



## The Georgetown-Howard Universities Center for Clinical & Translational Science Mentored Career Development Core

*Announces:*

### **2024 KL2 Scholars**

The Georgetown-Howard Universities Center for Clinical and Translational Science (GHUCCTS) is pleased to announce the appointment of **Aline M. A. de Souza, PhD as the 1<sup>st</sup> KL2 Scholar selected in our highly-competitive 2024 cycle**. This new awardee, her research projects, and training plan are emblematic of our program objectives in that they match a highly-promising junior faculty scholar with a mentor team that includes senior colleagues from across disciplines, departments, campuses, and institutions to pursue research that depends upon collaborations and methods from outside the scholars' discipline, local research environment, or past experiences.

The GHUCCTS KL2 program is built on the original National Institutes of Health "roadmap" K12 Clinical and Translational Research Scholars program and is similar to individual K-series awards, by providing up to three years of protected time and research support, focused on developing early-career faculty investigators through a multidisciplinary-mentored research experience to enable their success as independent, extramurally-funded investigators, preferably in programs of multidisciplinary, collaborative translational team science.

**Aline M. A. de Souza, PhD**, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicine, Division of Nephrology & Hypertension at Georgetown University. Dr. De Souza will investigate "Long-term physiological consequences after recovery from severe caloric restriction." She seeks to understand why people develop heart and kidney problems after recovering from a period of malnutrition or very low-calorie intake with the ultimate goal of defining the best treatment to prevent this long-term cardiovascular disease. Dr. De Souza is co-mentored by Dr. Carolyn Ecelbarger from the Georgetown Department of Medicine, Dr. Nawar Shara from MedStar Health Research Institute, and by Drs. Chris Albanese and Olga Rodrigues from the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center at Georgetown University Medical Center.

Dr. de Souza will join our continuing KL2 Scholars including:

**Bonnie C. Carney, PhD**, is a Research Scientist in the Burn Research Laboratory at MedStar Health Research Institute and an Assistant Professor in the Departments of Biochemistry and Surgery at Georgetown University Medical Center. Her major project focuses on “Uncovering the mechanistic pathophysiology behind post-burn hypopigmented hypertrophic scar development”. She will investigate extrinsic/non-autonomous and intrinsic/autonomous melanocyte alterations in cells and tissues derived from post-burn hypertrophic scar with altered pigmentation. Her ultimate goal is to elucidate mechanisms of post-burn dyschromia in order to improve patient outcomes. She is co-mentored by Dr. Jeffrey Shupp, Director of the Burn Center and the Firefighters’ Burn and Surgical Research Laboratory at MedStar Washington Hospital Center, Dr. Melissa Harris (University of Alabama, Birmingham), Dr. Robert Judson-Torres (University of Utah), and Dr. Ginette Okoye (Howard University College of Medicine).

**Erica E. Coates, PhD**, an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Georgetown, is conducting a longitudinal study on sociocultural stressors and protective factors for Black families with young children, which will inform a culturally adapted model of parent-child interaction therapy that incorporates racial socialization, on which she will gather preliminary acceptability and feasibility data. She is co-mentored by Dr. Celene Domitrovich from the Department of Psychiatry at Georgetown and Dr. Velma McBride Murry at Vanderbilt University.

**Amanda Blair Spence, MD** an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Georgetown who seeks to understand the contributions of biology, behavior, and social determinants to the development and manifestation of comorbidities in persons living with HIV to then inform interventions to improve health outcomes. She is mentored by Drs. Seble Kassaye, from the Division of Infectious Disease, and Lucile Adams-Campbell, from the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center, both at Georgetown University Medical Center.

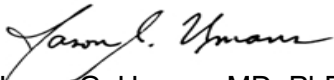
**Christina Marea, PhD, MA, FACNM**, a certified nurse midwife and Assistant Professor in the Georgetown University School of Nursing (GUSON). Dr. Marea is investigating the feasibility, acceptability and preliminary effectiveness of a 12-month model of postpartum care to address the negative health effects of structural racism for birthing people in Washington DC. Dr. Marea’s mentoring team includes Dr. Alejandra Hurtado de Mendoza, a former KL2 scholar herself, Dr. Kristi Graves, and Dr. Arnold Potosky, all members of the Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center at Georgetown University Medical Center.

**Maurice B. Fluitt, PhD**, an Assistant Professor at the Howard University College of Medicine . Dr. Fluitt is investigating the use of microRNAs as early predictive biomarkers and mediators of autophagic response in diabetic kidney disease. Dr. Fluitt’s mentoring team includes Dr. Ben Afzali from the Immunoregulation Section of the Kidney Disease Branch at the NIDDK, Drs. Gail Nunlee-Bland and Hassan Ashktorab from the Department of Medicine at Howard University, Dr. Carolyn Ecelbarger from the Department of Medicine at Georgetown University, and Dr. Alison Kriegel from the Department of Physiology at the Medical College of Wisconsin.

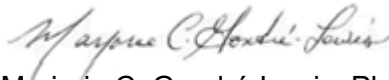
**Roxanne Mirabal-Beltran, PhD RN**, an Assistant Professor in the Department of Professional Nursing Practice at the Georgetown University School of Nursing & Health Studies. Dr. Mirabal-Beltran is investigating the effect of an educational intervention on maternal healthcare

knowledge of women living in DC's Ward 5 and the feasibility of having the intervention delivered in community laundromats. She is mentored by Drs. Laura Linnan, from the Department of Health Behavior at the Gillings School of Global Public Health at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Linda Gallo, from the Department of Psychology at San Diego State University and Alejandra Hurtado de Mendoza, at Georgetown.

Please join us in congratulating our new and continuing KL2 scholars.



Jason G. Umans, MD, PhD  
Associate Professor and KL2  
Program Director



Marjorie C. Gondré-Lewis, PhD  
Professor and KL2 Associate  
Program Director



Kathryn Sandberg, PhD  
Professor and Associate Program  
Director