandular spread of invasive adenocarcinoma as a common mimic of prostatic intraepithelial neoplasia.

Outside of Johns Hopkins, Dr. Nelson is a recognized leader in cancer research, organizing national and international meetings in cancer health disparities, cancer prevention, and prostate cancer. He serves on the Board of the Break Through Cancer Foundation, as a Scientific Co-Chair for Stand Up 2 Cancer, and on the Scientific Advisory Board for the Prostate Cancer Foundation. He also works as Executive Editor of Cancer Today, and as a Senior Editor of Cancer Research and of the Journal of Clinical Investigation. Owner of eleven issued patents, he is a co-founder of Digital Harmonics, Brahm Astra Therapeutics, and DH Cytoacoustics, and a Board Member of Armis Biopharma.

Scientific Advisory Committee



Brian Patrick O'Neill, M.D.

Emeritus Professor of Neurology, Mayo Clinic Alix School of Medicine and Science; Supplemental Consultant in Research, Mayo Clinic Division of Experimental Neurology; Program Director/Principal Investigator, NCI T32 Training Grant in Brain Cancer Research, Mayo Clinic Cancer Center (Rochester, MN)

Primary Expertise: Brain Cancer and Neurological Complications of Systemic Cancer

Dr. Brian Patrick O'Neill is the Founding Director of the Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center Neuro-Oncology Program and is Director and Overall Principal Investigator of the Mayo Clinic Training Grant in Brain Cancer Research. Dr. O'Neill holds the academic rank of Professor of Neurology. He has served on National Institutes of Health (NIH) Special Review Panels and Stidu Sections since 1999, and he served as a member of The Cancer Genome Atlas Working Group and the Brain Malignancies Steering Committee. Dr. O'Neill is a member of the editorial boards of The Journal of Neuro-Oncology and Neuro-Oncology. Dr. O'Neill has been appointed to national committees that deal with scientific review, policy creation and governance and advisory functions. He served on the Executive Committee of the American Academy of Neurology's Neuro-oncology Section. He is a founding member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of The Sontag Foundation. He is a Charter Member of the Mayo NIH Clinical and Translational Science Award. Dr. O'Neill's specific research focus is primary CNS lymphoma (PCNSL), and he has led NIH-supported clinical trials and epidemiologic studies in this lethal but potentially curable brain tumor. His current research focus is on the genomic differences between PCNSL and systemic non-Hodgkins lymphoma (NHL) and the development of an animal model.

Gregory R. Pond, Ph.D., P.Stat. *He/him*

Professor, Department of Oncology, McMaster University; Director, Escarpment Cancer Research Institute; Associate Director, Ontario Clinical Oncology Group; Investigator, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research

Primary Expertise: Biostatistics

Dr. Gregory Pond is the Director of the Escarpment Cancer Research Institute, Associate Director of the Ontario Clinical Oncology Group and Professor in the Department of Oncology at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. Dr. Pond is additionally an Ontario Institute for Cancer Research Investigator. Dr. Pond collaborates as a biostatistician on oncology clinical trials and research studies having global impact. He has co-authored over 450 peer-reviewed publications and is accredited as a Professional Statistician by the Statistical Society of Canada. He has served on numerous grant review panels, research and strategic working groups, within Canada, the United States and internationally. Dr. Pond received his Ph.D. in Biostatistics from the University of Toronto. Prior to joining McMaster University in 2008, he previously worked at the Mayo Clinic, Princess Margaret Hospital and in industry.

Scientific Advisory Committee

Naim Rashid, Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biostatistics; Associate Director Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center Biostatistics Core

Primary Expertise: Biostatistics, Pancreatic Cancer, Breast Cancer

Dr. Rashid is an Associate Professor in the Department of Biostatistics in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, with a joint appointment at the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center. He is also the Associate Director of the Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center Biostatistics Core, where he consults with cancer center members on statistical problems spanning basic science, translational, and clinical research areas in cancer. His methodological research concerns the development of novel statistical tools supporting this aim, with a specific focus in the areas of genomics, precision medicine, and machine learning. He has designed and served as the statistician of record for a number of clinical trials in breast and pancreatic cancer and have served as a statistical advisor for national cancer research consortiums.

Dr. Rashid has a Ph.D. in Biostatistics from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Prior to joining UNC as faculty, he was a post-doctoral scholar in the Department of Data Sciences at the Dana Farber Cancer institute and the Department of Biostatistics at the Harvard School of Public Health.

Fun Fact: In addition to his homemade pizza hobby, Dr. Rashid has branched out into making NY-style bagels and schmears, complete with a spiral mixer, bagel boards, and obnoxious opinions on local bagel spots.

Barry P. Sleckman, M.D., Ph.D.

Chair Elect of the V Foundation's Scientific Advisory Committee; Director, O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB

Primary Expertise: Immunology, DNA Repair

Dr. Barry Sleckman completed his M.D. and Ph.D. (Immunology) at Harvard Medical School in 1990 followed by an internship and residency in Medicine and a fellowship in Infectious Diseases at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. In 1998, after completing a post-doctoral fellowship in Molecular Immunology at Harvard, Dr. Sleckman started his independent laboratory in the Department of Pathology and Immunology at the Washington University School of Medicine (WUSM) in St. Louis. In 2015 he moved to the Department of Pathology at Weill Cornell Medicine and in 2020 he moved to The University of Alabama at Birmingham to become the Director of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center. His laboratory focuses on elucidating pathways required for immune system development and on understanding DNA damage responses, especially as they apply to cancer and the development of novel cancer therapeutics.

Fun Fact: I summited Mt. McKinley (Denali) in Alaska in 1988.

Scientific Advisory Committee

Shizhen (Jane) Zhu, M.D., Ph.D.

Associate Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, Mayo Clinic

Primary Expertise: Pediatric Cancer, Tumor Metastasis

Shizhen (Jane) Zhu, M.D., Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (BMB) at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Dr. Zhu serves as an Emerging Leader of the Cancer Cell Genomics, Signaling, and Metastasis Research Program in Mayo Clinic Comprehensive Cancer Center. Dr. Zhu's laboratory focuses on understanding neuroblastoma pathogenesis using zebrafish model with a goal to provide new insights into molecular and cell bases of neuroblastoma development, identify novel circulating prognostic markers, and develop innovative therapeutic approaches, including personalized targeted therapies and macrophage-mediated immunotherapy, to tackle this devastating childhood cancer. Dr. Zhu received her M.D. degree in China from the Norman Bethune University of Medical Sciences (currently, the Norman Bethune College of Medicine, Jilin University) and Ph.D. from the National University of Singapore. During her postdoctoral training in Dr. A. Thomas Look's laboratory at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (DFCI), she developed the first zebrafish model of neuroblastoma with metastasis which remains one of the most robust and clinically impactful zebrafish cancer models to date. Dr. Zhu has received multiple outstanding career development awards, including the NIH Pathway to Independence Award (K99/R00) and PRCRP Career Development Award. She also proudly received a series of awards from V Foundation, including V Scholar Award, V Scholar Plus award and V Scholar All-Star Award.

V Grantees

Ramzi Abboud, M.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor of Medicine, Division of Oncology
Washington University School of Medicine
Primary Expertise: Bone Marrow Transplant
2025 Game-Changer

I focus on clinical trials combining novel immunosuppressants such as JAK inhibitors and monocyte inhibitors. I developed a platform to examine immune reconstitution after allo-HCT. The goal of this clinical and laboratory science is to improve allo-HCT platforms using biologically rational approaches.

Fun Fact: I worked as a cook before going to medical school.

Noam Auslander, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Molecular and Cellular Oncogenesis
Wistar Institute
Primary Expertise: Computational Biology
2024 V Scholar

I am developing computational methods to uncover reproducible and mechanistically grounded links between the microbiome and immunotherapy efficacy.

Caroline Bartman, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Systems Pharmacology
Pharmacology Abramson Cancer Center, University of Pennsylvania
Primary Expertise: Cancer Metabolism
2024 V Scholar

The Bartman lab studies metabolic cofactors in colorectal and pancreatic cancer. We found many metabolic cofactors, like Coenzyme A and thiamine-diphosphate, are depleted in tumors, yet they are required for energy production and proliferation. We use metabolomics, isotope tracing, spatial mass spectrometry, and genetics, to study why cofactors are low and if lowering them further can block tumor growth.

Fun Fact: In high school my hobby was church bell ringing.

V Grantees

Giada Bianchi, M.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Department of Medical Oncology, Department of Medicine
Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center
Primary Expertise: AL Amyloidosis, Myeloma
2025 V Scholar

Our group research focuses on developing novel therapeutics for AL amyloidosis that builds upon recent discoveries from our lab: 1- immunoglobulin free light chain secretion is a SNAP23-dependent process; and 2- amyloid hearts are relatively depleted in macrophages, hampering amyloid fibril phagocytosis. To this end, we intend to generate and validate BCMA nanobody-botulinum neurotoxin conjugates and amyloid fibril-targeting LYTACs.

Fun Fact: I was a competitive semi-pro volleyball player before entering medical school.

James Byrne, M.D., Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Radiation Oncology,
Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Radiation Oncology
2023 V Scholar

We apply translational engineering to develop biomaterials that improve the therapeutic index of existing treatments. Our work focuses on gas-entrapping materials that enable controlled, localized delivery of therapeutic gases such as oxygen and carbon monoxide to modulate disease biology and enhance treatment responses.

Fun Fact: I have an identical twin brother who is also in medicine.

Vishal Chandra, Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, OBGYN
University of Oklahoma Health Campus
Primary Expertise: Cancer Prevention
2025 V Scholar

My research focuses on preventing and treating endometrial cancer by addressing obesity-driven disease progression and hormone therapy resistance. I investigate how metabolic factors impair progesterone response and evaluate FDA-approved anti-obesity agents, such as GLP-1 receptor agonists, as novel adjunct strategies to prevent atypical endometrial hyperplasia and improve outcomes in high-risk patients.

Fun Fact: I love scientific collaboration and believe great ideas grow from teamwork. Outside the lab, I enjoy traveling to nature-filled places and love playing cricket—it's my favorite way to unwind and stay energized.

V Grantees

Martina Damo, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Medicine
University of Chicago
Primary Expertise: Cancer Immunology
2025 V Scholar

I study immune-related Adverse Events in the context of immune checkpoint receptor blockade immunotherapy. My goal is to identify novel therapeutic approaches that reduce the toxic effects of immune checkpoint blockade while maximizing their effectiveness.

Fun Fact: Before my STEM-oriented career, I studied ancient Greek and Latin and I used to participate in translation competitions.

Anirban Das, M.B.B.S., M.D., D.M. *He/him*

Staff Physician, Hematology/Oncology
The Hospital for Sick Children
Primary Expertise: Immunotherapy
2025 V Scholar

Dr. Anirban Das' over-arching research focus is to unearth the germline underpinnings of deadly brain tumors in children and young adults and translate these discoveries to improve diagnostics and clinical care for these young patients globally. His current work is specifically focused on comprehensively deciphering the immuno-biology of CNS cancers that arise from DNA replication-repair deficiency.

Brandon Faubert, Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Medicine
University of Chicago
Primary Expertise: Cancer Metabolism
2024 V Scholar

My laboratory focuses on understanding how metabolic reprogramming, including alterations of nutrient consumption and metabolic flux, supports cancer cell survival, growth, and progression. By understanding how tumors alter metabolism to survive, we find new therapeutic targets to limit cancer metastasis.

Fun Fact: True to Canadian stereotypes, I'm an avid hockey fan and a lifelong player.

V Grantees

Hannah Garner, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology and Immunology
McGill University, Goodman Cancer Institute
Primary Expertise: Immunosuppression
2025 V Scholar

My research focuses on how breast cancer changes the tumour macro-environment and drive chronic systemic inflammation that drives tumour progression and inhibits response to immune checkpoint blockade.

We are particularly interested in how different tumour driver mutations shape inflammatory hematopoiesis and the systemic immune landscape and how this impacts therapeutic response.

Fun Fact: I'm British but I lived in The Netherlands for 7 years so I can speak Dutch.

Matthew Griffin, Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Chemistry,
Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Microbiota Signaling
2023 V Scholar

Our laboratory aims to understand how the microbiota interacts with the host immune system. By identifying molecular mechanisms of microbiota-to-host signaling, our work will reveal how variability in cancer treatment response may be explained by our resident microbes. These discoveries may allow us to control how these signals are produced to improve therapeutic responses.

Fun Fact: I am Cajun by heritage, and I have strong opinions about what belongs in gumbo.

William Gwin III, M.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, Division of Medical Oncology
University of Washington, Fred Hutch Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Cancer Immunotherapy
2025 Game-Changer

My research seeks to improve the clinical outcomes of patients with cancer through maximizing cancer specific immunity. I lead translational clinical trials evaluating novel approaches, including DNA vaccines, to improve clinical response, prevent recurrence, and overcome therapeutic resistance. By integrating correlative immune and biomarker analyses, my work aims to define mechanisms of response and guide more precise, durable treatment approaches.

Fun Fact: I used to collect swords but this is not compatible with having children...

V Grantees

Tiki Hayes, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Molecular and Medical Pharmacology
University of California, Los Angeles
Primary Expertise: Signal Transduction
2025 V Scholar

Our lab focuses on basic and pre-clinical mechanisms surrounding oncogene dependency, signal transduction, and therapeutic strategies. We seek to describe the underlying mechanisms driving 1) the transition from a normal cell state to a diseased cell state and 2) how the diseased cell state responds to available therapeutic regimens.

Emily Heikamp, M.D., Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Pediatric Hematology-Oncology
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Primary Expertise: Leukemia, Epigenetics
2025 V Scholar

My laboratory studies acute myeloid leukemia (AML) driven by chromosomal translocations that produce oncogenic fusion proteins, which are potent drivers of leukemogenesis. We aim to understand how these fusion proteins promote epigenetic dysregulation by hijacking chromatin regulatory complexes, and how these pathways can be exploited therapeutically to induce differentiation and halt self-renewal in AML.

Fun Fact: I spent my formative years in North Carolina as an undergraduate at Duke University, and I am thrilled to return to the Research Triangle for this V Foundation Summit. Ask me about tenting in K-ville as a Cameron Crazy.

Courtney Jones, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Pediatrics
University of Cincinnati Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Leukemia
2024 V Scholar

My lab focuses on characterization, mechanistically dissecting, and targeting metabolism in leukemia stem cells.

Fun Fact: I have kayaked with whales in Antarctica.

V Grantees

John Liu, M.D., Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Radiation Oncology and Neurological Surgery
University of California San Francisco
Primary Expertise: Brain Cancer
2025 V Scholar

Diffuse midline glioma (DMG) is a devastating and incurable childhood brain tumor. We developed functional genomics tools to identify genetic vulnerabilities and radiation sensitizing targets in DMG tumors in vivo. We seek to understand the mechanisms underlying these genetic vulnerabilities as well as develop them into therapeutic targets for clinical trials.

Fun Fact: I am a parent of two children (ages 5 and 1) and enjoy long distance cycling in my spare time.

Prerna Malaney, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Biochemistry and Cell Biology
Dartmouth Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: RNA biology
2025 V Scholar

The Malaney Lab studies how RNA-binding proteins maintain cellular homeostasis and how these processes go awry in cancer. We use a combination of biochemistry, molecular biology and mouse modeling techniques to study cancers driven by aberrant RNA-binding protein expression.

Robert Manguso, Ph.D. *He/him*

Associate Professor, Krantz Family Center for Cancer Research
Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Immunotherapy
2023 V Scholar

The Manguso laboratory is working to improve the efficacy of cancer immunotherapy. We use a range of approaches including mouse models, functional genomics, cellular immunology, and single-cell profiling to understand how cancers evade the immune system. Our lab has pioneered the use of in vivo genetic screens with CRISPR to identify new immunotherapy targets and resistance mechanisms.

V Grantees

Jared Mayers, M.D., Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Human Biology
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Microbiome
2025 V Scholar

Deciphering microbial metabolism is essential to understanding human pathophysiology. We combine multi-omics in patients with genetic, biochemical and chemical biology approaches in models to uncover key microbial activities contributing to disease in complex host environments. Our work identifies novel pathways for mechanistic investigation and clinical intervention in antibiotic resistance, structural lung disease, and cancer.

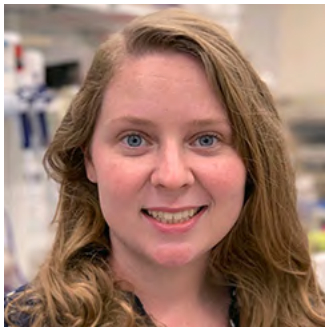
Fun Fact: I have been SCUBA diving since I was 12 and looking forward to getting my oldest kid involved this year.

Aram Modrek, M.D., Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Radiation Oncology
University of Southern California (USC)
Primary Expertise: Glioma, Epigenetics
2024 V Scholar

How is the epigenome locally altered by DNA damage? We want to investigate the impact of these changes on gene regulation and treatment resistance in brain tumors.

Fun Fact: My cat weighs 17 pounds.



Kathleen Mulvaney, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Fralin Biomedical Research Institute
Atrium Wake Forest Comp Cancer Center; Virginia Tech Cancer Center DC
Primary Expertise: Targeted Therapy
2024 V Scholar

My lab works on targeting cancer vulnerabilities, particularly PRMT5 in CDKN2A/MTAP-null cancers. We aim to understand the essential normal and cancer-specific roles of the enzyme. We also employ CRISPR genomic screens to identify new therapeutic targets in cancer.

Fun Fact: I'm passionate about rescuing shelter dogs.

V Grantees

Abhijit Parolia, Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Pathology & Urology
University of Michigan, Rogel Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Chromatin Cancer Biology
2024 V Scholar

The Parolia Lab investigates how oncogenic transcription factors hijack chromatin regulatory machineries to establish aberrant transcriptional programs that drive cancer initiation and progression. By integrating multi-omic analyses, epigenomic profiling, and in vivo models, we define the chromatin and epigenetic dependencies of transcription factor–driven malignancies such as prostate cancer and Ewing sarcoma, revealing new disease mechanisms and actionable therapeutic targets.

Fun Fact: I have been playing in the Detroit Cricket League in Michigan for six seasons now. Also, an unrelated long-shot coincidence—my first two graduate students are both fraternal twins; using a rough 3.3% twinning rate, that's about a 1-in-900 odds.

John Prensner, M.D. Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Pediatrics
University of Michigan, Rogel Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Childhood Brain Tumors
2024 V Scholar

My research probes the dark matter of the genome to discover functional and clinically-tractable microproteins, which illuminate new disease mechanisms and immunotherapy targets. Our work operates in several deadly pediatric cancer types, including medulloblastoma and diffuse midline gliomas.

Fun Fact: I am a music fanatic, and go to as many concerts as I possibly can (not tons now that I have children).

Eric Rellinger, M.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Surgery
University of Kentucky
Primary Expertise: Neuroblastoma
2023 V Scholar

Our research defines how aberrant glycosylation, specifically core fucosylation, drives high risk neuroblastoma progression, stromal anchoring, and resistance to immunotherapy. By integrating spatial glycomics, advanced in vivo models, and immuno-oncology, we uncover tumor cell surface mechanisms that stabilize therapy adapted mesenchymal states and immune excluded niches, guiding rational translational strategies to improve outcomes.

Fun Fact: Beyond science and surgery, I am a husband to Brandiann and a father of three, which is the role that matters most to me.

V Grantees

Alison Ringel, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Biology
MIT
Primary Expertise: Cancer Immunology
2025 V Scholar

The Ringel lab studies how immune aging impacts T cell-mediated control of tumors. Our long-term goal is to uncover age-related mechanisms of T cell dysfunction that can be targeted to improve immunotherapy outcomes in older cancer patients.

Fun Fact: My exceptionally grumpy-faced dog has been turned into a Slack emoji by my graduate students.

Jared Rowe, M.D., Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Pediatric Oncology
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Primary Expertise: Immunology
2025 V Scholar

My laboratory is interested in understanding why the immune system of infants and children functions differently than adults. Our objective is to leverage these differences for the treatment of childhood cancers.

Fun Fact: I am an avid hiker and completed the New Hampshire 48 4000' list and hopefully the New England 67 by the end of summer.

Jay Spiegel, M.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Transplantation and Cellular Therapy
Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Cellular Therapy
2024 Early Career Investigator

My research aims to improve outcomes of CAR-T in aggressive B-cell lymphomas. At Sylvester, we are conducting an investigator initiated trial combining two lymphoma immunotherapy drugs, mosunetuzumab and polatuzumab, with CAR-T. This grant supports the investigation of dynamics of tumor clearance with cell-free tumor DNA and assessment of immune reconstitution, an important factor for survivorship after CAR-T treatment.

Fun Fact: I am originally from Canada and very stereotypically I enjoy playing ice hockey in the sunny state of Florida.

V Grantees

Joelle Straehla, M.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Departments of Pediatrics and Bioengineering
University of Washington, Seattle Children's Research Institute
Primary Expertise: Drug Delivery
2023 V Scholar

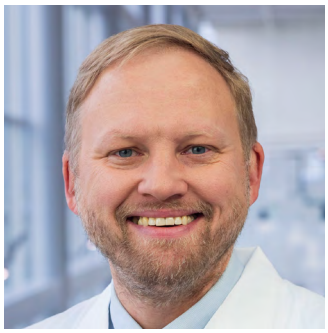
Our goal is to develop more effective and less toxic therapies for children with cancer. Operating at the intersection of nanotechnology and biology, we strive to bridge the gap between innovative engineering tools and clinical practice. We do this through designing new nanoparticle-based therapeutics, improving delivery across challenging tissue barriers, and developing strategies to remodel the tumor microenvironment.

Fun Fact: I love playing and watching soccer and am excited to celebrate the world cup in my home city of Seattle in 2026!

Xueqin Sherine Sun, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Sun Lab
Sanford Burnham Prebys Medical Discovery Institute
Primary Expertise: Epigenetics, Brain Cancer
2025 V Scholar

Our research aims to uncover genetic and epigenetic alterations driving cancer-specific transcriptional programs, with the ultimate goal of identifying vulnerabilities unique to cancer cells. By understanding these mechanisms, we hope to develop targeted therapies that more precisely treat cancer, improving patient outcomes and reducing side effects by focusing on the root causes of tumorigenesis.



Richard Voit, M.D., Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Pediatrics
UT Southwestern, Simmons Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: AML
2025 V Scholar

The focus of the Voit lab is to elucidate, mechanistically describe, and manipulate the factors that control hematopoietic stem cell maintenance. We aim to apply these insights to develop the next generation of gene therapies for hematopoietic disorders and new classes of targeted therapies for AML.

Fun Fact: I have three children and one of my favorite activities is coaching soccer (go Blue Scorpions!) and basketball (go Dunk Beetles!)

V Grantees

Christina von Roemeling, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Neurosurgery
University of Florida, UF Health Cancer Institute
Primary Expertise: Brain Cancer
2025 V Scholar

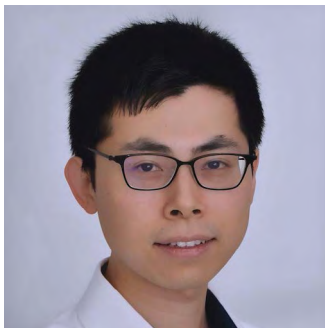
My research focuses on developing translational immuno-oncology strategies for aggressive adult and pediatric brain tumors by integrating immune gene therapy, targeted metabolic inhibition, and advanced drug-delivery approaches. Using adeno-associated virus (AAV) platforms, small-molecule inhibitors, and nanoparticle-based immunotherapies, my laboratory seeks to reprogram the tumor–immune microenvironment and overcome barriers such as the blood–brain barrier and treatment-induced gliosis.

Fun Fact: In my free time, I enjoy snowboarding, reading, and reminiscing about my former days playing rugby. I'm also the proud parent of two wonderful children and lucky wife to an amazing husband.

Ly Vu, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences
University of British Columbia
Primary Expertise: Leukemia, RNA biology
2023 V Scholar

The overarching goal of my research is to develop innovative treatments for myeloid neoplastic diseases. Our research aims to uncover mechanisms of gene expression regulation of stem cell properties and how it is dysregulated during transformation. Our major focus is at the intersect of RNA biology, stem cells and cancer biology.



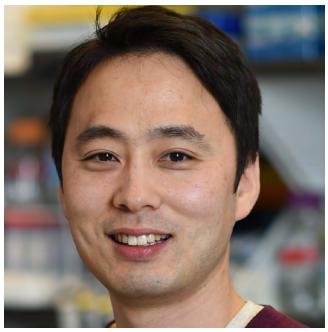
Haopeng Xiao, Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry
Stanford Cancer Institute, Stanford University
Primary Expertise: Mass Spectrometry
2025 V Scholar

We develop mass spectrometry (MS)-based strategies, combined with machine learning, to understand protein function and druggability proteome-wide. Using these approaches, we recently deorphanized protein LRRC58 and established its function in sensing and regulating cellular cysteine levels, and we are now working to define its role and therapeutic relevance in cancer.

Fun Fact: I used to be a semi-professional gamer and twitch streamer. I used to play a lot of Dota2 and was on this game's North America leaderboard.

V Grantees



Hee Won Yang, Ph.D. *He/him*

Assistant Professor, Pathology and Cell Biology
Columbia University, Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center
Primary Expertise: Cell Cycle
2023 V Scholar

I study how dynamic signaling and cell-cycle programs enable cancer cells to survive targeted therapies and eventually recur. Using high-throughput single-cell live imaging, genetically encoded reporters, and computational analysis, my lab maps real-time adaptive trajectories and drug-tolerant persister states. Our goal is to translate these mechanisms into rational combination strategies that prevent therapy escape and improve durable responses.

Fun Fact: I'm a runner and marathoner. I like to think about cancer research the same way: pace, endurance, and lots of data "miles" before you see a breakthrough.

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V Foundation Senior Leadership

Brandi Williams Broome *She/her*

Chief Executive Officer

Brandi Williams Broome joined the V Foundation for Cancer Research as Chief Executive Officer in March 2026. She is a visionary nonprofit leader who has experience in fundraising, operations, market expansion, business transformation, and talent development. She has a proven track record of leading cross-functional teams and driving development and partnership growth. As CEO, Williams Broome will oversee all operations of the V Foundation's mission of funding game-changing cancer research to accelerate Victory Over Cancer® and save lives.

Fun Fact: I probably know the words to every 90's rap song!

Jackie Aanes *She/her*

Chief Systems Officer

Jackie Aanes is the Chief Systems Officer for the V Foundation. As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Aanes partners closely with organizational leaders to design and implement the systems that support the V Foundation's current and long-term goals. She provides enterprise-level leadership across data strategy and governance, CRM and systems architecture, information technology, reporting and analytics, stakeholder research, gifts and records administration, and the organization's cybersecurity infrastructure. Through her leadership of the Operations team, Aanes works cross-functionally to advance organizational priorities while continuously evaluating and integrating emerging technologies to strengthen effectiveness.

Fun Fact: I was once on Live with Regis and Kelly as a finalist in an ugly couch contest!

Katherine DeStefano *She/her*

General Counsel & Chief Human Resources Officer

Katherine DeStefano is the General Counsel & Chief Human Resources Officer of the V Foundation. In this role, DeStefano leads business and legal affairs, human resources, risk management, and board governance. She serves as a trusted strategic advisor to the board and leadership team with a focus on propelling the V Foundation's mission of funding game-changing research and all-star scientists to accelerate Victory Over Cancer® and save lives.

Fun Fact: I collected nearly 100 Ty Beanie Babies as a kid. Still hoping they'll be worth big bucks one day!

V Foundation Senior Leadership

Roger M. Ferguson *He/him*

Chief Marketing Officer

Roger Ferguson is the Chief Marketing Officer of the V Foundation. In this role, Roger is the executive leader responsible for strategic stewardship of the V Foundation's multi-channel marketing efforts; including, peer-to-peer community events and experiential marketing, direct marketing, website and digital marketing, strategic corporate partnerships, and Brand communications. As a visionary leader, he's responsible for translating the Foundation's audacious research grant objectives into a long-term integrated marketing plan to catalyze donor growth and support of the Foundation's mission in the short-term, while evolving and building a world-class brand to sustain future growth.

Fun Fact: I love to scuba dive. I have Advanced Open Water, Rescue Diver & Nitrox certifications. I once dove with whale sharks and hammerhead sharks in the Galapagos Islands.

Devin Gilreath *He/him*

Chief Financial Officer

Devin Gilreath is a Finance professional with over 10 years of experience in the nonprofit sector. Serving as Chief Financial Officer, Devin first joined the V Foundation for Cancer Research in 2014 as Director of Finance. As Chief Financial Officer, Devin oversees the Foundation's financial functions including accounting, budgeting, reporting, and financial strategy. He is also responsible for ensuring that the Foundation's resources are maximized to achieve the strategic goals of the organization and maintain its status as a leader in financial transparency and efficiency.

Fun Fact: In 2021, my family and I took a three-week road trip from home to the Oregon Coast and back. Along the way, we visited some incredible places, including the Badlands, Mt. Rushmore, Yellowstone, the Tetons, Crater Lake, and Zion. It gave us a deep appreciation for the size and beauty of the country.

V Foundation Senior Leadership

Susanna F. Greer, Ph.D. *She/her*

Chief Scientific Officer

Dr. Susanna F. Greer leads the scientific strategy of the V Foundation for Cancer Research, guiding investments into the ideas and investigators most likely to change the future of cancer care. Working alongside the Scientific Advisory Committee, she ensures that funding is directed to bold, breakthrough science with the potential to redefine what is possible for patients.

Her leadership has helped position the V Foundation at the forefront of high-risk, high-reward research, supporting work that pushes beyond today's boundaries to create tomorrow's treatments. She is deeply committed to connecting donors and partners to the science they make possible, bringing clarity, urgency, and purpose to every dollar invested in the fight against cancer.

Fun Fact: I am (re)teaching myself to watercolor. I used to love to paint and draw, but #lifehappened, and I haven't picked up a paintbrush in decades. It's wonderful to dive back into an escape I once enjoyed so much.

Coury Shadyac *She/her*

Chief Development Officer

As Chief Development Officer, Coury Shadyac is responsible for the strategic design and execution of the V Foundation's national fundraising initiatives to support its mission of accelerating Victory Over Cancer®. Her role centers on diversifying and expanding the organization's revenue streams by overseeing a comprehensive philanthropic portfolio that includes major gifts, planned giving, and signature events. By leveraging her extensive experience in large-scale nonprofit development, Shadyac directs a nationwide team of professional fundraisers who focus on donor stewardship and lead management.

Fun Fact: I am a Lebanese American and speak just enough Arabic to be dangerous while traveling in the Middle East!

V Foundation Research and Grants Team

Kara Coleman, Ph.D. *She/her*

Vice President of Research and Grants

I oversee our Flagship grants which includes working closely with the Scientific Advisory Committee on grant selection for V Scholar, Translational, and All-Star grants and following the impact our grantmaking has on the field of cancer research.

Fun Fact: I asked my 5-year old what I should share about myself when I meet new people and she said "Tell them that you like playing and giving me hugs".

MacKenzie Hinson, MHA *She/her*

Director, Grantee Engagement

I manage grantee engagement and outreach. This includes answering questions about external speaking requests, providing recommendations on grantee speakers and acting as liaison between our grantees and the organization. I also help answer questions relating to the impact of awarded grants and what progress funded researchers have reported in annual reports, papers, and other resources.

Fun Fact: I am currently reading the 16-book Realm of the Elderlings series by Robin Hobb. Once complete, it'll have been a 425 hour commitment and roughly 11,000 pages.

Sara Kezar, MBA, MHA *She/her*

Senior Director of Grants Administration

I manage and oversee daily operations of the Flagship grant programs (V Scholar, Translational, All-Star, and Pediatric) and any special grant naming initiatives. I serve as the administrator for the grants management software, ensuring data integrity and accurate reporting.

Fun Fact: Our family has been making 'Kezar's Wonder Salve' since 1899. We continue to make it today, and it's still available in pharmacies throughout Wisconsin.

Kelly Michael *She/her*

Executive Assistant to the CSO

My role primarily consists of providing administrative support to Dr. Susanna Greer, as well as being the first point of contact for patient navigation; providing support to patients seeking our assistance.

Fun Fact: The last year I have learned the game of Mahjong and love playing any chance I get!

V Foundation Research and Grants Team

Megan Miller, MBA *She/her*

Research and Grants Coordinator

I help manage the grant process from start to finish, making sure everything runs smoothly before and after awards are given. I also work on improving our grants management software, which helps us track reports and updates from grantees throughout their funding period.

Fun Fact: I have a three-legged rescue dog whose favorite hobby is running at full speed!

Erin Oakley, Ph.D. *She/her*

Assistant Director, Foundation and Scientific Partnerships

I am responsible for providing grant administration support for the Powered by the V grant portfolio. I manage pre and post-award grant activities for these grant programs. This includes supporting applicants, tracking progress of funded grantees, and managing the Powered by the V granting cycle.

Fun Fact: I like Bravo TV and I'm not ashamed of it.

Veneshia Ridout *She/her*

Director of Grants Administration

My main role is to provide administrative support and help manage post-award grant activities. I also serve as the lead project manager for the annual V Foundation for Cancer Research Summit.

Fun Fact: My 4 kids have collectively played 11 different competitive sports over the years. Cheering them on is by far one of my favorite things to do!

Yazmin Sanchez *She/her*

Assistant Director of Grants Administration

I provide administrative support and focus on the pre-award grant activities for our Flagship grant portfolio which includes overseeing our informative webinars and email inboxes.

Fun Fact: I've been to 2 aquariums that house whale sharks (Okinawa, Japan and Atlanta, Georgia)!

V Foundation Research and Grants Team

Caroline Smith, Ph.D. *She/her*

Senior Director, Foundation and Scientific Partnerships

I am responsible for overseeing the Powered by the V grant portfolio, which encompasses all special grant calls and programs related to donors, foundations, and strategic partners. I collaborate with many teams at the V Foundation to develop new grant-making strategies with external partners that align with the mission of the organization.

Fun Fact: I was a swimmer for 17 years, and now happily a "swammer."

Mindy Toth, BSN, RN *She/her*

Patient Navigator

As the Patient Navigator, I work with Dr. Susanna Greer to provide compassionate guidance to individuals facing a new or complex cancer diagnosis.

Fun Fact: Nursing is my second career. I was a cosmetologist prior to becoming a nurse.

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Victory Over Cancer

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