

28th Annual Symposium

Visual Sciences Research Center

Schedule

Friday, May 29, 2026

- 8:15 Continental Breakfast
- 9:00 **Irina Pikuleva**
Professor and Vice Chair of Research, Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences
Case Western Reserve University
Opening Remarks
- 9:10 **Johannes Von Lintig**
Professor, Pharmacology
Case Western Reserve University
Training Grant Update

Session 1 - Moderator: Johannes Von Lintig

- 9:15 **Mahip Kalra**
Graduate Student, Pharmacology
Johannes Von Lintig Lab
Developing Structural and Kinetic Platforms to Define the Mechanism of BCO2-Mediated Carotenoid Metabolism
- 9:35 **Jaclyn Swigris**
Graduate Student, Pharmacology
Marcin Golczak Lab
Targeting retinoid metabolism to mitigate corneal damage in dry eye
- 9:55 **Quinn Caron**
Graduate Student, Cleveland Clinic Research
Bela Anand-Apte Lab
Bruch's Membrane Biomechanics Govern Outer Blood-Retinal Barrier Integrity
- 10:15 **Laurence Johnson**
Graduate Student, University of Akron
Jordan Renna Lab
Outer Retinal Ribbons: A Comparative Approach to Exploring a Novel Scotopic Circuit
- 10:35 **Break**

Keynote Presentation – Introduction: Irina Pikuleva

- 10:50 **David J. Calkins**
Professor, Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences
Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Treating the Untreatable: A Journey Through Neurodegeneration in Glaucoma

11:50 – 1:40 Lunch and Poster Session

Session 2 - Moderator: Shigemi Matsuyama

- 1:40 **Nicole El-Darzi**
Research Assistant, Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences
Irina Pikuleva Lab
Studies of APOJ and CYP46A1 link retinal cholesterol and glaucoma
- 2:00 **Miljan Terzic**
Graduate Student, Northeast Ohio Medical University
Samuel Crish Lab
Glial-axonal interactions in glaucoma
- 2:20 **Anand Bhushan**
Research Associate, Cleveland Clinic Research
K.P. Connie Tam Lab
Epithelial keratin 6a positively regulates multiple aspects of corneal wound healing and nerve regeneration after injury
- 2:40 **Made Airanthi K Widjaja-Adhi**
Research Scientist, Pharmacology
Marcin Golczak Lab
Corneal Nerve Neuroplasticity in Evaporative Dry Eye Disease: Evidence from an Awat2^{-/-} Mouse Model
- 3:00 **Break**

Session 3 - Moderator: Patricia Taylor

- 3:15 **Scott Howell**
Research Scientist, Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences
Patricia Taylor Lab
Diabetes-Mediated STEAP4 Impacts the Development of Diabetic Retinopathy
- 3:35 **Jonah Scott-McKean**
Research Associate, Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences
Shigemi Matsuyama Lab
Mouse genetic studies revealed an unexpected dual role of Bax in inducing apoptosis and maintaining autophagy flux in multiple models of Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP)
- 3:55 **Mingda Liu**
Graduate Student, Pharmacology
Beata Jastrzebska Lab
Utilizing non-retinoid pharmacochaperone small molecules to target retinal degeneration caused by unliganded cone opsin in Stra6^{-/-} mice
- 4:15 **Sreelakshmi Vasudevan**
Postdoctoral Scholar, Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences
Paul Park Lab
Characterization of an M-Opsin mutation in blue cone monochromacy

Closing Remarks - Douglas Rhee

- 4:35 Reception in the Wolstein Research Building Lobby