

# Dermatology News

PURSUING WITH EXCELLENCE THE MISSIONS OF RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND PATIENT CARE

## The Future Looks Bright

**T**HE FUTURE OF ACADEMIC medicine, and in our case, the future of dermatologic research, is threatened by a decrease in the numbers of M.D.'s and Ph.D.'s choosing this career path. To help in the crucial development of translational researchers in dermatology, the Department of Dermatology has created the Future Academic Scientists in Dermatology (FASID) T32 Training Program.

Selected for funding by the National Institutes of Health, the program offers a unique focus on translational research in which M.D., M.D./Ph.D. and Ph.D. trainees are trained and mentored in clinical and basic science research projects utilizing human subjects and human skin cells. These studies can directly translate to better understanding and treatment of human skin diseases. A broad range of inflammatory, autoimmune and genetic disorders will be studied, as well as cutaneous malignancies, which are major challenges to public health due to their frequency, disfigurement, morbidity and mortality.

“With the FASID T32 Program, we now have a formal structure for educating postdoctoral fellows who are either clinically or Ph.D. trained (or both) to learn about a broad



TOBA RAINES

**Dr. Courtney Johnson and Dr. Luis Garza**

**“We now have a formal structure for educating postdoctoral fellows who are either clinically or Ph.D. trained (or both) to learn about a broad range of skin research from epidemiology to basic cell and molecular biology.”**

**DR. LUIS GARZA**

range of skin research from epidemiology to basic cell and molecular biology,” said Luis Garza, M.D., Ph.D., Vice Chair of Research in the Department of Dermatology. Dr. Garza is the FASID T32 Program Director and he is assisted by Dr. Sewon Kang, who serves as the program’s Associate Director.

The program has two goals. First, to provide training and mentorship to M.D. and M.D.-Ph.D. Dermatology residents and Ph.D. post-doctoral fellows in translational research to develop successful independent basic or clinical research programs and become future leaders in investigative dermatology. The second goal is to equip these trainees with a skillset of innovative methods, state-of-the-art technologies, and interdisciplinary approaches to translate new targets for diagnosis, treatment, and prevention to patients suffering from skin diseases. “We have all the infrastructure present to prepare trainees for a successful career in research,” continued Garza.

The Department’s inaugural FASID T32 trainee is **Courtney Johnson, M.D., Ph.D.** Dr. Johnson obtained her bachelor of science in chemistry from Tougaloo College in Jackson, Mississippi. She received both her doctoral degree and medical degree from Brown University, and completed a medicine internship at the University of Miami/Jackson Health System prior to beginning her dermatology residency at Johns Hopkins. Having graduated in June, Dr. Johnson is diving into her new FASID T32 fellowship role. “I applied to the FASID program for the opportunity to conduct clinical translational research within the robust scientific environment of Hopkins,” said Johnson.

During her dermatology residency, Dr. Johnson received the 2019-2020 Maryland Dermatologic Society Resident Grant for the proposal “Investigating Cardiovascular Disease Outcomes and Molecular Mechanisms in CTCL Patients of Color.” In 2020 she presented her work at the World Congress of Cutaneous Lymphoma. As a FASID T32 fellow, Dr. Johnson will follow a structured education curriculum comprised of training in basic single cell epigenetics, clinical research, methods for enhancing reproducibility in research, as well as responsible conduct in research. Additional training in statistics, animal models and other methods will also be available. She will also participate in an enrichment program consisting of translational research career development workshops, combined dermatology research seminar series, dermatology grand rounds, dermatology translational research journal club, and the Department’s annual Dermatology Research Day.

“Dr. Johnson is brilliant, tireless, kind, with outstanding training and a commitment to discovering biological and medical insights into skin and skin disease,” said Garza.

“Over the next year, I hope to further develop a research protocol to identify key regulatory markers that can be utilized to improve the care of CTCL patients,” said Johnson.

The future of academic dermatology is looking brighter every day.

For more information on the FASID T32 program, please click this link or visit the Department of Dermatology website at [hopkinsmedicine.org/dermatology](https://hopkinsmedicine.org/dermatology). ■

## Supporting Our Work

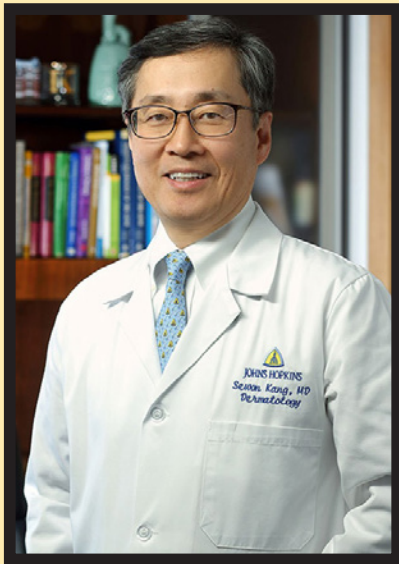
The Johns Hopkins Department of Dermatology strives to provide outstanding individualized diagnosis and treatment of skin disease; educate the next generation of dermatologists to become leaders in medical dermatology, cosmetic dermatology, dermatologic surgery, dermatopathology and investigative dermatology; and develop new and better strategies to diagnose and treat skin disease through groundbreaking research.

If you wish to support any program or research project with a tax-deductible donation, please visit: <https://secure.jhu.edu/form/derma> or call 202-527-3176.

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## Chairman's Corner



**Sewon Kang, M.D.**

IT HAS BEEN 18 MONTHS SINCE COVID-19 SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED how we live and work at Johns Hopkins Medicine. While we still must take precautions, especially with the rise of the Delta variant, we press on with the business of academic medicine and our commitment to the Hopkins tripartite mission of clinical care, education, and research.

In this edition of the Dermatology Newsletter, we are proud to highlight our Future Academic Scientists in Dermatology (FASID) T32 Training Program, funded by the National Institutes of Health, and introduce you to our first trainee, Courtney Johnson, M.D., Ph.D., who graduated from our residency program this June.

For our patients most at-risk for melanoma, we are proud to introduce a whole body 3D imaging system (Vectra 360) that captures the entire skin surface in about a second. It maps moles and when used appropriately is expected to improve patient outcomes. Hopkins Dermatology is one of just a few centers in the United States to acquire one of these machines and offer the special service to our patients. We are grateful to the Women's Board of the Johns Hopkins Hospital for providing full funding to install the device.

While we continue our good work, our doctors and care teams are keeping our clinics running, all while taking extra precautions to make patient visits as safe as possible. We know times are uncertain, and we pledge to remain resilient and flexible as we move into the fall.

Wishing you good health,

Sewon Kang, M.D.  
*Noxell Professor and Chair*  
*Johns Hopkins Department of Dermatology*

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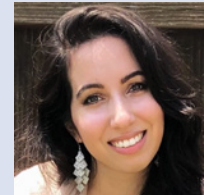
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## Thank you to Elizabeth Small



**Dr. Elizabeth Small receiving the JHU Alumni Association Distinguished Alumni Award from Dean Paul Rothman in 2017.**

**T**HE DEPARTMENT OF DERMATOLOGY would like to thank alumna, Elizabeth Small, M.D., for her continued generosity. This year, Dr. Small is helping to fund JHU School of Medicine student **Maria Fazal's** "Dean's Year of Research." The Dean's Year is a highly competitive program with stipends awarded to just ten Hopkins students annually. The cost of the stipend is shared equally between the Dean's Office and the department in which the research is being conducted. With the help of Dr. Small's gift, Maria, who has completed her third year of medical school, will spend this academic year with us to study the changes in skin associated with bariatric surgery and skin aging in transgender patients on hormonal therapy. "I hope to use the knowledge from this year to better serve my future patients in both the clinic and through work in research," said Maria.



**Maria Fazal**

Thank you Dr. Small for supporting Maria and for your unwavering partnership with Hopkins Dermatology. ■

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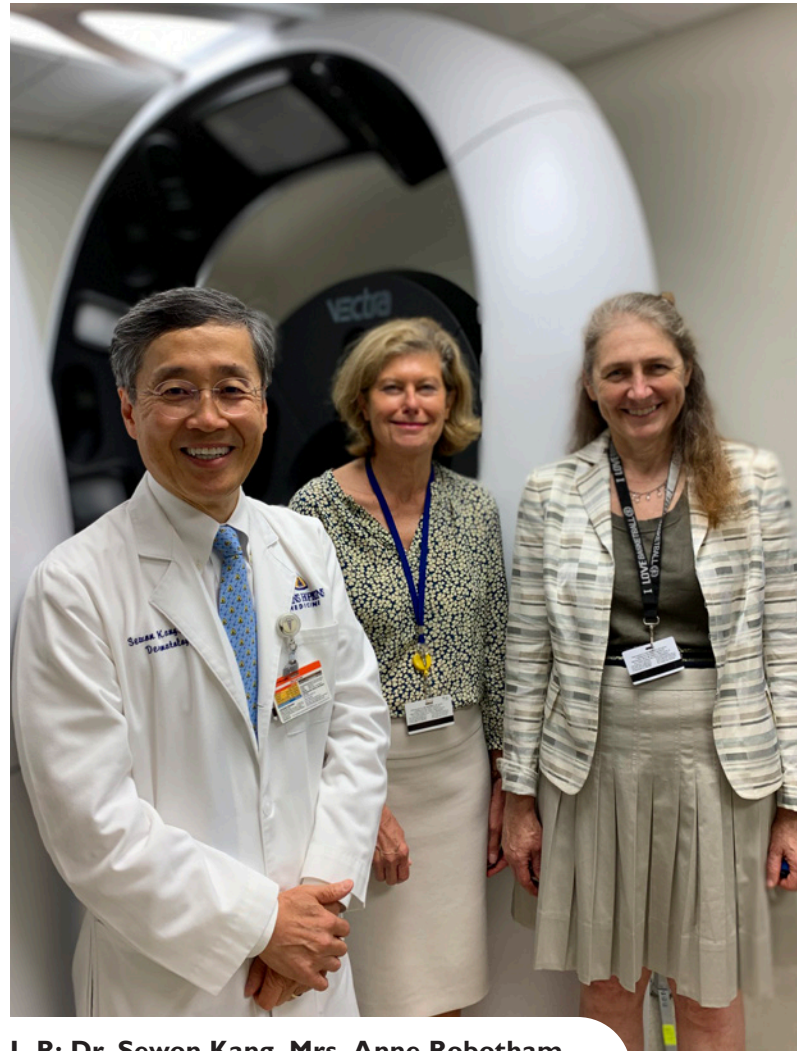
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## Mole Mapping Goes High-Tech

**W**HAT IF THERE WERE A MACHINE THAT could map every lesion on your body, making it easier for your doctor to identify suspicious moles? The Vectra WB360 is a whole body skin imaging system that gets us a step closer to that. The Department of Dermatology is pleased to announce the acquisition of the Vectra machine thanks to a grant from the Women's Board of the Johns Hopkins Hospital.

How does it work? A patient stands in the machine and in just under one second, 92 cameras go off simultaneously to give a 3D model of the person. Fully integrated software tags each lesion to a 3D body map, enhancing the clinicians' ability to identify new and changed moles. Prior to Vectra coming on the scene, a medical photographer would have to take multiple shots covering a patients' entire body. Patients would have to bring in their photos for reference. Now, our physicians can use the Vectra images and magnify and rotate the figure. The photos allow the physicians to zoom in and out to assess pigmented lesions. "We can now offer patients this special tool for better monitoring of their skin," said Dr. Sewon Kang, Noxell Chair and Professor of the Department. Early detection, especially in high-risk melanoma patients, has the potential to significantly improve patient outcomes.

"Awarding grants for equipment such as this state of the art Vectra machine is the epitome of The Women's Board's mission," said Anne Robotham, the Board's new president. ■



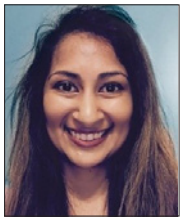
**L-R: Dr. Sewon Kang, Mrs. Anne Robotham, President, The Women's Board, Dr. Roberta Ficke, Past President, The Women's Board**

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED** in learning more about this high-tech option, please speak with your physician in the Department of Dermatology.

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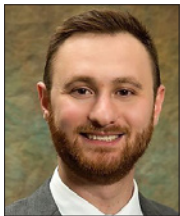
## New Faculty



**Sara Lamb, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Dermatology*

Dr. Sara Lamb is a Johns Hopkins dermatologist with a focus in general dermatology. She treats a variety of skin conditions and sees pediatric patients, as well as adults. Dr. Lamb received her medical degree at West Virginia University School of Medicine, where she also completed her dermatology residency.



**Kevin Sharghi, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Dermatology*

Dr. Kevin Sharghi is a Johns Hopkins dermatologist located at Sibley Memorial Hospital in Washington, D.C. His expertise is in medical dermatology. Dr. Sharghi sees both adults and children of all ages. Dr. Sharghi obtained his medical degree at The University of Texas Medical Branch and completed his dermatology residency at Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine.



**Daren Simkin, M.D.**

*Assistant Professor of Dermatology*

Dr. Daren Simkin joins the faculty after completing his residency in the Johns Hopkins Department of Dermatology, where he also served as co-chief resident. Born and raised in Boston, Massachusetts, Dr. Simkin earned his bachelor's degree in history at Dartmouth College and obtained his medical degree at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. He is passionate about education and will organize medical student lectures and clerkships.



**Joel Chaim Sunshine, M.D., Ph.D., M.S.**

*Assistant Professor of Dermatology, Pathology and Biomedical Engineering*

Dr. Joel Sunshine specializes in medical dermatology and skin cancer. His areas of clinical expertise include general dermatology, cutaneous oncology including melanoma and Merkel cell carcinoma, and supportive oncodermatology. Dr. Sunshine obtained his undergraduate degree from Brandeis University, his M.D. and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, and his dermatology residency training and dermatopathology fellowship from the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine.

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## Awards and Recognition



**Crystal Aguh, M.D.**, the Director of the Ethnic Skin Program, was recently promoted to Associate Professor of Dermatology. Dr. Aguh's area of research focuses primarily on skin conditions that disproportionately impact minority populations, with particular emphasis on scarring alopecia.

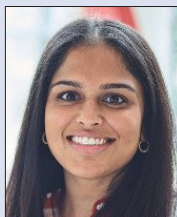


The Falling Walls Foundation has selected **Janis Taube, M.D., M.Sc.** and **Alex Szalay, Ph.D.**, as finalists for the prestigious Falling Walls Science Breakthroughs of the Year 2021 in Life Sciences. Their innovative research project, known as AstroPath, combines astronomy

with pathology to identify predictive biomarkers for cancer immunotherapy. The eventual winner of the award will present their work to a global audience in Berlin on November 9, 2021, the anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Falling Walls Foundation is devoted to the mission of bringing together those who set out to tear down the next walls in science and society.



The Skin of Color Society awarded **Courtney Johnson, M.D., Ph.D.**, with the Skin of Color Society Research Grant Award sponsored by Pfizer. This \$15,000 grant funds research of atopic dermatitis and other inflammatory diseases and is intended to assist young dermatologists in furthering their academic careers.



The Department of Dermatology appointed **Mark Marchitto, M.D.** and **Deepa Patel, M.D.** as Co-Chief Residents for the 2021-2022 academic year.

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## The Stanford I. Lamberg, M.D. Research Prizes in Dermatology



In 2017, Dr. Stan Lamberg, a former faculty member, and his wife Lynne Lamberg, a medical journalist, pictured left, established “The Stanford I. Lamberg, M.D. Research Prizes in Dermatology” to continue the legacy of innovation in translational research.

The Department wishes to congratulate the 2021 Lamberg Prizes winners:

### Best Scientific Presentation:



Nishadh Sutaria, B.A. (medical student at Tufts University and our Itch Fellow) – *“Cluster analysis of circulating plasma biomarkers in prurigo nodularis reveals a distinct systemic inflammatory signature in African Americans”*

### Best Paper:



Michelle Kerns, M.D. (our senior resident) – *“Pathogenic and therapeutic role for NRF2 signaling in ultraviolet light-induced skin pigmentation”*

### Junior Faculty Prize:



Elise Ng, M.D. (Assistant Professor of Dermatology) – *“Artificial intelligence assisted skin cancer surgery”*

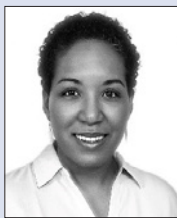


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## Alumni Corner

### Tamia Harris-Tryon, M.D., Ph.D.



Dr. Tamia Harris-Tryon is a rock star in the world of dermatology, and we were lucky to have her as our Distinguished Alumni Visiting Professor at the 2nd annual Alumni Lecture this spring. Presenting on the topic of “Host-Microbe Interactions at the Skin Surface,” Dr. Harris-Tryon, who is an Assistant Professor of Dermatology at UT Southwestern, shared her cutting edge research with us via a Zoom gathering. “It was a great honor to return virtually for the Alumni Lectureship. Though it has been 7 years since I left Hopkins, the impact that my training had on me is permanent and it makes me feel like I never left, said Dr. Harris-Tryon.”

Dr. Harris-Tryon received her combined medical-doctoral degrees in cellular and molecular medicine in 2010 at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and completed her dermatology residency with us in 2014. She joined UT Southwestern faculty that year, where her research focuses on the organisms residing on the skin’s surface and how they impact the skin’s immune system. In 2019, Dr. Harris-Tryon’s research earned her the American Academy of Dermatology’s Young Investigator Award. She has published in peer-reviewed journals and delivered invited talks around the world. Her research is supported by the NIH (Ko8) and the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, Career Award for Medical Scientists (CAMS).

Volunteerism and community engagement are central to Dr. Harris-Tryon’s work, and since 2015, she has worked at a local clinic that provides quality health care services to underserved people. “I am truly fortunate to be at UT Southwestern in a Dermatology Department that equally values patient care, service, teaching, and research. Our department supports the free Dermatology clinic in Dallas called Agape,” said Dr. Harris-Tryon. She continued, “Following the leadership of my colleagues Rebecca Vasquez and Donald Glass, I volunteer on Saturday mornings when I can. It is a joy to help treat the skin ailments of our patients at Agape and provide an additional safety net for people with skin conditions in Dallas.”

Thank you, Dr. Harris-Tryon for taking the time to educate our faculty, residents, and fellows.

# Alumni Corner

## **Dongwon Kim, Ph.D.**



Our distinguished alumnus, Dongwon Kim, Ph.D., is now Chairman of the Department of Biopharmaceutical Engineering at Dongseo University in Busan, South Korea. Formerly, Dr. Kim was a postdoctoral research fellow in the Garza Lab, run by Luis Garza, M.D.,

Ph.D., in the Department of Dermatology. “Looking back to the past, it was really unforgettable memories at Hopkins for about five and a half years and I was really happy to work with Dr. Garza, all lab members and clinicians,” said Kim.

In 2020, the National Research Foundation of Korea awarded Dr. Kim a major grant, approximately \$500,000 for 4 years, to run his own lab. His research focuses on the regenerative capacity and exosome biosynthesis induced by TLR3 activation in damaged tissues. Dr. Kim said, “Without such precious experiences (at Hopkins), it was impossible to find a job in Korea. “Although my department is young and small, I am working hard to build our research program and impart the scientific knowledge and experience I have learned at Hopkins to my students. He went on to say, “I would like to take this opportunity to express all my gratitude to Dr. Luis Garza and Dr. Sewon Kang for having me at Hopkins and providing great chances to work with great researchers.”

Congratulations, Dr. Kim, on all of your achievements!