

MSSRP Mentor List - Summer 2026

The first stage of the MSSRP application process is to research a few mentors whose work interests you, and to ask Tracy Krebs (tls23@case.edu) to help you get in contact with those mentors.

1. Please use the information below as a jumping-off point for your own research on mentors you may want to work with.
2. You should utilize the CWRU, UH, and/or Cleveland Clinic websites to get more details of what each mentor is researching.
3. You should utilize PubMed and browse the list of publications for mentors you are interested in working with.
4. We encourage you to consider basic and translational research in addition to clinical research.

Mentors by category:

GROUP 1: <u>Digestive Diseases</u>	GROUP 2: <u>Liver Diseases</u>	GROUP 3: <u>Diabetes & Metabolic Diseases</u>	GROUP 4: <u>Kidney Diseases</u>
Fabio Cominelli, MD PhD	J. Mark Brown, PhD	David Buchner, PhD	Walter Boron, MD, PhD
Wendy Goodman, PhD	Srinivasan Dasarathy, MD	Atul Chopra, MD	Leslie Bruggeman, PhD
Andrei Ivanov, PhD	Maria Hatzoglou, PhD	Darcy Freedman, PhD	Katherine Dell, MD
Jeanette Messer, DVM, PhD*	Feng Lin, PhD	Rose Gubitosi-Klug, MD, PhD	Christopher Flask, PhD
Theresa Pizarro, PhD	Takuya Sakaguchi, MD	Grace McComsey, MD	Stanley Hazen, MD, PhD
Florian Rieder, MD	Gail Cresci, PhD		John O'Toole, MD
Alex Rodriguez-Palacios, PhD, DVM*	Danny Manor, PhD		Mahboob Rahman, MD
Rui Wang, PhD	Pierre Gholam, MD*		Jeffrey Schelling, MD
Philip Ahern, PhD			John Sedor, MD
Mahmoud Ghannoum, PhD			Jonathan Stamler, MD
Ganapati Mahabaleshwar, PhD			
Aaron Burberry, PhD*			
Abigail Raffner, PhD, RD*			
Luca Di Martino, PhD*			
Carlo De Salvo, PhD*			

GROUP 5: <u>GI & Liver Tumorigenesis</u>	GROUP 6: <u>Inflammation/Infection</u>
Amitabh Chak, MD	Donald Anthony, Jr, MD, PhD
Gregory Cooper, MD, MPH	Robert Bonomo, MD
Amar Desai, PhD*	Sahera Dirajlal-Fargo, MS, DO*
Kishore Guda, PhD	Curtis Donskey, MD
Zhenghong Lee, MD	Craig Hodges, PhD
Anant Madabhushi, PhD	Alan Levine, PhD
Sanford Markowitz, MD, PhD	Laura Nagy, PhD
Zhenghe Wang, PhD	Parameswaran Ramakrishnan, PhD
Agata Exner, PhD	Carlos Subauste, MD
Andrew Blum, MD, PhD*	Michelle Longworth, PhD*

* Junior faculty mentors, paired with a senior mentor with a strong-track record of mentorship to ensure the highest level of training.

Mentor Summaries:

Faculty Research & Case MSSRP T35 Mentoring Group 1: Digestive Diseases

FABIO COMINELLI, MD, PhD, Hermann Menges, Jr. Professor of Medicine & Pathology, Chief, Division of GI & Liver Diseases, CWRU SoM; Director, Case MSSRP T35; Co-Director, Digestive Diseases T32 (NIDDK); **Research:** Role of cytokines & gut microbiota in IBD; **Email:** fxc90@case.edu

WENDY GOODMAN, PhD, Instructor of Pathology, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Regulatory T-cells in CD; **Email:** wag@case.edu

ANDREI IVANOV, PhD, Staff Scientist, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; **Research:** Actomyosin cytoskeleton & intestinal barrier dysfunction in IBD; **Email:** ivanova2@ccf.org

JEANNETTE MESSER, DVM, PhD* , Assistant Staff Scientist, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Adjunct Assistant Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; Research: HMGB1 in IBD; Email: messerj3@ccf.org
THERESA PIZARRO, PhD , Professor of Pathology & Medicine, CWRU; Case MSSRP T35 Co-Director; Research: Mucosal immunity; Email: ttp@case.edu
FLORIAN RIEDER, MD , Assistant Professor (Medicine), CCLCM/CWRU SoM; Research: Gut Microbiome-induced Intestinal Fibrosis; Email: riederf@ccf.org
ALEXANDER RODRIGUEZ-PALACIOS, PhD, DVM , Assistant Professor of Medicine (GI & Liver Diseases), CWRU SoM; Research: Mouse models of intestinal inflammation; Email: axr503@case.edu
RUI WANG, PhD , Assistant Professor of Surgical Oncology, & Pathology, CWRU SOM; Research: Immune-regulation roles of NPTX2 in inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD); Email: rxw517@case.edu
PHILIP AHERN, PhD , Assistant Staff, Cardiovascular Disease & Metabolic Sciences, Cleveland Clinic LRI, Assistant Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; Research: Homeostasis between the intestinal immune system and the gut microbiota is established and maintained and disruption in IBD; Email: ahernp@ccf.org
MAHMOUD GHANNOUM, PhD , Professor, Department of Dermatology and Pathology, CWRU SoM; Research: Defining the role of the bacteriome and mycobiome (the bacterial and fungal community) in cancer; Email: mag3@case.edu
GANAPATI MAHABALESHWAR, PhD , Associate Professor, Department of Pathology, CWRU SoM; Research: Novel transcriptional regulators in the pathogenesis of human chronic, and acute inflammatory disease conditions; Email: ghm4@case.edu
AARON BURBERRY, PhD* , Assistant Professor, Department of Pathology, CWRU SoM; Research: Genetic and environmental contributions to neural inflammation; Email: axb1316@case.edu
ABIGAIL RAFFNER, PhD, RD* , Assistant Professor, Department of Nutrition, CWRU SoM; Research: Mechanisms for targeted dietary manipulation of intestinal microbiota and inflammation; Email: axb860@case.edu
LUCA DI MARTINO, PhD* , Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine (GI & Liver Diseases), CWRU SoM; Research: Inflammatory cytokines and microbiome in inflammatory bowel disease; Email: lxd150@case.edu
CARLO DE SALVO, PhD* , Assistant Professor, Department of Pathology, CWRU SoM; Research: Mucosal immunity; Email: cxd198@case.edu

Faculty Research & Case MSSRP T35 Mentoring Group 2: Liver Diseases
J. MARK BROWN, PhD , Associate Staff Scientist, Cardiovascular Disease & Metabolic Sciences, Cleveland Clinic LRI, Assistant Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; Research: Gut bacterial metabolite TMAO in host stress response to insulin resistance; Email: brownm5@ccf.org
SRINIVASAN DASARATHY, MD , Staff Scientist, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; Research: Mechanisms of sarcopenia in cirrhosis; clinical research in non-alcoholic steatohepatitis; Email: dasaras@ccf.org
MARIA HATZOGLOU, PhD , Professor of Nutrition & Pharmacology, CWRU SoM; Research: Molecular mechanisms regulating gene expression during nutrient stress; Email: maria.hatzoglou@case.edu
FENG LIN, PhD , Staff Scientist, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; Research: Compliment activation to improve diabetes, Email: linf2@ccf.org
TAKUYA SAKAGUCHI, PhD , Associate Staff, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Assistant Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; Research: Biliary system formation; nonalcoholic steatohepatitis using a zebrafish model, Email: sakagut2@ccf.org

GAIL CRESCI, PhD, Staff, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Assistant Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; **Research:** Gut microbiota; **Email:** crescig@ccf.org

DANNY MANOR, PhD, Professor, Department of Nutrition, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Mechanistic understanding of growth factor signaling; **Email:** dxm178@case.edu

PIERRE GHOLAM, MD*, Associate Professor, Department of Medicine (GI & Liver Diseases), CWRU SoM; **Research:** Liver Diseases; **Email:** pmg7@case.edu

Faculty Research & Case MSSRP T35 Mentoring Group 3: Diabetes & Metabolic Diseases

DAVID BUCHNER, PhD, Associate Professor of Genetics and Genome Sciences, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Adipocyte biology: pathways to obesity and type 2 diabetes and system genetics of metabolic health; **Email:** david.buchner@case.edu

ATUL CHOPRA, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Medicine (Cardiology), CWRU SoM; **Research:** Asprosin neutralization as an anti-obesity treatment; **Email:** atul.chopra@case.edu

DARCY FREEDMAN, PhD, MPH, Associate Professor of Epidemiology & Biostatistics, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Nutritional interventions & obesity; **Email:** daf96@case.edu

ROSE GUBITOSI-KLUG, MD, PhD, Professor of Pediatrics (Endocrinology) & Associate Professor of Pharmacology, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Epidemiology of long-term type I diabetes; **Email:** Rose.Gubitosi-Klug@uhhospitals.org

GRACE McCOMSEY, MD, Professor of Pediatrics & Division Chief of Pediatric Infectious Diseases/ Rheumatology, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Gut integrity markers after HIV infection & metabolic complications; **Email:** Grace.McComsey@uhhospitals.org

Faculty Research & Case MSSRP T35 Mentoring Group 4: Kidney Diseases

WALTER BORON, MD, PhD, David N. & Inez Myers/Antonio Scarpa Professor & Department Chair of Physiology & Biophysics, CWRU SoM; **Research:** RTPT- δ in acid-base disturbances in renal proximal tubes; **Email:** walter.boron@case.edu

LESLIE BRUGGEMAN, PhD, Professor of Medicine (Nephrology & Hypertension), CCLCM-CWRU; **Research:** Molecular and cellular biology of chronic kidney diseases; **Email:** bruggel@ccf.org

KATHERINE DELL, MD, Staff Scientist, Pediatric Nephrology, Cleveland Clinic Pediatric Institute; Professor of Pediatrics (Nephrology), CCLCM-CWRU; **Research:** Imaging of ARPKD in kidney disease; **Email:** dellk@ccf.org

CHRISTOPHER FLASK, PhD, Assistant Professor of Radiology, Pediatrics & Biomedical Engineering, CWRU SoM and School of Engineering; **Research:** Imaging of ARPKD in kidney disease; **Email:** caf@case.edu

STANLEY HAZEN, MD, PhD, Van Bleeksma Chair of Vascular Cell Biology & Artherosclerosis, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; **Research:** Diet-induced gut microbiota-mediated pathways & chronic kidney disease; **Email:** HAZENS@ccf.org

JOHN O'TOOLE, MD, Staff Scientist, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Associate Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU & CWRU SoM; **Research:** Genetics of human kidney disease; **Email:** john.otoole2@case.edu

MAHBOOB RAHMAN, MD, Professor of Medicine (Nephrology & Hypertension), CWRU SoM; **Research:** Predictors of chronic renal insufficiency progression; **Email:** Mahboob.Rahman@uhhospitals.org

JEFFREY SCHELLING, MD, Professor of Medicine (Nephrology & Hypertension), CWRU SoM; **Research:** Mechanisms of chronic kidney disease in diabetes; **Email:** jrs15@case.edu

JOHN SEDOR, MD, Staff Scientist, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Professor of Physiology & Biophysics, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Nephropathy susceptibility genes and kidney disease; **Email:** sedorj@ccf.org

JONATHAN STAMLER, MD, Robert S. and Sylvia K. Reitman Family Foundation Distinguished Chair and Professor of Medicine & Professor of Biochemistry, CWRU SoM; **Research:** S-nitrosylation in renal function; **Email:** jonathan.stamler@case.edu

Faculty Research & Case MSSRP T35 Mentoring Group 5: GI & Liver Tumorigenesis

AMITBAH CHAK, MD, Professor of Medicine (GI & Liver Diseases) & Oncology, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Barrett's esophagus (BE) & esophageal adenocarcinoma, novel endoscopic imaging techniques; **Email:** amitabh.chak@uhhospitals.org

GREGORY COOPER, MD, Professor of Medicine (GI & Liver Diseases); **Research:** Screening & surveillance for colorectal cancer (CRC); **Email:** gregory.cooper@uhhospitals.org

AMAR DESAI, PhD, Assistant Professor, Case Comprehensive Cancer Center, CWRU SoM; **Research:** 15-PGDH in improving bone marrow transplantation; **Email:** abd10@case.edu

KISHORE GUDA, PhD, Associate Professor of Medicine, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Genetics of colon & esophageal cancer; **Email:** kkg5@case.edu

ZHENGHONG LEE, PhD, Professor of Radiology & Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Imaging technologies for liver cancer proliferation; **Email:** zxl11@case.edu

ANANT MADABHUSHI, PhD, F. Alex Nason Professor II of Biomedical Engineering, Professor of Pathology, Radiation Oncology, Radiology & Urology, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Quantitative image analysis & multi-modal correlation of large data sets for disease diagnostics and prognostics of GI cancers; **Email:** anant.madabhushi@case.edu

SANFORD MARKOWITZ, MD, PhD, Frances Wragg Ingalls Professor of Cancer Genetics, Genetics & Genome Sciences, & Molecular Biology & Microbiology, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Immunogenetics of CRC; **Email:** sxm10@case.edu

ZHENGHE WANG, PhD, Dale H. Cowan M.D. & Ruth Goodman Blum Professor of Cancer Research & Professor of Genetics & Genome Sciences, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Metabolic programming in CRC; **Email:** zxw22@case.edu

AGATA EXNER, PhD, Professor, Department of Radiology, CWRU SoM, **Research:** Image-guided drug delivery, ultrasound contrast agents, interventional oncology; **Email:** agata.exner@case.edu

ANDREW BLUM, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Esophageal adenocarcinoma (EAC) and its development from Barrett's esophagus (BE); **Email:** aeb27@case.edu

Faculty Research & Case MSSRP T35 Mentoring Group 6: Inflammation/Infection

DONALD ANTHONY, Jr, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Medicine (Infectious Diseases & HIV) & Pathology, CWRU SoM; HIV T32 Program Director; **Research:** Immune cell function during hepatitis C virus infection; **Email:** dda3@case.edu

ROBERT BONOMO, MD, Professor of Medicine, Pharmacology, Molecular Biology & Microbiology, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Genetic determinants of β -lactamases; **Email:** robert.bonomo@va.gov

SAHERA DIRAJLAL-FARGO, MS, DO, Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Pediatric HIV complications, inflammation & immune activation; **Email:** Sahera.Dirajlal-Fargo@uhhospitals.org

CURTIS DONSKEY, MD, Professor of Medicine (Infectious Diseases & HIV), CWRU SoM; **Research:** Mechanisms used by normal intestinal microflora to inhibit colonization by nosocomial pathogens; **Email:** cxd30@case.edu

CRAIG HODGES, PhD, Associate Professor of Genetics & Genome Sciences; **Research:** CFTR gene function & mouse models of cystic fibrosis; **Email:** craig.hodges@case.edu

ALAN LEVINE, PhD, Professor, Department of Molecular Biology and Microbiology, School of Medicine, **Research:** Intestinal Host Defense: Toggling between immune tolerance and immune protection; **Email:** alan.levine@case.edu

LAURA E. NAGY, PhD, Staff Scientist, Department of Inflammation & Immunity, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Professor of Physiology & Biophysics, CWRU; Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; **Research:** Alcohol-induced chronic hepatitis & diabetes; **Email:** nagyl3@ccf.org

PARAMESWARAN RAMKRISHNAN, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pathology & Biochemistry, CWRU SoM; **Research:** Signal transduction in autoimmunity & immunometabolism in type-1 diabetes & inflammation-induced colon cancer; **Email:** pxr150@case.edu

CARLOS SUBAUSTE, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine (Infectious Diseases & HIV Medicine), Ophthalmology & Pathology, CWRU SoM; **Research:** CD40 in immune responses to pathogens; diabetic inflammation; uses transgenic diabetic mouse; **Email:** carlos.subauste@case.edu

MICHELLE LONGWORTH, PhD, Associate Staff, Cleveland Clinic LRI; Associate Professor of Molecular Medicine, CCLCM-CWRU; **Research:** proteins that help to maintain DNA organization; **Email:** longwom@ccf.org