



# Translational Research Academy

Cohorts 2023 & 2024



**Wake Forest University**  
**School of Medicine**



## **Asma Ahmed, PhD, MD, MPH**

**Assistant Professor, Epidemiology and Prevention**

[asahmed@wakehealth.edu](mailto:asahmed@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/a/asma-mohamed-ahmed>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

Less than 1 year

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a perinatal/pediatric epidemiologist with a strong methodological background and a trained physician with clinical experience in pediatrics. My research utilizes routinely collected administrative data, causal inference methods, and life-course approaches to investigate how maternal exposures during pregnancy affect maternal and child outcomes over their life course.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Baking/cooking, walking, and spending time with my family.



## Hannah Ainsworth, PhD

Assistant Professor, Biostatistics and Data Science

[hainswor@wakehealth.edu](mailto:hainswor@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2023**

### Faculty Profile

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/a/hannah-christine-ainsworth>

### How long have you been at Wake Forest?

3 years as faculty, 14 years spanning previous positions and educational training.

### Background and Research Interests

I am a biostatistician/bioinformatician who studies multi-omic contributors to complex diseases. My research interests focus on developing methods for translating omics associations (e.g., SNP associations, transcriptomic profiles, epigenetic signatures) to actionable therapeutic targets and reliable diagnostic markers. Currently, I am working on methods that leverage intrinsic DNA topology to identify functional implications of genetic and epigenetic risk variants.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy volunteering for community service projects, bouldering, drawing, and painting. I am currently learning Swedish and ASL.



## **Aynur Aktas, MD**

**Assistant Professor, Supportive Oncology**  
[aynur.aktas@atriumhealth.org](mailto:aynur.aktas@atriumhealth.org)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/a/aynur-aktas>

### **How long have you been at Atrium Health?**

5 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a Research Scientist in the Department of Supportive Oncology at Atrium Health Levine Cancer, an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Medicine at Wake Forest University School of Medicine, and an Affiliate Member of the Wake Forest Comprehensive Cancer Center. I did my Hospice and Palliative Medicine Research Fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic. My research on symptom clusters, malnutrition, inflammation, and cachexia in advanced cancer integrates themes in Oncology and Palliative Medicine, focusing on patient-reported outcomes.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Painting, drawing, dancing, and playing music.



## **Nicklaus Ashburn, MD, MS**

**Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine**  
[n.ashburn@wakehealth.edu](mailto:n.ashburn@wakehealth.edu)

### **TRA Cohort 2023**

#### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

2 years as faculty, 14 years for education and training

#### **Background and Research Interests**

I am an Emergency Medicine physician with postdoctoral NHLBI T32 research fellowship training in Cardiovascular Disease Epidemiology and Prevention. I am interested in the intersection of emergency cardiovascular care and the prevention of cardiovascular disease, prehospital cardiovascular care, and chest pain risk stratification.

#### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with my family, triathlons, and hiking.



## **Mohsen Bahrami, MS, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Radiology**

[mbahrami@wakehealth.edu](mailto:mbahrami@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2023 & K12 Scholar 2023-2025**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/b/mohsen-bahrami>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

9 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Radiology with a background in Biomedical Engineering. My research is focused on developing and using analytical tools to understand how brain disorders affect the structure and function of the brain as a complex system.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with family and friends, playing and listening to music, watching movies, and outdoor activities.



## **Shirley Bluethmann, PhD, MPH**

**Assistant Professor, Social Sciences and Health Policy**

[sbluethm@wakehealth.edu](mailto:sbluethm@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2023**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/b/shirley-morrison-bluethmann>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

2 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a behavioral scientist specializing in research for older adults with cancer. I am especially interested in using exercise and behavioral strategies to manage cancer-treatment systems and reduce burden from chronic conditions.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I love traveling, zumba, running and hiking outdoors.



## **Caroline Cochrane, MD, MSCR, FACOG**

**Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology**  
[accochra@wakehealth.edu](mailto:accochra@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/c/anna-caroline-cochrane>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

2 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a board-certified Obstetrician-Gynecologist, originally from Charlotte, NC, and I recently obtained a Master's in Clinical Research from UNC Chapel Hill in 2020. My research interests include health disparities in benign gynecology, particularly during the menopause transition. I would like to study patients' experiences with seeking and obtaining menopause-related care, and design an intervention based on patient experiences to transform delivery of and access to menopause care.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I love travelling and new experiences. I enjoy exercising and running both road and obstacle races. I am not great at cooking, but I am very good at finding great restaurants and farmers markets where I buy too many plants.





## **Emilie Duchesneau, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Epidemiology and Prevention**

[educhesn@wakehealth.edu](mailto:educhesn@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

**Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/d/emilie-danielle-duchesneau>

**How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

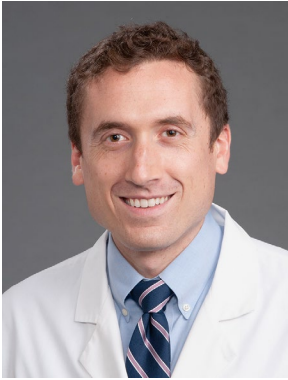
1 year

**Background and Research Interests**

I am a pharmacoepidemiologist and health services researcher focused at the intersections of aging, oncology, and drug interventions. The objectives of my research are: 1) to improve the quality of aging and cancer outcomes research through epidemiologic methods development and validation and 2) to use advanced epidemiologic methods to generate real-world evidence that supports interventions to improve the quality of care for older adults with cancer.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy spending time with family and friends, running, biking, wheel-throwing, playing music (guitar and piano), and reading.



## **Jack Edminister, MD**

**Assistant Professor, Dermatology**

[jedminis@wakehealth.edu](mailto:jedminis@wakehealth.edu)

### **TRA Cohort 2024**

**How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

3 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a dermatologist with clinical interests that include autoimmune connective tissue diseases, blistering disorders, and psychodermatology. My primary research interest is the study of calcimimetic drugs as putative treatments for both acquired and genetic diseases of keratinocyte dysadhesion, such as pemphigus vulgaris and Hailey-Hailey Disease.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I love spending time with my significant other (Katherine) and my golden retriever (Piper). I love to be with my family, in the outdoors, or at concerts with friends.



## **Erica Frechman, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Gerontology and Geriatric  
Medicine**

[efrechma@wakehealth.edu](mailto:efrechma@wakehealth.edu)

### **TRA Cohort 2023**

#### **How long have you been at Wake Forest/Atrium Health?**

Atrium Health 16 years, Wake Forest since  
February 2023.

#### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a clinician scientist with clinical specialization in Palliative Care and Gerontology. My research focuses on aging, frailty, dementia, palliative care, transitions of care, and caregiving. I am interested in dementia care models that support person-and-family focused care from diagnosis to death.

#### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Yoga, cooking, and watching and supporting my kids playing softball and baseball.



## **Pooja Jadiya, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Internal Medicine**

[pjadiya@wakehealth.edu](mailto:pjadiya@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2023**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/i/pooja-jadiya>

**How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

3 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, Section on Gerontology, with a primary research focus on unraveling the intricacies of mitochondrial calcium signaling, quality control pathways, and cell death, particularly in the context of aging and Alzheimer's disease.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I cherish moments with my family, indulge in cooking, and enjoy watching TV.



## Melissa Kay, PhD, MS, MPH, RD, CLC

Assistant Professor, Pediatrics

[mekay@wakehealth.edu](mailto:mekay@wakehealth.edu)

TRA Cohort 2024

### Faculty Profile

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/k/melissa-kay>

### How long have you been at Wake Forest?

Less than 1 year

### Background and Research Interests

I am a nutrition interventionist and epidemiologist with interest in the prevention of early life obesity and the improvement of diet quality in mother-child dyads.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

My two young kids take up most of my free time, but when I'm not enjoying the company of my family you can find me out running.



## **Anna Kuan-Celarier, MD, MS**

**Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and Gynecology**  
[akuancel@wakehealth.edu](mailto:akuancel@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/k/anna-mei-ching-kuan-celarier>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

1 year

### **Background and Research Interests**

My research interest is in the effects of cancer treatment on cognitive and physical function and aging. I recently completed my fellowship at the University of Oklahoma during which I completed Master of Science degree in Clinical and Translational Research, and have participated in basic science, translational, and clinical research primarily focused on cancer patients.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy running, traveling, and learning new languages. I'm currently learning Hungarian!



## Mitchell Ladd, MD, PhD

Assistant Professor, General Surgery

[mrladd@wakehealth.edu](mailto:mrladd@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2023 & K12 Scholar 2024-2026**

### Faculty Profile

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/l/mitche-ll-ryan-ladd>

### How long have you been at Wake Forest?

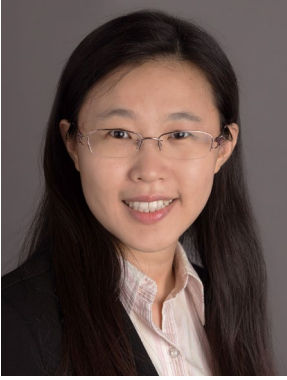
2 years

### Background and Research Interests

I have an undergraduate degree in biomedical engineering and then obtained my MD and PhD in biomedical engineering here at Wake Forest. I went on to do my general surgery training and pediatric surgical training (including a 2-year post-doctoral research fellowship) at Johns Hopkins. Currently, I am a pediatric surgeon with a research interest in tissue engineering, in particular, working toward developing a tissue-engineered small intestine to treat short bowel syndrome.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I am married with three children so most of my free time is spent with them and getting my kids to extracurricular activities. I also enjoy live music (bluegrass in particular), smoking meats, sports, and the outdoors.



## **Tsai-Ling Liu, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Center for Health System Sciences**

[Tsai-Ling.Liu@atriumhealth.org](mailto:Tsai-Ling.Liu@atriumhealth.org)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/l/tsai-ling-liu>

### **How long have you been at Atrium Health?**

8 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

My educational background is in health services research with an emphasis on quantitative outcomes research. My research interests include telehealth, health disparities, and chronic disease management. Currently, I am focusing on improving outcomes for older patients, particularly those living with dementia, aiming at providing the best healthcare services to these patients.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with family and friends, traveling, reading, and enjoy watching TV / movies.





## **Rohan Mahabaleshwarkar, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Center for Health System Sciences, Atrium Health**

[Rohan.Mahabaleshwarkar@atriumhealth.org](mailto:Rohan.Mahabaleshwarkar@atriumhealth.org)

### **TRA Cohort 2023**

**How long have you been at Atrium Health?**

10 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I have a background and interest in public health research, specifically the evaluation and implementation of interventions to improve primary care delivery for patients with chronic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. I am also interested in conducting research on outcomes and receipt of guideline-concordant care in patients with chronic diseases, to identify groups at risk of not receiving recommended care and experiencing suboptimal outcomes and understand where the need of interventions is and what type of interventions are needed.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with family, yoga, and meditation.



## **Jaclyn Martindale, DO**

**Assistant Professor, Neurology**

[jmartind@wakehealth.edu](mailto:jmartind@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/xxxx>

**How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

5 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a physician-scientist specializing in pediatric movement disorders, with clinical research focusing on Tourette syndrome (TS). I aim to become an independent clinical investigator and design behavioral interventions to address the full psychosocial impact of TS. Specifically, I am interested in studying and affecting these aspects of TS: 1) stigma, 2) emotional well-being, and 3) psychological distress.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Gardening, reading books, and being outside.



## **Shruti Mittal, MD, FAAP**

**Assistant Professor, Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics, Atrium Health**

[shruti.mittal@atriumhealth.org](mailto:shruti.mittal@atriumhealth.org)

**TRA Cohort 2023**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://atriumhealth.org/provider-profile/shruti-mittal-1326393273>

### **How long have you been at Atrium Health?**

4 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a developmental-behavioral pediatrician, originally from Greenville, SC. My research focus is improving access to DBP care for children with neurodevelopmental disabilities, In particular for preschool-age children with ADHD. I would like to study the impact of social determinants of health, historical redlining and structural racism on health outcomes in children with developmental disabilities.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy spending time outdoors with my husband, two young children, Alisha (4 years old) and Arya (2 years old), and our miniature schnauzer Max. I love traveling, watching NBA basketball and CLT FC soccer, and reading fiction novels.



## **Andrew Nance, MD, DipABLM**

**Assistant Professor, Family and Community  
Medicine, Atrium Health**

[andrew.nance@atriumhealth.org](mailto:andrew.nance@atriumhealth.org)

### **TRA Cohort 2023**

#### **Faculty Profile**

<https://atriumhealth.org/provider-profile/andrew-nance-1831544949>

#### **How long have you been at Atrium Health?**

8 years

#### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a clinician-researcher practicing inpatient, outpatient, and home-based family medicine. I am providing a more equitable preventive care experience for historically marginalized populations through my Lifestyle Medicine at Home program. I believe that collaborating with families to create a high-quality Lifestyle Action Plan can recognize the biological, psychological, and sociological needs of patients, can address health inequities, and can teach the future healthcare workforce how to practice Lifestyle Medicine in a way that prevents, treats, and reverses chronic diseases.

#### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with my wife, daughter and two cats, walking the greenway, landscaping my azaleas, rooting for Charlotte at Hornets and FC games, and cooking whole-food plant-based meals.



## **Sally Ong, MD**

**Assistant Professor, Ophthalmology**

[song@wakehealth.edu](mailto:song@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2023**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/o/sally-s-ong>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

4 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a vitreoretinal surgeon and a clinician scientist. My current research is focused on translating laboratory findings using animal models to the clinic to improve treatment options for patients with diabetic retinopathy and other ischemic retinopathies. Other research interests include studying ways to improve anatomical and functional outcomes after surgical repair for retinal detachments and full thickness macular holes.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Travelling, hiking, dining out, exploring local children's museums and parks with my family. We also have immediate family living in four different continents and one of my goals in the coming years is to visit them all!



## Mital Patel, MD, MHS

Assistant Professor, Pediatrics

[mitpatel@wakehealth.edu](mailto:mitpatel@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### Faculty Profile

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/p/mital-patel>

### How long have you been at Wake Forest?

1 year

### Background and Research Interests

I am a pediatric nephrologist and clinician researcher at Wake Forest with an interest in acute kidney injury and chronic kidney disease in children. My research aims to identify risk factors and biomarkers that predict the progression of kidney disease, with the ultimate goal of preventing advanced kidney disease in pediatric patients.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy spending time with my husband and senior dog, hiking, running, and exploring local restaurants and coffee shops.



## **Kristyn Pocock, MD**

**Assistant Professor, Neurology**

[kpocock@wakehealth.edu](mailto:kpocock@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/p/kristyn-n-m-pocock>

**How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

1.5 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am interested in studying the impact of enlarged breast size on migraine and neck pain.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with my young family (husband, toddler and newborn!)



## Heather Shappell, PhD

Assistant Professor, Biostatistics and Data Science

[hshappel@wakehealth.edu](mailto:hshappel@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2023**

### Faculty Profile

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/s/heather-marie-shappell>

### How long have you been at Wake Forest?

4 years

### Background and Research Interests

I am an Assistant Professor of Biostatistics and Data Science, as well as faculty member in the Laboratory for Complex Brain Networks, with experience performing inter-disciplinary research with collaborators from a variety of fields, including neuroscience, aging, mental health, and pediatrics. While my work initially focused on the statistical analysis for clinical trials and observational studies, my research emphasis over the past 6 years has been on the statistical analysis of network data, with a concentration in dynamic brain networks.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy doing gymnastics, reading, playing various board and card games with friends and family, and spending time outdoors!





## **Kirtikar Shukla, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Internal Medicine**

[kshukla@wakehealth.edu](mailto:kshukla@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/xxxx>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

6 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

My research focuses on redox homeostasis in inflammation and its role in the tumor microenvironment during chemoradiation therapy for HNSCC. I aim to discover theragnostic tools targeting redox-sensitive cysteines in alarmins released during radiation therapy, which can hinder immunotherapy efficacy. Additionally, I study redox-sensitive proteins like NQO1, aldose reductase, and NAMPT in radiation-resistant HNSCCs. By targeting these proteins and using adjuvant therapies, I seek to overcome treatment resistance and improve cancer outcomes.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy spending time with my kids and watching sci-fi movies. I also love reading, especially science fiction, and spending time outdoors with my kids and friends. Cooking for my family is a favorite pastime.



## **Michael Supples, MD, MPH**

**Assistant Professor, Emergency Medicine**

[mwsupple@wakehealth.edu](mailto:mwsupple@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/s/michael-william-supples>

**How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

5 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a physician board certified in Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Emergency Medicine. My research areas of interest are prehospital medicine and cardiovascular medicine, including general prehospital care optimization, reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease among EMS clinicians, and prehospital and emergency department cardiovascular disease care pathways.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy spending time with my wife and my son, traveling, and learning new skills.



## **Mariana Wingood, DPT, PhD, MPH**

**Assistant Professor, Implementation Science**  
[mwingood@wakehealth.edu](mailto:mwingood@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024 & K12 Scholar 2024-2026**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/w/mariana-wingood>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

Less than 1 year

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a physical therapist with a Board Certification in Geriatrics and an implementation scientist. My research focuses on addressing the challenges healthcare providers encounter when promoting functional independence and well-being, including early fall risk screenings and encouraging patients to engage in physical activity.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Running, competing in Ironmans, hiking, skiing, traveling, and cuddling with my Greater Swiss Mountain Dogs.



## **Kip Zimmerman, PhD**

**Assistant Professor, Molecular Medicine**

[kdzimmer@wakehealth.edu](mailto:kdzimmer@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2024**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/z/kip-donald-zimmerman>

**How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

10 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a biostatistician with experience processing and analyzing a wide variety of omics data to identify molecular mechanisms underlying disease. I am currently interested in how cells and tissues alter their molecular diversity through alternative splicing in response to changes in their surrounding environment. I am in the process of developing analytical methods and pipelines to analyze long-read RNA-Seq data which can be used to assess changes in alternative splicing.

**What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy spending time with my family, playing and watching sports, hiking, gardening, swimming, cooking, fishing, and camping.



## **Matthew Zuber, MD**

**Assistant Professor, Obstetrics and  
Gynecology, Section of Maternal-Fetal  
Medicine**

[mjzuber@wakehealth.edu](mailto:mjzuber@wakehealth.edu)

**TRA Cohort 2023**

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/z/matthew-james-zuber>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

5 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a maternal-fetal medicine specialist with specific interest in vaccines in pregnancy. My research includes the unique immune response to vaccination in pregnancy, how maternal comorbidities or environmental exposures may influence novel and routine vaccines, and optimization of vaccine timing for maternal and neonatal benefit.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I enjoy outdoor activities including hiking, golf and tennis. My wife and I adventure with our corgi, Newton.



# Translational Research Academy

Faculty and Staff



**Wake Forest University**  
**School of Medicine**



## **Dave Miller, MD, MS**

**Professor, Implementation Science, Wake  
Forest University School of Medicine**

**K12 / TRA Director**

[dmiller@wakehealth.edu](mailto:dmiller@wakehealth.edu)

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/Faculty/M/David-Philip-Miller>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

24 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a primary care physician, board-certified clinical informaticist, and healthcare delivery researcher. My research focuses on developing, implementing, and evaluating multi-level digital health interventions that are designed to increase the efficiency and quality of primary healthcare. I also have experiencing commercializing research discoveries, including founding a start-up and serving as PI of an NIH Small Business Technology Transfer Grant.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Hiking the Appalachian Trail, travel with family, and weekend warrior projects on our property.



## **Nichole Allred, PhD**

**Professor, Biochemistry, Wake Forest  
University School of Medicine**

**K12 / TRA Co-Director**

[nallred@wakehealth.edu](mailto:nallred@wakehealth.edu)

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/a/nichole-danielle-allred>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

23 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a molecular biologist with a research focus on understanding the genomic architecture of complex diseases and underlying risk factors in minority populations. I apply diverse -omics approaches to understand the genomic architecture including genome-wide association studies (GWAS), whole exome sequencing, whole genome sequencing, metabolomics and transcriptomics. With an emphasis on metabolic disease, my research focuses on type 2 diabetes (T2D), nephropathy, obesity, liver disease and cardiovascular disease (CVD).

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with my husband and two children, attending equestrian, gymnastics and taekwondo practice/tournaments/shows, working in my garden and playing with our pets.





## **Deepak Palakshappa, MD, MSHP**

**Associate Professor, Internal Medicine, Wake Forest University School of Medicine**

**K12 / TRA Co-Director**

[dpalaksh@wakehealth.edu](mailto:dpalaksh@wakehealth.edu)

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/faculty/p/deepak-palakshappa>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

7 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am an ambulatory general internist and pediatrician at the Wake Forest Downtown Health Plaza and also a health services researcher in the Department of Epidemiology and Prevention. My research focuses on improving the health outcomes of socially and economically disadvantaged populations by addressing food insecurity and other social determinants of health. Over the past 10 years, I have focused on understanding how to screen and address food insecurity in clinical care settings through innovative team-based care models using mobile technology, in-person navigation (with patient navigators and community health workers), and partnerships with community-based organizations.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with my wife and 2 kids, coaching my daughter's soccer team, traveling to new places, reading, and golf.



## **Michael Brennan, DDS, MHS**

**Chair, Oral Medicine/Oral & Maxillofacial  
Surgery, Atrium Health**

**Professor, Otolaryngology/Head & Neck  
Surgery, Wake Forest University School of  
Medicine**

[mike.brennan@atriumhealth.org](mailto:mike.brennan@atriumhealth.org)

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://atriumhealth.org/education/graduate-medical-education/physician-residencies/general-practice-dentistry-and-oral-medicine/faculty-and-visiting-professors>

### **How long have you been at Atrium Health?**

24 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am an oral medicine specialist and hospital dentist. My research focuses on oral sequelae of cancer therapies, Sjogren's disease, dry mouth and lichen planus.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Spending time with my wife and 2 children and playing volleyball and golf.



## **Stephen B. Kritchevsky, PhD**

**Professor, Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine,  
Wake Forest University School of Medicine**

[skritche@wakehealth.edu](mailto:skritche@wakehealth.edu)

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/Faculty/K/Stephen-Kritchevsky>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

21 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am an epidemiologist/gerontologist who studies factors contributing to declining physical function in older adults.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Reading, cooking and visiting historical sites.



## **John Parks, PhD**

**Professor, Molecular Medicine, Wake Forest University School of Medicine**

[jparks@wakehealth.edu](mailto:jparks@wakehealth.edu)

### **Faculty Profile**

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/Faculty/P/John-S-Parks>

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

44 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I am a basic scientist interested lipid metabolism in pre-clinical models of chronic diseases, such as atherosclerosis, fatty liver disease, and obesity/type 2 diabetes.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Any outdoor activity (biking, swimming, walking, YMCA workouts) and spending time with my three grown children and their families (five grandchildren.)



## Sean Simpson, PhD

Professor, Biostatistics and Data Science ,  
Wake Forest University School of Medicine

[slsimpso@wakehealth.edu](mailto:slsimpso@wakehealth.edu)

### Faculty Profile

<https://school.wakehealth.edu/Faculty/S/Sean-L-Simpson>

### How long have you been at Wake Forest?

16 years

### Background and Research Interests

I am a biostatistician with interests in network- and complexity-based neuroimaging, and health and social disparities. My main research focus has been on the development of novel fusions of statistical tools with network science methods for the analysis of whole-brain network data to engender more biologically meaningful approaches to understanding the root causes of a number of brain diseases and disorders.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

Reading, spending time with my family and friends, traveling, hiking, working out, engaging in social justice activities, watching movies.



## Hazel Tapp, PhD

Director, Center for Primary Care Research,  
Family Medicine, Atrium Health

[Hazel.Tapp@atriumhealth.org](mailto:Hazel.Tapp@atriumhealth.org)

### Faculty Profile

<https://atriumhealth.org/education/graduate-medical-education/physician-residencies/family-medicine/carolinas-medical-center-family-medicine-residency-program/research>

### How long have you been at Atrium Health?

19 years

### Background and Research Interests

My research interests are in implementing improved delivery of care for patients with chronic diseases such as asthma. As Director for the Center for Primary Care Research at Atrium Health and co-director of a practice-based research network (PBRN), I work on multiple projects designed to use community based participatory research (CBPR) and implementation research to study improved outcomes for populations with chronic disease through implementation of evidence-based interventions. For example, we study the dissemination of shared decision making for asthma in primary care practices and the Emergency Department across Atrium.

### What do you enjoy doing in your free time?

I enjoy travel and hiking with my husband and sons, Craig, Nick and Harrison, distance running with a local running group, and playing with our two dogs Willow and Lucy.



## **Susan Newcomb, MA, PhD**

**Director of Education Programs, Clinical and Translational Science Institute, Wake Forest University School of Medicine**

[snewcomb@wakehealth.edu](mailto:snewcomb@wakehealth.edu)

### **How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

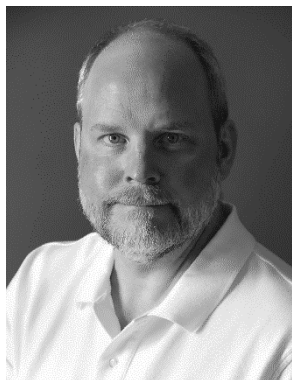
Less than 1 year

### **Background and Research Interests**

I recently joined Wake Forest from the University of Southern California's Center for Excellence in Teaching where I supported faculty, staff, and trainees in developing evidence-based, inclusive teaching and course design approaches. I am interested in translating pedagogical best practices known to be effective in the classroom to more diverse settings such as research mentoring, management, science communication, and outreach. During my research career as a graduate student at Columbia University and then as an American Cancer Society Fellow at Caltech, I developed genetic and live-cell imaging approaches to better understand how gene expression is regulated, and to gain insight about the role of 3-D genome organization in development and disease.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

I love hiking with my friends and dogs, watching movies, cooking, and getting in over my head on DIY projects around the house.



## **Tom Roth**

**Education Program Manager, Clinical and Translational Science Institute , Wake Forest University School of Medicine**

[tomroth@wakehealth.edu](mailto:tomroth@wakehealth.edu)

**How long have you been at Wake Forest?**

30 years

### **Background and Research Interests**

I'm an Education Program Manager in the Clinical and Translational Science Institute responsible for coordinating the Translational Research Academy, the KL2 Program, K&R Grant Writing Series, and the Medical Student Research Program and Research Day. I also create online, asynchronous training, record lectures, and try to leverage available tools and technology to facilitate learning opportunities.

### **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?**

Hanging out with my family and two cats, watching British crime dramas, doing home improvement projects, cooking, bicycling, photography, and audio technician for church.