

Winter 2024



Cell Plasticity  
Organ Design



CPOD

## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTORS



Dear Colleagues, Alumni and Friends,

We are excited to share this newsletter highlighting activities and upcoming events for the Center for Cell Plasticity and Organ Design (CPOD). First, a warm welcome to Angela Palek who joins us as CPOD Center Administrator. Please reach out to her to say hello!



The CPOD Seminar Program picks up again this semester starting with a new series “New Year – New Faculty – Making Connections” where five new UM faculty will present their research. Please join us to hear their science and meet these new members of our community. External

invited speakers will visit us later in the Winter Semester. Look out for these notices and note that our Tuesday seminars vary in their location between BSRB ABC seminar rooms and 5915 Buhl.

We also include information on our competition for the 2024 CPOD Emerging Scholar. This has been an effective program to support new faculty as they work to establish their research programs and first independent funding (e.g., K08 or R01).



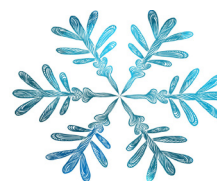
Finally, we are waiting for news about funding for the NIH T32 Training Program in Organogenesis. In the event of good news, we will have a number of graduate student training slots available this year; keep your eyes out for our notices!

We look forward to a vibrant year of activities!

Happy New Year and Best Wishes for 2024,

Linda Samuelson, Ph.D.  
CPOD Director

Benjamin Allen, Ph.D.  
CPOD Associate Director



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### CPOD New Staff

#### Angela Palek, Center Administrator

We are excited to welcome Angela to CPOD as our new Center Administrator. Prior to joining CPOD, Angela worked in the higher education field for over twelve years where her specific experience includes higher education administration, financial management, pre- and post-award research administration, business and financial operations, talent management, strategic planning, educational research, program outcomes and assessment, and supporting student success.



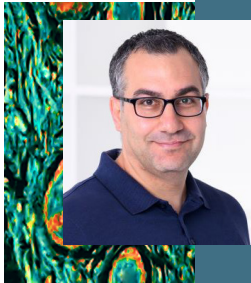
During Angela's tenure at Eastern Michigan University, she was

instrumental in the creation and development of the non-profit student food pantry that provides a resource for students facing food insecurity and has been a part of the leadership board since its inception.

Angela holds a Master's in Higher, Adult, and Lifelong Education from Michigan State University and a Bachelor's in Administration with an emphasis in Organizational Administration from Central Michigan University.

When Angela is not at CPOD, she enjoys spending time with her family and her furry family, reading, gardening, and hiking. Please stop by BSRB 2058A to say “hello”, Angela looks forward to meeting everyone!

# WELCOME NEW CPOD MEMBERS



**Hisham Bazzi, Ph.D.**  
Associate Professor  
Cell and Developmental Biology  
Medical School  
[Bazzi Lab](#)



**Nisha D'Silva, M.S.D., Ph.D.**  
Professor  
Periodontics and Oral Medicine  
School of Dentistry  
[D'Silva Lab](#)



**Stephanie Moon, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor  
Human Genetics  
Medical School  
[Moon Lab](#)



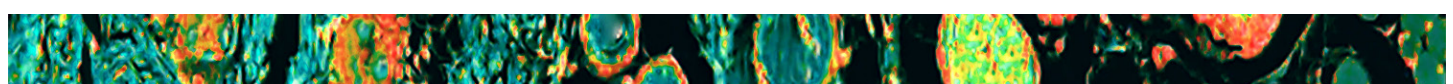
**Jonathan Sexton, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor  
Internal Medicine  
Gastroenterology & Hepatology  
Medical School  
[Sexton Lab](#)



**Andrew Tidball, Ph.D.**  
Research Assistant Professor  
Neurology  
Medical School  
[Tidball Lab](#)



**Rachel Zemans, M.D.**  
Professor  
Internal Medicine  
Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine  
Medical School  
[Zemans Lab](#)



## CPOD Emerging Scholars Spotlight



### Donnele Daley (2021-2023)



Dr. Daley is an Assistant Professor of Surgery and was a CPOD Emerging Scholar during 2021-2023. During her tenure in the CPOD Emerging Scholar Program, Dr. Daley's research was funded by the American College of Surgeons, the UM Center for Gastrointestinal Research, and the Rogel Cancer Center. In addition, Dr.

Daley was recently awarded a K08 from NHI-NCI for her research project "Microbial Dysbiosis in Pancreatic Cancer Initiation and Progression". Congratulations Donnele!

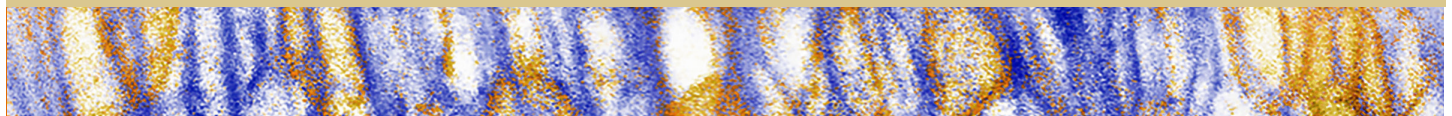


### Adam Abraham (2022-2024)



Dr. Abraham is a Research Investigator of Orthopaedic Surgery. Among Dr. Abraham's accomplishments as a CPOD Emerging Scholar, his research was funded by the Scoliosis Research Society. He currently has several research projects under review for funding, including a R01 from NIH-NIAMS for his research project

"Extracellular Matrix Regulation of Inflammatory Signaling in Tendon". Good luck Adam!



## CPOD Emerging Scholar Request For Applications



**Application deadline: April 8, 2024**



**Fellowship Start Date: July 1, 2024**



### Purpose:

The CPOD Emerging Scholars Program has been established to support early-stage faculty or senior postdoctoral fellows transitioning to a faculty position at the University of Michigan. This is a competitive award (\$25K total over a two-year period) that aims to provide mentoring for talented junior investigators working to develop an independent research program.

### CPOD Emerging Scholars Program

This competitive award program aims to help talented junior investigators launch a successful, externally supported independent research career. CPOD Scholars will receive funds to perform exploratory studies or generate a new research model, and an individualized mentoring committee to guide project development and grant submission. This program takes advantage of the broad research base of Center members and extends our training impact in a new and exciting direction.

### Eligibility:

- The applicant must have a full-time faculty appointment at the University of Michigan or have an active full-time faculty appointment by the time funding takes effect;
- Be an early-stage faculty or senior postdoctoral fellow transitioning to a faculty position at the University of Michigan;
- The research project must fit the goals of the CPOD Mission Statement;
- The Scholar must commit to submitting an external career development award (e.g., K01, K08) or research grant (e.g., R01, R21) within the first year of the award;
- And the Scholar (or their mentor) does not have to be a CPOD Center Member.

CPOD does not consider the following eligible:

- Those who have already received R or K type (or equivalent) funding are not eligible for this fellowship;
- Those who have already received startup or grant funds in the amount of \$500,000 or more.



To apply, visit our [Emerging Scholars Program webpage](#)



## CPOD EVENTS & SEMINARS

We are excited to announce our Winter 2024 CPOD Seminar Series. We have 11 invited speakers who will be on campus to meet faculty, trainees, and to present their research. During our January and February Seminar Series titled “New Year - New Faculty - Making Connections”, we will introduce five new faculty from across the University of Michigan campus. Later in the Winter Semester, we will have several external invited speakers visiting our UM campus. Check out who we’ve scheduled so far!



For a detailed event and seminar schedule, visit our [Events & Seminars](#) webpage or QR code.

### New Year - New Faculty - Making Connections



**WINTER  
2024**



#### **JANUARY 2024**



**23rd**, 4:00PM  
BSRB ABC Seminar Rooms  
**David Lorberbaum, Ph.D.**  
University of Michigan  
*“Intersecting cell signaling pathways and transcription factors that regulate pancreas development, function, and disease”*  
[Lorberbaum Lab](#)

**30th**, 4:00PM  
BSRB ABC Seminar Rooms  
**Hisham Bazzi, Ph.D.**  
University of Michigan  
*“Cell cycle and cell fate during skin development”*  
[Bazzi Lab](#)



#### **FEBRUARY 2024**

**6TH**, 4:00PM  
BSRB ABC Seminar Rooms  
**Tomer Stern, Ph.D.**  
University of Michigan  
*“Deconstructing gastrulation at single cell resolution”*  
[Stern Lab](#)

**13TH**, 4:00PM  
Buhl 5915  
**Michelle Hastings, Ph.D.**  
University of Michigan  
*“RNA Therapeutics: Targeting RNA to Modulate Gene Expression and Treat Disease”*  
[Hastings Lab](#)

**27TH**, 4:00PM  
Buhl 5915  
**Agnieszka Lukaszewicz, Ph.D.**  
University of Michigan  
*“Germline mutagenesis at meiotic double-strand breaks”*  
[Lukaszewicz Lab](#)



### CPOD External Speakers

#### **MARCH 2024**

**26TH**, 4:00PM  
Buhl 5915  
**Joan Jorgensen, Ph.D.**  
University of Wisconsin  
Seminar Title: TBD  
[Jorgensen Lab](#)



#### **APRIL 2024**

**16TH**, 4:00PM  
Buhl 5915  
**Darrell Kotton, M.D.**  
Boston University  
Seminar Title: TBD  
[Kotton Lab](#)



#### **MAY 2024**

**21st**, 4:00PM  
Location: TBD  
**Deepika Vasudevan, Ph.D.**  
University of Pittsburgh  
Seminar Title: TBD  
[Vasudevan Lab](#)



**28TH**, 4:00PM  
BSRB ABC Seminar Rooms  
**David MacPherson, Ph.D.**  
Fred Hutchinson Cancer Center  
Seminar Title: TBD  
[MacPherson Lab](#)

We look forward to seeing you at our events and seminars!



## David Lorberbaum



*Pictured: Dr. David Lorberbaum with members of his lab.*

- 1. What years were you a trainee?** I did my PhD from 2010-2016 and was part of the Center for Organogenesis between 2014-2016
- 2. Who was your faculty mentor(s)?** Dr. Scott Barolo
- 3. What was your research area and Organogenesis project?** My research focused on defining the cis-regulatory mechanisms that regulate the Hedgehog signaling pathway during development. It focused mainly on the receptor and direct target of the pathway, Patched, using *Drosophila melanogaster* as our model system.
- 4. What did you do after the completion of your training and what are you doing now?** I completed a postdoctoral fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Lori Sussel at the University of Colorado and am now an assistant professor in the Department of Pharmacology and member of the Caswell Diabetes Institute here at the University of Michigan.
- 5. What did you learn during your training that is most relevant to your current position?** Being a trainee at Michigan and member of the Center for Organogenesis offered exceptionally strong support in many aspects of my career, but one thing that stuck out the most was the breadth of expertise within this community and how collaborative everybody was and continues to be. So, probably the most relevant lesson that I learned during my training was to form strong collaborations and find/keep mentors who would continue to support me in both scientific and career advancement.
- 6. What has been the most surprising or unexpected experience to date in your career?** The most surprising (and exciting) experience was probably an unexpected result I got early in my postdoctoral fellowship. I was working on a new project that explored the intersection of a cell signaling pathway and

transcription factor (TF) during pancreas development using mice as a model. If I knocked out this particular TF during pancreas development, there was almost no phenotype. If I impaired the signaling pathway during pancreas development there was a minor phenotype. So, when I simultaneously knocked out the TF and impaired the signaling pathway I did not expect to see much. However, the lone mouse in the litter with the compound genotype became sick early on and when I completed the dissection it had a massively cystic pancreas and diabetes. I was still relatively new to using mouse models of development at the time, so I had to have the more experienced lab members help and they were all stunned by the phenotype as well. All of the subsequent mice with similar genotypes had corresponding defects as well. I have been working on understanding the mechanisms of this intersection for the past several years now and continue to focus on this in my own laboratory here at Michigan.

- 7. What advice would you give a new trainee to the program?** Ask questions, participate in seminars, have lunch with invited speakers, try to invite speakers or guests to the program if possible. This is a great way to get different perspectives on science and grow your network. If you are brand new to graduate school, i.e. have not yet chosen the laboratory in which you will complete your thesis, make sure you consider the environment of the lab in addition to the science. Graduate school is hard, but being part of the right team with a supportive mentor makes it easier.
- 8. What is it like returning to Michigan as a faculty member?** Returning to Michigan has been an amazing experience with immense support from my new home department, Pharmacology, and my colleagues in the Caswell Diabetes Institute. I have also been welcomed back by my graduate school mentors, many of whom are still active members of CPOD. While being on the other side of the bench and establishing my own laboratory is a new and challenging experience, the friendly and collaborative environment at Michigan continues to provide support as I make this transition. I am thrilled to continue mentoring and training the next generation of scientists here at the U of M.

Dr. Lorberbaum will be kicking off our Winter 2024 Seminar Series on January 23rd at 4:00pm in BSRB ABC Seminar Rooms with his talk “Intersecting cell signaling pathways and transcription factors that regulate pancreas development, function, and disease”.

Please join us as welcome one of our newest UM faculty!



## About CPOD

The mission of the Center for Cell Plasticity and Organ Design (CPOD) is to unite interdisciplinary research efforts towards understanding the basic mechanisms by which organs and tissues are formed and maintained and to use this knowledge to regenerate or create replacement tissues and organs, improve stem cell therapies and effective organ transplantation systems that will correct acquired and genetic human disease.

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## CPOD DIRECTORS & STAFF

**Linda Samuelson**  
CPOD Director

**Benjamin Allen**  
CPOD Associate Director

**Jason Spence**  
T32 Training Program in Organogenesis Director

**Angela Palek**  
Center Administrator



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## CPOD MEMBERSHIP

CPOD is continuously seeking new members to be a part of the CPOD community. Our primary objective is to identify and unite the community of Michigan faculty members whose scientific interests fall under the umbrella of organogenesis research.

Your application should include:

1. A 1-2 paragraph summary of your research program;
2. A 1-2 paragraph summary explaining why you are interested in becoming a member;
3. A description of your laboratory's training environment and list of current trainees;
4. And a full CV that includes external grant support.

If you would like to be considered for membership, please send your completed [application form](#) and CV to: [CPOD-contact@umich.edu](mailto:CPOD-contact@umich.edu).


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## CONNECT WITH CPOD

Stay up to date with our events, seminars & latest news

 [CPOD-friends-requests@umich.edu](mailto:CPOD-friends-requests@umich.edu)

 [@UM\\_CPOD](#)

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/center-for-cell-plasticity-and-organ-design/mycompany/>



## GIVING

The Center for Cell Plasticity and Organ Design supports interdisciplinary training on the topics of how organs form, repair and are affected by disease. By combining the expertise of biologists, clinicians and engineers across the University of Michigan in the training of our students and fellows, we are better preparing the next generation of scientists to lead discoveries that impact human health.

Your generosity helps to support trainees in the program.

To give to the Center for Cell Plasticity and Organ Design, visit:

[giving.umich.edu/  
basket/fund/329346](https://giving.umich.edu/basket/fund/329346)

