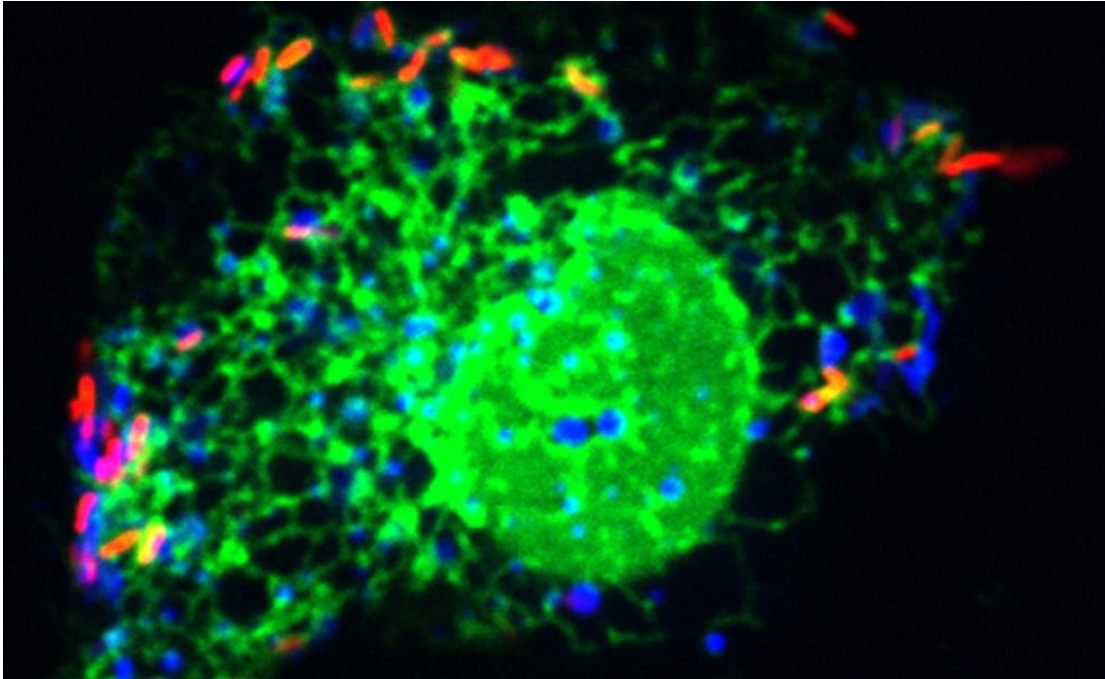


## ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS



Pictured above: A [UT Southwestern study](#) in Dr. Vincent Tagliabracci's laboratory suggests that *Legionella* (red) oscillates between the endoplasmic reticulum (green), and bubble- or tube-shaped structures (blue) to help create or sustain a structure that houses this bacterium during infection. Credit: Ting-Sung Hsieh

## Announcing the 2021 Endowed Scholars

Seven promising early career investigators constitute the newest cohort of the [Endowed Scholars Program in Medical Science](#).

Funded by a private endowment and institutional funds, the Endowed Scholars Program provides generous financial support over four years to newly appointed tenure-track assistant professors in a UTSW basic science or clinical department.

These new members of the faculty get the chance to tackle new and innovative research problems and take risks, supported by distinguished senior scientist mentors. Endowed scholars also have access to outstanding trainees enrolled in graduate programs and 18 core facilities with the latest equipment and knowledge necessary to assist in their work.

Established in 1998, the Endowed Scholars Program has enabled UT Southwestern to recruit 126 premier scientists from around the country and world. Of these, to date eight have become Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigators, two have been elected to the National Academy of Sciences, four received the Norman Hackerman Award, five received an Edith and Peter O'Donnell Award, and two are current department chairs at UT Southwestern.

The tremendous success of the program can be attributed to the Endowed Scholar Committee and the dedication of Dr. Eric N. Olson, who served as Chair from 2007 to 2020. The current committee is chaired by

**Additional scholar programs** give our faculty access to resources and mentorship to further their research and careers.

Learn more about these scholar programs:

[Dedman Scholar Awards](#)

[Disease-Oriented Clinical Scholars](#)

[Frenkel Clinical Scholars Program](#)

Dr. David Mangelsdorf, and members include: Dr. Joseph Goldstein, Dr. Helen Hobbs, Dr. Olson, Dr. Marc Diamond, Dr. Lora Hooper, Dr. W. Lee Kraus, Dr. Sean J. Morrison, Dr. Duoqia Pan, Dr. Margaret Phillips, and Dr. Michael Rosen.

[Peter O'Donnell Jr.  
Brain Institute  
Clinical  
Neuroscience  
Scholars Program](#)

[Texas Health  
Resources Clinical  
Scholars Program](#)

Welcome to the Class of 2021 Endowed Scholars:

**Dr. Sebastian Choi**, recruited jointly by the Departments of Psychiatry and Anesthesiology and Pain Management.

**Dr. Kevin Forsberg**, recruited by the Department of Microbiology.

**Dr. Yuuki Obata**, recruited jointly by the Departments of Immunology and Neuroscience.

**Dr. Allan Pool**, jointly recruited by the Department of Neuroscience, the Peter O'Donnell Jr. Brain Institute, and the Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Management.

**Dr. Courtney Schroeder**, recruited by the Department of Pharmacology.

**Dr. Boyuan Wang**, recruited by the Department of Pharmacology.

**Dr. Haiyang Yu**, jointly recruited by the O'Donnell Brain Institute, the Center for Alzheimer's and Neurodegenerative Diseases, and the Department of Molecular Biology.

## Consistent Strength in Research

Once again, [UT Southwestern tops the Nature Index for health care institutions](#) in the biomedical sciences category. The index compiles affiliation information from research articles published in 82 premier science journals, providing perspective on high-quality scientific discoveries around the globe. UTSW's ranking is a testament to the consistent strength and impact of our research community, and our institution's commitment to cultivating an atmosphere of rigorous science through multidisciplinary collaboration where scientists can perform at their best.

## Faculty Awards

### HHMI Investigators



**Vincent Tagliabracci, Ph.D.**  
Molecular Biology



**Benjamin Tu, Ph.D.**  
Biochemistry

Drs. Vincent Tagliabracci and Benjamin Tu were named [Howard Hughes Medical Institute \(HHMI\) Investigators](#).

The program supports about 280 scientists of the highest caliber conducting basic biomedical research in more than 60 institutions across the U. S., investing roughly \$9 million per investigator over a seven-year term.

Dr. Tagliabracci's lab studies how proteins are modified by phosphorylation and other small molecules – the addition of which can change the proteins' activity – by a novel family of enzymes

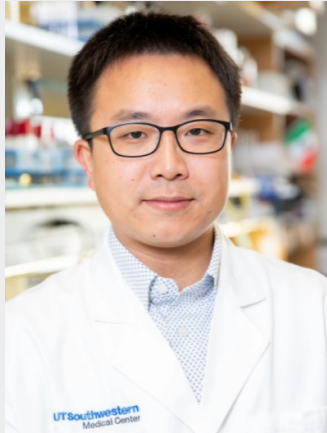
called pseudokineses. Dr. Tu's lab is investigating how fundamental cellular processes such as cell growth and division, transcription, translation, mitochondrial homeostasis, and autophagy are coordinated with the metabolic state of the cell.

Currently, UT Southwestern has 14 of the 18 HHMI Investigators in Texas and, as a single institution, ranks fourth in the nation with this prestigious recognition surpassed only by Stanford, UC Berkeley, and the Rockefeller University.

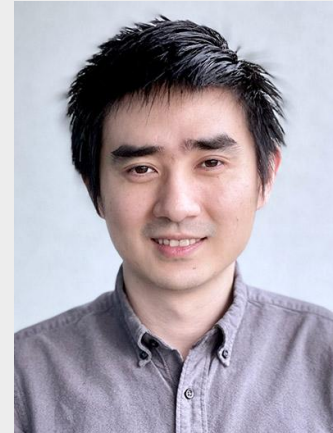
## NIH Director's New Innovator Award



**Lorena Saelices Gomez, Ph.D.**  
Center for Alzheimer's and  
Neurodegenerative Diseases  
Biophysics



**Lu Sun, Ph.D.**  
Molecular Biology



**Jian Zhou, Ph.D.**  
Lyda Hill Department of  
Bioinformatics

Drs. Lorena Saelices Gomez, Lu Sun, and Jian Zhou received the [NIH Director's New Innovator Award](#).

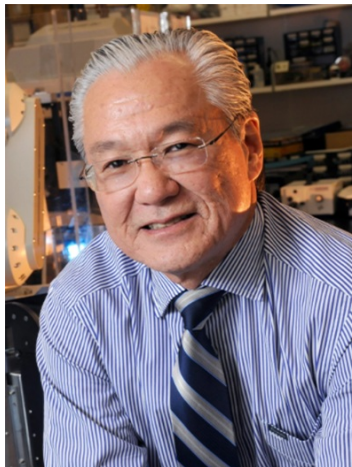
This highly competitive award supports exceptionally creative early career investigators who propose innovative, high-impact projects in the biomedical, behavioral, or social sciences. Each will receive a \$1.5 million grant spread across five years to support their research.

Dr. Saelices Gomez is [elucidating the structures of amyloid fibrils](#), a step toward developing better diagnostics and therapies for amyloid diseases. Dr. Sun is investigating the [communication between neurons and supporting glial cells](#), which make up about half the cells in the brain. Dr. Zhou is leading research to understand [how the sequence and 3D structure of chromosomal DNA modulates gene regulation](#) to affect health and disease.

## NIH Director's Transformative Research Award



**Todd Roberts, Ph.D.**  
Neuroscience  
Peter O'Donnell Jr.  
Brain Institute



**Joseph Takahashi, Ph.D.**  
Neuroscience



**F. Kent Hamra, Ph.D.**  
Obstetrics and Gynecology



Drs. Todd Roberts, Joseph Takahashi and F. Kent Hamra will share an [NIH Director's Transformative Research Award](#).

The grant, established in 2009, supports individuals or teams proposing cross-cutting, interdisciplinary approaches to research that challenges existing paradigms.

The group will receive \$4.4 million over five years to further their work on the [genetic basis of vocal imitation abilities](#).

## DISD STEM School Town Hall Tonight

UT Southwestern is partnering with the Dallas Independent School District to grow local STEM-based education offerings for youth. The school district is establishing a new [Medical District PK-8 Biomedical School](#), set to open in fall 2022, that will be located on our campus off Forest Park Road. Enrollment will begin with prekindergarten through first grade and add an additional grade level each year, up to eighth grade. Learn more about this exciting opportunity to connect children with real-world science during this evening's Town Hall. [Register for the event](#).



## 2021 Texas State Employee Charitable Campaign



From now through Nov. 30, we encourage faculty members to participate in the 2021 State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) – the only authorized workplace charitable giving campaign for state agency and higher education employees in Texas.

The impact of a single donation cannot be overstated, nor can the combined generosity of the UT Southwestern community. There are [several hundred state-vetted charities](#) to select from, so you can give to the causes and organizations that speak to you.

UT Southwestern is aiming to raise \$350,000 this year. To learn how to donate, visit the [SECC page on MyUTSW](#).

## Upcoming Virtual Events

### Fall Female Faculty Reception

This year's program - Impact of the Pandemic on our Lives: Insights from UTSW Faculty - features Dr. Susan Matulevicius, Assistant Dean of Faculty Wellness, and Dr. Kala Bailey, Chief of Service in the Department of Psychiatry, followed by a panel discussion with Drs. Tamia Harris-Tryon, Alecia Nero and Shreya Rao.

- Thursday, Oct. 21, 5-6:30 p.m. Join via [Zoom](#); meeting ID: 862 6550 8248, passcode: 679493.



### Promotion and Tenure (P&T) Workshops

Following last month's event, "Demystifying the Promotion and Tenure Process," the P&T Committee is hosting a series of workshops to ensure that faculty members understand the academic advancement timeline and criteria for different academic ranks and tracks.

- Clinical Scholar Track, Thursday, Oct. 21 at noon. [Register](#) to attend.
- Tenure-Accruing/Tenure Track, Thursday, Nov. 4 at noon. [Register](#) to attend.

### Health Equity Discussion Group

To continue the conversations started by the series of racial bias webinars, the Health Equity

Discussion Group gets together quarterly to talk about a book that highlights underrepresented experiences. Next month, the group will discuss "This is How it Always Is" by Laurie Frankel.

- Wednesday, Nov. 3 at 5 p.m. [Register](#) to attend.
- Friday, Nov. 5 at noon. [Register](#) to attend.

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## Staying Connected, Informed, and Involved

Use our social media channels to connect with colleagues and stay in the know about happenings across campus. Visit our [archive](#) to review past editions. Submit feedback through our [RedCap form](#).

