Long School of Medicine
The University of Texas at San Antonio

OFFICE FOR RESEARCH NEWSLETTER

Volume 4, Issue 2 | November 2026



In this issue:

Scientific Breakthroughs

Extramural Funding

CPRIT Recruitment

Diabetes Research Center Pilot Awards

Research Symposium Highlights

MD with Distinction in Research Graduates

Undergraduate Medical Education

Graduate Medical Education

A Message from the Vice Dean for Research

With the recent leadership transition, the Long School of Medicine enters a new chapter of growth, innovation, and dedication within our research community. The accomplishments highlighted in this issue reflect the extraordinary work of our investigators, faculty, trainees, and research teams, whose commitment to scientific discovery and collaboration advances our mission to improve human lives. We remain committed to building upon the strong foundation of our research enterprise. Our investigators continue to advance discoveries that address complex health challenges, expand scientific knowledge, and improve outcomes for the communities we serve.

The integration of UT Health San Antonio and The University of Texas at San Antonio brings new opportunities for collaboration across disciplines, institutions, and areas of expertise. Through our *Scientific Collaborations for Programmatic Excellence (SCOPE)* Initiative, we are bringing investigators together from across the University to strengthen research teams and enhance competitiveness for large-scale, collaborative funding opportunities. These efforts reflect our shared commitment to expanding our research impact and positioning our university for continued growth and national recognition.

As we look ahead, our success will continue to depend on recruiting new talent, fostering collaborations, and everyone's perseverance to make our research enterprise exceptional. I sincerely appreciate our faculty, staff, trainees, and university leadership for their continued dedication to scientific excellence and to advancing knowledge that makes a meaningful difference in people's lives.

On behalf of the Long School of Medicine Office for Research, I look forward to building on this momentum and continuing to support the discoveries that will shape the future of medicine for the benefit of humankind.

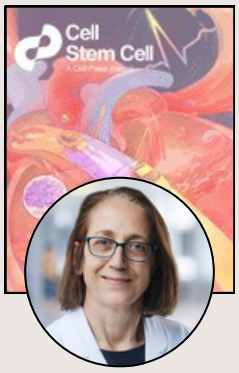
- *Manzoor Bhat, MS, PhD*

Major Scientific Breakthroughs

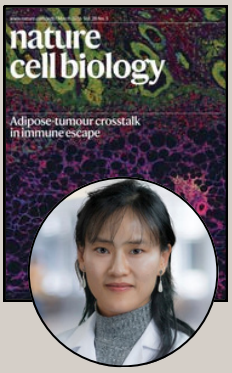


Laurence Morel, PhD
MIMG

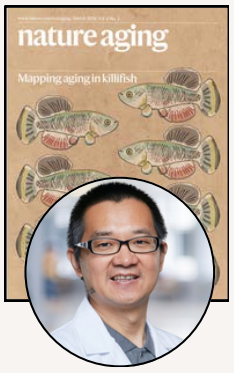
Ralph DeFronzo, MD
Medicine



Laurence Morel, PhD
MIMG



Kexin Xu, PhD
Molecular Medicine



Shangang Zhao, PhD
Medicine

nature COMMUNICATIONS



Shaun Olsen, PhD
BSB



Yong Ge, PhD
MIMG



Patrick Sung, DPhil
BSB



Kevin Koronowski, PhD
BSB



Mohamad Habes, PhD
Radiology



Weixing Zhao, PhD
BSB



Lizhen Chen, PhD
CSA



Shangang Zhao, PhD
Medicine



Anna Malkova, PhD
BSB



Reuben Harris, PhD
BSB

Robert Hromas, MD
Medicine



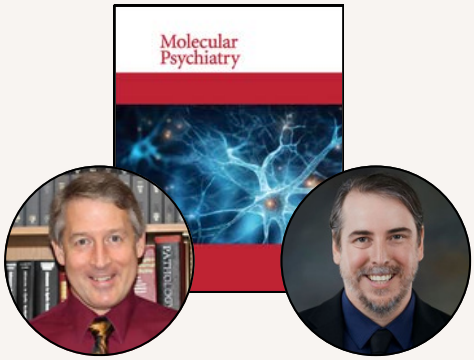
Gang Huang, PhD
CSA



Alexei Tumanov, PhD
MIMG

Madesh Muniswamy, PhD
Medicine

Major Scientific Breakthroughs



David Morilak, PhD
Pharmacology

Daniel Lodge, PhD
Pharmacology

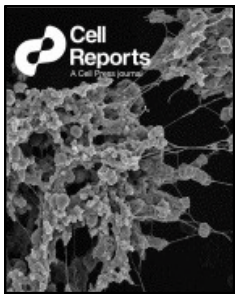


Shaun Olsen, PhD
BSB

Patrick Sung, DPhil
BSB



Amalia Gastaledelli, PhD
Medicine





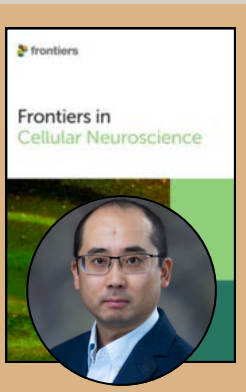
Madesh Muniswamy, PhD
Medicine



Katsumi Kitagawa, PhD
Molecular Medicine



Paolo Casali, MD
MIMG



Qian Shi, PhD
CIP





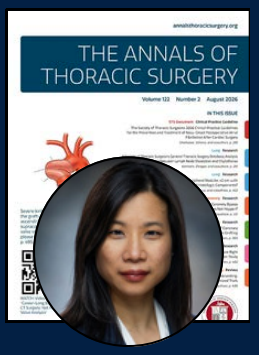
Dean Kellogg, MD, PhD
Medicine



Ramon Coronado, PhD
Surgery



Vaida Glatt, PhD
Orthopaedics

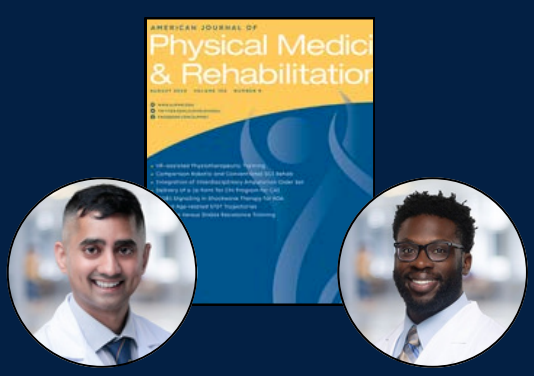


Dawn Hui, MD
Cardiothoracic Surgery

Scan here to view more publications

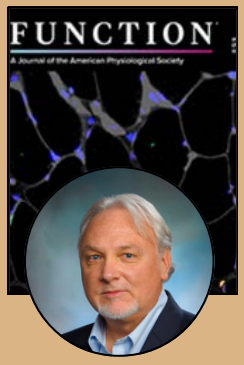


John Cunningham, MD
Medicine



Aditya Raghunandan, MD
Rehabilitation Medicine

Adedeji Olusanya, MD
Anesthesiology



Blake Rasmussen, PhD
CIP



Jason Kempenich, MD
Surgery

Recognizing Research Funding Excellence

The LSOM Office for Research celebrates faculty whose extramural research awards rank among the **top 15%** since January 2026. These achievements reflect excellence in research, strengthen our institution's impact, and advance discoveries that improve human health.



Elena Volpi, MD, PhD
Director, Sam and Ann Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies

DHHS-ARPA-H, Rapamycin + Semaglutide To Optimize, Restore, and Extend Healthspan, 2/24/2026-3/1/2031 **$38,002,714**



Sudha Seshadri, MD, DM
Founding Director, Glenn Biggs Institute for AD & Neurodegenerative Diseases

NIH-NIA R01 AG059421, Cognitively Healthy Nonagenarians in the Cross Cohort Collaboration, 2/15/2026-1/31/2031 **$14,192,766**



Kumar Sharma, MD
Chief, Division of Nephrology

NIH R01 DK143234, Metabolite Markers of Diabetic Kidney Disease 4/15/2026-2/28/2031 **$3,951,382**



Luke Norton, PhD
Associate Professor and Director, Center of Molecular Metabolism

NIH R01 R01 DK145103, Identification of Cell Type-Specific Insulin Responsive Quantitative Trait Loci in Human Skeletal Muscle, 5/22/2026-3/31/2031 **$3,442,438**



Lingtao Jin, PhD
Associate Professor, Molecular Medicine

NCI 1R01CA300241, Targeting Mucin-Type O-Glycosylation for EGFR Mutant Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer, 4/1/2026-3/31/2031 **$2,991,729**
NIH R01CA299621, Development of First-in-Class AAK1 PROTACs for Ovarian Cancer, 3/25/2026-2/28/2031 **$2,909,190**



Feng-Chun Yang, MD, PhD
Professor, Cell Systems and Anatomy

NIH R01CA310862-01, The Molecular Mechanisms Underlying PHF6-Mutation-Mediated Hematologic Malignancies, 6/1/2026-5/31/2031 **$2,745,856**



Adam Salmon, PhD
Associate Director, Sam and Barshop Institute for Longevity and Aging Studies

NIH T32 ag021890, Training Grant for the Biology of Aging 5/1/2026-4/30/2031 **$2,524,967**



Jeremy Tanner, MD
Assistant Professor, Neurology

Lewy Body Dementia Association, Clin-SYN: Validation of Multimodal alpha-Synuclein Biomarkers and Repository for People with Dementia with Lewy Bodies and AD, 6/4/2026-6/30/2028 **$2,500,000**

Recognizing Research Funding Excellence



Justin Leung, PhD
Associate Professor, Radiation Oncology

NIH-NIGMS R35GM137798, Deciphering the chromatin-based DNA damage response pathway
4/10/2026-3/31/2030

$2,165,625



David Libich, PhD
Associate Professor, Biochemistry and Structural Biology

NIH-NIGMS R35GM163922, Protein Intrinsic Disorder in Genome Regulation, 5/1/2026-4/30/2031

$2,110,500



Ralph DeFronzo, MD
Chief, Division of Diabetes and Deputy Director, Texas Diabetes Institute

Corcept Therapeutics, Relacorilant and Improved Glucose Homeostasis: Mechanism of Action, 2/15/2026-1/31/2031

$1,596,166



Chu Chen, PhD
Professor, Cellular and Integrative Physiology

NIH R01 AG081362, Silencing of Astrocytic MAGL as a Therapy for Alzheimer's Disease, 4/1/2026-3/21/2028

$1,543,353



Alan Peterson, PhD
Professor and Director, STRONG STAR Consortium

Baptist Health Foundation of San Antonio, Enhancing Mental Health Training and Treatment in San Antonio: Dual Benefit for Military/Veterans and Civilian Population, 1/1/2026-12/31/2030

$1,100,000



Panneerdoss Subbarayalu, PhD
Assistant Research Professor, Cell Systems and Anatomy

American Cancer Society, Novel Targeted Therapy for Treating Osteosarcoma with Lung Metastasis
4/1/2026-3/31/2030

$879,000



Gangadhara Reddy Sareddy, PhD
Associate Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology

Army OB-GYN Reproductive Research, Targeting KDM1A/LSD1 to Overcome Radiation Resistance in Triple-Negative Breast Cancer Brain Metastases
3/1/2026-2/28/2029

$750,000



Zhao Lai, PhD
Research Professor and Director, Next Gen Sequencing Core

NIH-OD 1S10OD040222-01, Illumina Novaseq X Sequencing System, 5/15/2026-5/14/2027

$750,000

CPRIT Awards $6,000,000 for Faculty Recruitment

Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas

ESTABLISHED INVESTIGATOR RECRUITMENT AWARD
$4,000,000



EKIHIRO SEKI, MD, PHD
Recruited to Mays Cancer Center and Cell Systems and Anatomy
Spatiotemporal Regulation of Hepatic Stellate Cell Programs in MASLD Liver Cancer



RECRUITMENT OF FIRST-TIME, TENURE TRACK FACULTY
$2,000,000

KRISTOPHER WHITE, PHD
Recruited to Biochemistry and Structural Biology
Understanding and Exploiting the Bioelectric Properties of Cancer Cells

Pilot Awards to Advance Diabetes Research

The LSOM Office for Research is pleased to recognize the recipients of the Diabetes Research Center Pilot Awards, an initiative that supports the development of an NIH P30 Diabetes Research Center grant application. Each project has been awarded $50,000 to generate preliminary data, and strengthen future grant applications for extramural funding to federal and non-federal agencies.



RAY LEE, PHD
Associate Professor
Radiology

Central glucagon action in human obesity



SOUMYA MAITY, PHD
Assistant Professor
Medicine

Defining Metabolic Heterogeneity to Predict SGLT2 Inhibitor Response in Diabetic Kidney Disease



KEVIN KORONOWSKI, PHD
Assistant Professor
BSB

A Pilot Clinical Trial of PPARγ Chronotherapy in Insulin Resistant MASLD



JIYOON RYU, PHD
Instructor
CSA

Trimeric Adiponectin: A Novel Endogenous Therapeutic for Diabetic Wound Healing

UT Health San Antonio | Office for Research Long School of Medicine

SOUTH TEXAS DIABETES RESEARCH CENTER
at UT Health San Antonio

$4,700 in cash prizes awarded

2026 RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

Highlights

2026 PODIUM PRESENTATION WINNERS



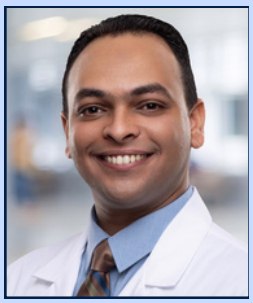
RODRIGO GONZALES-ROJAS

Medical Student
Lee Lab



FREEDOM GREEN

MD/PhD Student
Baxter Lab



KHALED NASSAR, MS

Graduate Student
Vadlamudi Lab



IOANNIS TSIALTAS, PHD

Post-Doc. Fellow
Koronowski Lab



GABRIELLE ZUNIGA, MD, PHD

Resident
Emergency Medicine



COLTON JONES, MD

Clinical Fellow
Mays Cancer Center

2026 POSTER AWARDEES

1st

MICHAELA KELLY
MD Student

VICTOR ALVAREZ
MD/PhD Student

DESIRAE MORALES
Graduate Student

NICHOLAS STANSBURY
Clinical Fellow

TERRELL ROANE
Resident

THANGARAJESWARI MOHAN
Postdoctoral Fellow

2nd

CLAIRE LAPPEN
MD Student

DANG NGUYEN
MD/PhD Student

HEETANSHI JAIN
Graduate Student

HADLEY ROSS
Clinical Fellow

GABRIEL RAMIREZ
Resident

RAHUL MOHJIDRA
Postdoctoral Fellow

3rd

ANGELA LIN
MD Student

KYRA CLARKE
MD/PhD Student

ISHITA TARNEKAR
Graduate Student

ASHLEY RANGEL
Clinical Fellow

JUAN RODRIGUEZ LOPEZ
Resident

CALEB STRATTON
Postdoctoral Fellow

2027 RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

SAVE THE DATE

03 • 17 • 2027

Join us for the annual LSOM Research Symposium as we celebrate the innovative research and discoveries happening across the Long School of Medicine. Connect, learn, and celebrate our research community!

2026 Recipients
MD with a Distinction in Research



"Are We Giving Too Much Weight to Lean Mass Loss?"

Mentored by
Luke Norton, MD
Department of Medicine

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Jeffrey Bolte



"Prediction of Transfusin Requirements in Trauma Patients"

Mentored by
Donald Jenkins, MD, FACS
Department of Surgery

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Michael De La Rosa



"Cardiopulmonary Outcomes in Sarcoidosis Patients with Ocular Involvement: A Propensity-Score-Matched Analysis"

Mentored by
Lilian Nguyen, MD
Department of Opthalmology

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Kannan Freyaldenhoven



"Open Versus Endovascular Approaches in Subclavian and Axillary Artery Trauma"

Mentored by
Susannah Nicholson,
Department of Surgery

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Brent Janda



"Decoding RITE-A Machine Learning Framework to Identify a Predictive Gene Signature for Venous Invasion in Renal Cell Carcinoma"

Mentored by
Ronald Rodriguez, MD, PhD
Department of Medical Education

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Christopher Mao, MSE



"Do Sliding Hip Screws Still Have a Role in Femoral Neck Fractures? Comparative Outcomes of Surgical Interventions for Femoral Neck Fractures"

Mentored by
Boris Zelle, MD
Department of Orthopaedics

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Yusuf Mufti



"Assessment and Cost Analysis of a Nail Plate Construct for Distal Femur Fracture Fixation"

Mentored by
Ravi Karia, MD
Department of Orthopaedics

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Lindsey Peng



"Prevalence and Impact of Food Insecurity on Orthopaedic Patients"

Mentored by
Christina Brady, MD
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Blaire Peterson



"Fish Skin Grafts: Systemic Review of Clinical Applications and Advantages of Skin Repair"

Mentored by
Joshua Owen, MD, PhD, FAAD
Department of Dermatology

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Mackenzie Ritch



"Impact of Medical Comorbidity Burden on Neuropsychiatric Manifestations in Long COVID Syndrome"

Mentored by
Summer Rollins, Psy.D
Department of Rehabilitation Medicine

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Richa Sikre

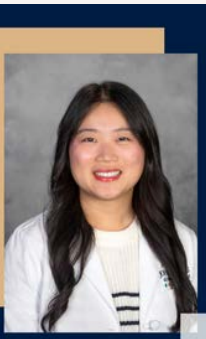


"Understanding Orthopaedic Injury and Care in the Incarcerated Population"

Mentored by
Christina Brady, MD
Department of Orthopaedic Surgery

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Victoria Vargas



"Charachteristics and Outcomes of Endophthalmitis in South Texas Population

Mentored by
Jeong-Hyeon Sohn, MD
Department of Opthalmology

MD WITH DISTINCTION IN RESEARCH RECIPIENT
CLASS OF 2026

Catherine Xie

UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION



Gear Up for Research

September 30, 2026





The LSOM Office for Research welcomed first- and second-year medical students to its annual Gear Up for Research Fall Social, highlighting opportunities in clinical and basic science research, biomedical engineering, physician-scientist training, and surgical fellowships.

Presenters included Sarah Kasprzyk, who discussed the internal application pathway to the MD/PhD Program; Dr. Kate Lathrop, who provided an overview of clinical research; Dr. Ann Griffith, who introduced basic science research; Dr. Hugo Giambini, who highlighted biomedical engineering research; and Dr. Aashish Rajesh, who shared research opportunities in the Department of Surgery, including a fellowship. The presentations offered practical insights into getting involved early in medical school while fostering connections with the research community and emphasizing the importance of mentorship.

Research Resume Preparation

August 26, 2026





The LSOM Office for Research hosted a Research Resume Workshop and Headshot Session to help medical students strengthen their professional materials and prepare for future research opportunities. The workshop covered developing a strong research CV, tailoring resumes for research and shadowing experiences, avoiding common mistakes, and addressing individual questions.

Students also updated their professional headshots for ERAS applications, LinkedIn profiles, research biographies, and other professional materials. The event helped students enhance their professional presence and prepare for the next steps in their medical and research careers.

Want to discuss your research goals?

Scan the QR code to complete a brief form and schedule a meeting with us!

The LSOM Office for Research offers a variety of opportunities for medical students to engage in research, connect with experienced mentors, develop essential skills, and explore areas of interest that align with their academic and career goals.



KATE LATHROP, MD
Assistant Dean for
Medical Student Research

MEET THE MEDICAL STUDENT RESEARCH TEAM

The LSOM Office for Research is pleased to welcome our new Medical Student Research Liaisons for the 2026–2027 academic year. These students will serve as key links between the student body and our office, helping to share opportunities, support peers, and strengthen our research community. We look forward to the energy and perspectives they bring to this role.

2026-27 Medical Student Research Liaisons



ATHUL ANILKUMAR



SUVAACHA BAJPAI



CHLOE CHUI



QUINN CUNNEELY



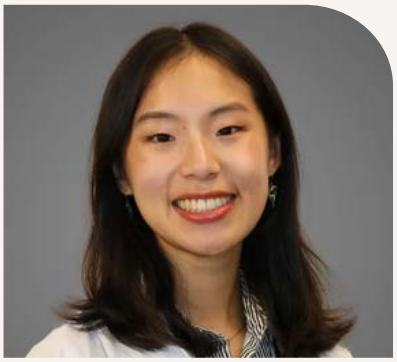
NEHAL DAVE



JAMIE EDWARDS



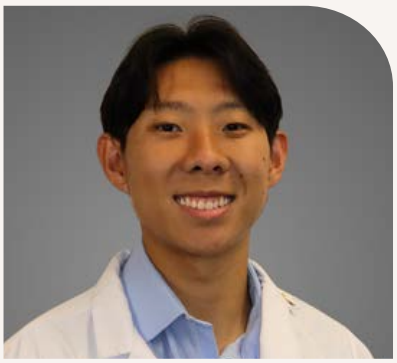
LEOPOLD GUO



ANGELA LIN



RIYA MOHAN



ETHAN PARK



NIKITA VILLEGAS

Graduate Medical Education

Spotlight



Dr. Diana Toro, PGY-3

Publication

Toro, Diana MD; McOmber, Joshua E. BS; Stansbury, Nicholas M. MD; Robinson, Randal D. MD, MBA "The SHIELD Hypothesis: A Falsifiable Barrier-Guided Model for Microplastic Translocation in Human Reproduction. Accepted for publication in Reproductive and Developmental Medicine. 2026.

Dr. Andrea Parra Jaimes, PGY-3

Published Manuscript



Parra Jaimes AV, Hartup L, Parkhurst A, Chang S, Stansbury N.Obstetrics and Gynecology Residents' Preparedness to Counsel on Anti-Müllerian Hormone Testing and Planned Oocyte Cryopreservation: A Single-Center Cross-Sectional Survey.Int J Gynecol Infertil. 2026;3(1):1-6. doi:10.5281/zenodo.21416210



Dr. Allyson Nevins, PGY-1

Publication

Nevins A, Zemet R, Ojo E, Abraham K, Adams A.Contraceptive Counseling Among Individuals with Genetic Conditions: A Retrospective Cohort Study. Accepted for publication in Contraception and Reproductive Medicine.

Dr. Ashlyn Parkhurst, PGY-3

Abstract accepted



Artificial Intelligence versus Human Learners in Interpretation of Laparoscopic Surgical Images has been accepted for presentation at the Minimally Invasive Surgery Week 2026 (MISWeek 2026) Dec. 3, 2026, in Orlando, Florida.



Dr. Andrea Soto Abarca
PGY-3

Recipient of the Cassie Murphy-Cullen, PhD Scholarship from the Texas Academy of Family Physicians



Dr. Gabrielle Zuniga
PGY-3
Emergency Medicine

SAEM
Society for Academic Emergency Medicine
FOUNDATION

Congratulations

Awarded a $5,000 Society for Academic Emergency Medicine Foundation Grant for Basic Research on Tau Aggregation in TBI



José E. Cavazos, MD, PhD
Assoc. Dean
Resident Research Training

The Long School of Medicine congratulates José Cavazos, MD, PhD, on his election as an honorary Member of the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), Class of 2026. The prestigious distinction recognizes Dr. Cavazos for his scientific contributions to neurodegenerative diseases and the mechanisms underlying dementia, as well as his national and local leadership in physician-scientist training and mentorship

Please join the LSOM Office for Research in celebrating Dr. Cavazos on this well-deserved honor!

Long School of Medicine

OFFICE FOR RESEARCH

MEET THE TEAM



Manzoor Bhat, MS, PhD
Vice Dean for Research



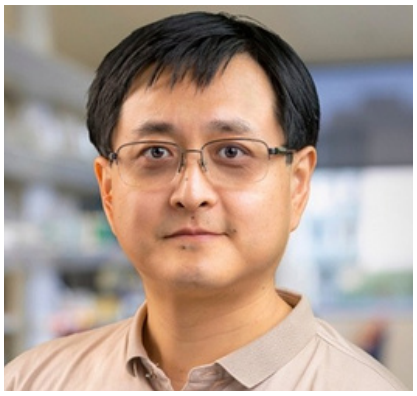
Patrick Sung, DPhil
Assoc. Dean for Research



José Cavazos, MD, PhD
Assoc. Dean- Resident Research



Kate Lathrop, MD
Asst. Dean- Medical Student Research



Nu Zhang, PhD
Director of Internal Review



Chris Valdez, PhD
Assoc. Dir., Research Operations



Jennifer Maldonado
Senior Program Coordinator

UT San Antonio™
The University of Texas at San Antonio

lsom.uthscsa.edu/office-research/
somresearch@uthscsa.edu
(210) 567-0611