OHSU

2025

OHSU Innovation Awards

Each year, Oregon Health & Science University celebrates outstanding individuals and teams driving innovation to improve lives in Oregon and beyond. The 2025 OHSU Innovation Awards honor those who are pushing the boundaries of science, technology and health care to create transformative products and partnerships. This year's 2025 Innovation Awardees showcase innovators working on a variety of projects to improve human health. From computational biology software designed to enhance cancer research to cutting-edge solutions for detecting and monitoring human diseases, the work being recognized is paving the way for better outcomes and healthier futures.

In addition to celebrating our award recipients, we also recognize the larger OHSU innovation community. Over the past year, OHSU members have achieved significant milestones, including the issuance of U.S. patents and licensing of intellectual property. These accomplishments are crucial in transforming discoveries into real-world solutions, creating partnerships that turn visionary research into tangible products and services to benefit society.

Congratulations to this year's awardees and to everyone contributing to OHSU's vibrant innovation ecosystem. We look forward to the continued impact our innovators will make in 2025 and beyond.

Travis Cook, M.S., M.B.A., CLP

SENIOR DIRECTOR, TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Aditi Martin, Ph.D.

SENIOR DIRECTOR, COLLABORATIONS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CREATORS OF LICENSED TECHNOLOGIES

P. Holland Alday

Bruce Branchaud

J. Peter Campbell

Jessie May Cartier

Matthew Chang

Yu-Jui (Roger) Chiu

Michael Cohen

Mingchong Dai

Joseph Stone Doggett

Craig Dorrell

Brian Druker

Rhonda Eppelsheimer

Mark Flory

Markus Grompe

Jian Guo

Yukun Guo

Leslie Hammer

David Huang

Peter Jacobs

Jeffrey Jensen

Yali Jia

Yifan Jian

Don Kain

Ashley Klein

Joseph Leitschuh

Philberta Leung

Sanjay Malhotra

Andy Mendoza

Hiroyuki Nakai

Shuibin Ni

Aaron Nilsen

Oregon Hearing Research Center

Brian O'Roak

Jana Peterson-Besse

Joseph Pinsonault

Matthew Rames

Srivathsan Ranganathan

Michael Riscoe

Kevin Schilling

Gulsu Sener

Ov Slayden

Dhanir Tailor

Kai Tao

Amita Tiyaboonchai

Eugene Tu

Anne Vonada

Jie Wang

Knight Cancer Institute BioLibrary

INVENTORS OF ISSUED U.S. PATENTS

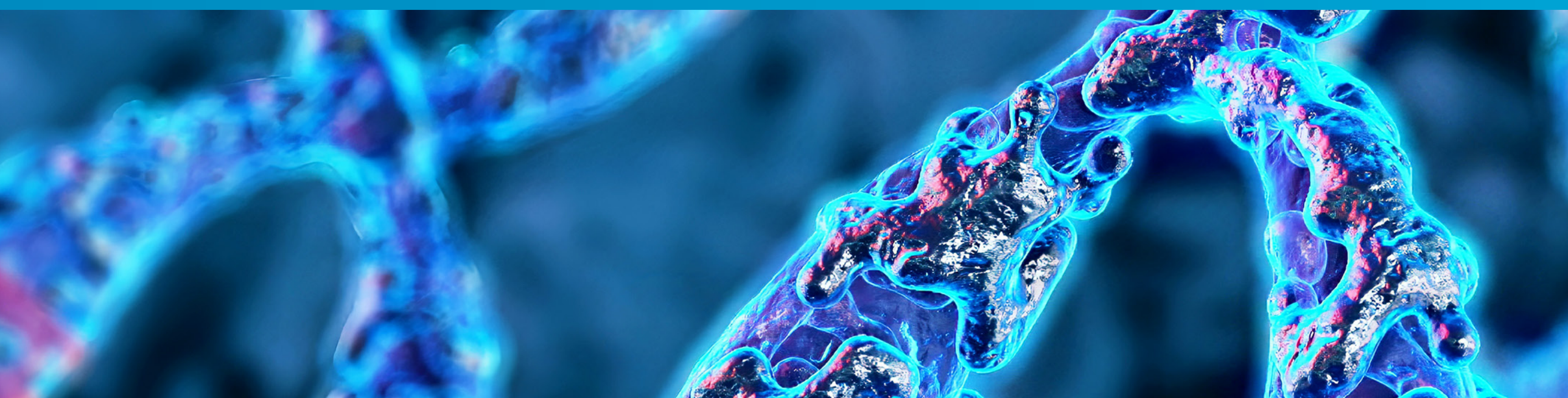
Connor Barth
Michael Cohen
Summer Gibbs
Yukun Guo
Alec Hirsch
David Huang
Yali Jia
Angelo Lipira
Christina Lorentz
Rob Meza-Romero
Hiroyuki Nakai
Halina Offner
Jessica Smith
Daniel Streblow
Erik Tucker
Arthur Vandenbark
Michael Wallisch
Jie Wang
Lei Wang
Wassana Yantasee

INDUCTEE IN THE OHSU CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF INVENTORS

Yan Li
Hiroyuki Nakai

NEW COMPANIES BASED ON OHSU TECHNOLOGY

BoneStrong Therapeutics
iFocus Imaging
OryGyn Medical Devices
Verendus Pharma



EARLY CAREER INNOVATOR

Kenneth Riley

PH.D. CANDIDATE, DEPARTMENT OF BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING

ACED PH.D. SCHOLAR, CANCER EARLY DETECTION ADVANCED RESEARCH CENTER, OHSU KNIGHT CANCER INSTITUTE, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Early Career Innovator Award is presented to an OHSU early-career member, such as a student, postdoctoral fellow or medical resident, who possesses a passion for innovation and for developing technologies to solve real-world problems. They work closely with the innovation ecosystems within and outside of OHSU to prepare their innovations for commercial success.

Epigenetics is the study of changes in DNA and the chromosome structure that control whether genes are turned on or off. These changes can play a role in the development and spread of diseases. Monitoring these changes can provide insights into how diseases start and how patients respond to treatments. Current methods to evaluate epigenetic changes in patients rely on combining multiple laboratory methods and often require invasive tissue biopsies.

As a graduate student in the laboratory of Thuy Ngo, Ph.D., Kenneth Riley is developing a new diagnostic technology, which could allow clinicians and scientists to detect genome-wide epigenetic changes non-invasively from a standard blood sample and with a single test. This technique could have the power to unlock new insights for multiple disease states and aid in the development of new therapeutic and diagnostic targets. Beyond the development of the technology itself, Riley is an actively engaged and self-motivated innovator, who worked closely with OHSU Technology Transfer to develop patent and commercialization strategies to one day bring this technology to the clinic.

CAREER INNOVATION EXCELLENCE

David M. Lewinsohn, M.D., Ph.D.

PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE, DIVISION OF PULMONARY AND CRITICAL CARE MEDICINE, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Deborah A. Lewinsohn, M.D.

PROFESSOR OF PEDIATRICS, DIVISION OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

WAYNE L. TRACY PROFESSOR OF PEDIATRIC INFECTIOUS DISEASE, PEDIATRICS, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The Career Innovation Excellence Award is presented to an OHSU member, or team of OHSU members, who has shown themselves to be an accomplished inventor and entrepreneur over the course of their career. They have demonstrated a true passion for innovation, been successful in engaging and cultivating partnerships with industry, and worked tirelessly to translate their discoveries into solutions for real-world problems and the benefit of society.

Tuberculosis, TB, remains a major health challenge, particularly in making accurate diagnostics accessible in low-resource regions of the world where TB is still common. The jointly run laboratory of David and Deborah Lewinsohn has dedicated years of research into immunology, focusing particularly on understanding why young children are more vulnerable to TB. By studying the body's immune response to Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacteria that causes TB, the Lewinsohn lab aims to improve vaccines and diagnostic tests for the disease.

Throughout their careers the Lewinsohns have been prolific innovators, disclosing 23 new technology disclosures during their time at OHSU. Many of these disclosures have focused on identifying improved targets for tuberculosis diagnostics. In 2011, the Lewinsohns co-founded the OHSU startup company ViTi, which formed an important partnership with a leader in the diagnostics industry, to develop a new test for pulmonary TB in children. As part of this work, the Lewinsohns have also spent years working in Africa to improve health care for infectious diseases in underserved communities.

NEW INNOVATORS OF THE YEAR

Katie Blise, Ph.D.

COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGIST 3, BRENDEN-COLSON CENTER FOR PANCREATIC CARE, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Sam Sivagnanam, M.S.

COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGIST 4, CELL, DEVELOPMENTAL, AND CANCER BIOLOGY, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

The New Innovator of the Year Award is presented to an OHSU member, or team of OHSU members, who have recently disclosed their first technology to OHSU. They demonstrate a true passion for advancing technology development and collaborating with various innovator ecosystems within and outside of OHSU. They demonstrate an eagerness to see their discoveries translate into tangible solutions for societal benefit.

Over the past decade, new lab techniques have given scientists unprecedented access to the inner workings of diseased tissues and cells. For example, these techniques now allow scientists to look at the the cellular composition and spatial organization of tumors from a single test. While these methods generate large amounts of data on many diseases, interpreting and making sense of that data has been a challenge.

Katie Blise and Sam Sivagnanam are computational biologists developing new software to help scientists quickly visualize and interpret large datasets. This software removes technical barriers, empowering all researchers to conduct efficient, sophisticated, and reproducible analysis of spatial biology datasets. As innovators, Blise and Sivagnanam have engaged multiple resources at OHSU to advance their technology, participating in the commercialization readiness program. They also received a 2024 grant from the Biomedical Innovation Program to further advance their software and take it to market.

PARTNERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARD

Joanna Pucilowska, M.S., Ph.D.

DIRECTOR, IMMUNE MONITORING AND CANCER OMICS SERVICES

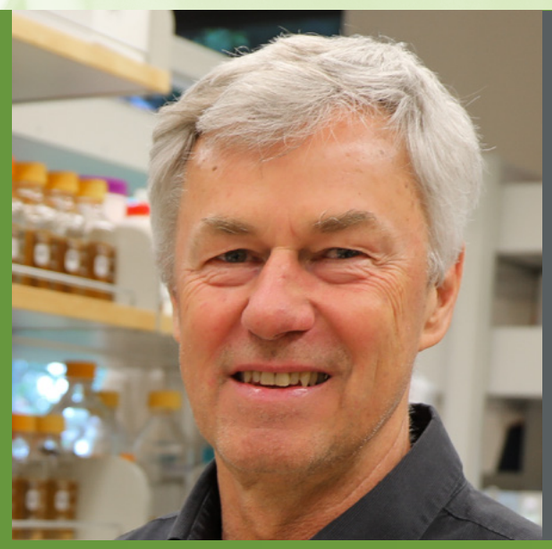
SENIOR DIRECTOR, BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATIONS, KNIGHT DIAGNOSTIC LABS

The Partnership Excellence Award is presented to an OHSU employee who demonstrates an entrepreneurial spirit and works closely with the OHSU Innovates commercialization network to foster and encourage collaborations. They demonstrate a successful track-record of establishing and developing new partnerships to advance innovative research.

Understanding how the body's immune system responds to treatments can be critical for understanding why some patients respond to a treatment and others do not, especially in cancer research where drug resistance is common. Joanna Pucilowska has played a key role in launching the Immune Monitoring and Cancer Omics, or IMCO, services at the OHSU Knight Diagnostics Laboratory. These services allow for precise monitoring of patient immune responses, with the goal of improving or developing new standards in patient care.

As director of IMCO, Pucilowska has built partnerships with academic, government and industry leaders by providing comprehensive state of-the-art research and assays in immune monitoring. She has a proven track record of working closely with partners to deliver the specific services needed for each study. Over the past four years, she has facilitated more than 80 collaborations through IMCO, some of which have grown into strong, multifaceted partnerships. These projects have provided valuable insights into drug effectiveness in human trials, including international, multi-institutional clinical trials, and advanced novel technologies being developed by biotech diagnostic companies.

NAI FELLOW



Klaus Früh, Ph.D.

PROFESSOR, VACCINE AND GENE THERAPY INSTITUTE

Fellows of the National Academy of Inventors (NAI) are recognized for their prolific spirit of innovation in creating or facilitating outstanding inventions that have made a tangible impact on quality of life, economic development and the welfare of society. Election to NAI Fellow status is the highest professional distinction accorded solely to academic inventors.

In late 2024, Klaus Früh was elected as a Fellow of the National Academy of Inventors, recognizing his significant contributions toward developing new vaccines. Früh and colleagues developed a new way to create vaccines, using genetically modified Human Cytomegalovirus (CMV). These CMV based vaccines can provide longer immunity than traditional vaccines and have shown promise for both infectious diseases and cancer. The CMV vaccine platform was the basis of OHSU startup company TomegaVax, for which Früh was a co-founder and served as the president and chief scientific officer. In 2016, TomegaVax was acquired by San Francisco-based Vir Biotechnology. The company is currently testing the platform in a human clinical trial for HIV.

Früh is a prolific researcher who has authored more than 140 publications, served as editor on several scientific journals and reviewed grants for the National Institutes of Health. He is also an inventor on 12 distinct patent families, with 21 issued U.S. patents and more than 120 international patents.

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