

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

School of Medicine Columbia

University of South Carolina

Research Newsletter

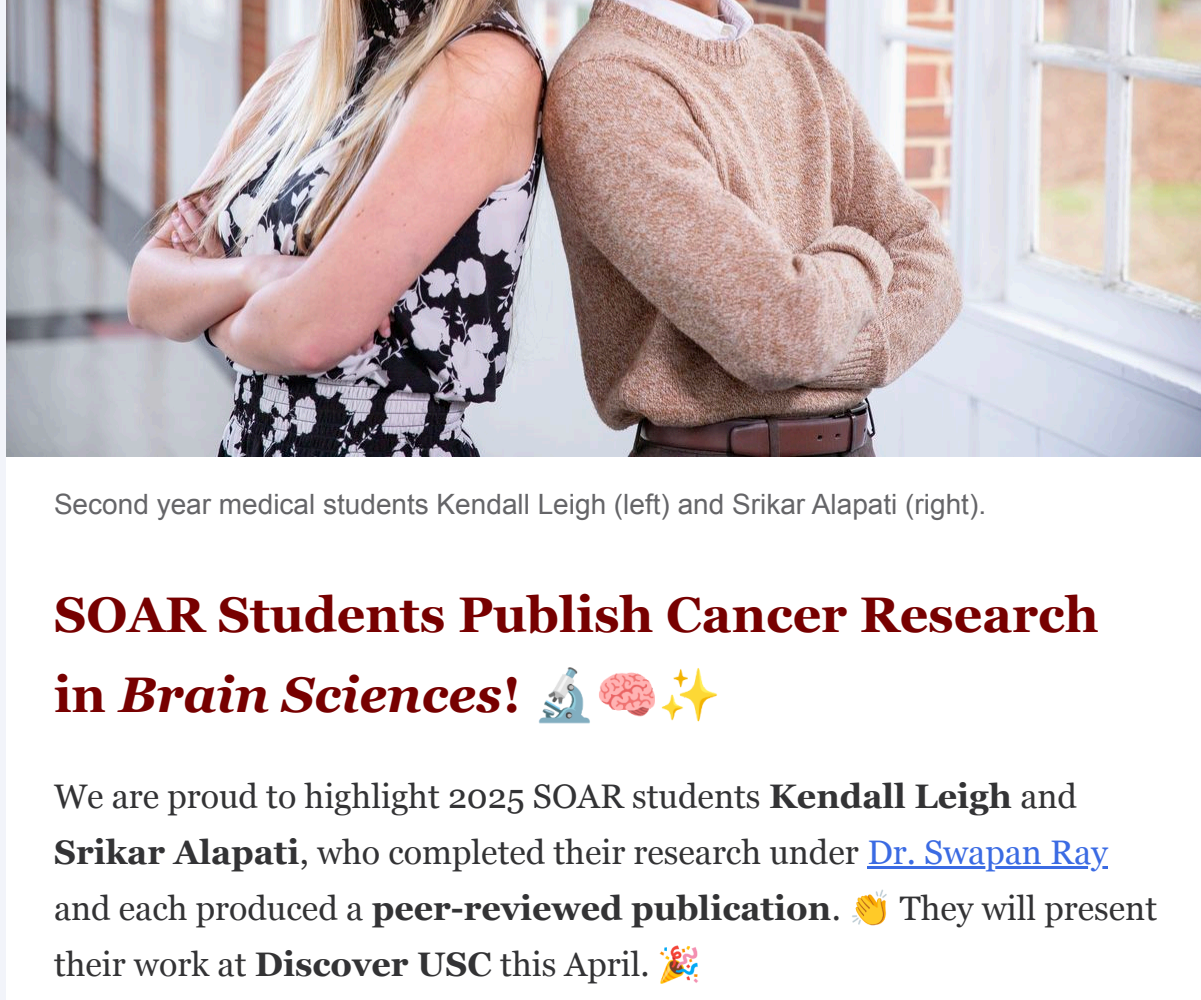
By SOMC Office of Research • Mar 09, 2026

Smart Brevity® count: 3 mins...855 words

👋 Welcome to the seventh edition of the Research Roundup where we share important updates and research news to keep you in the know.

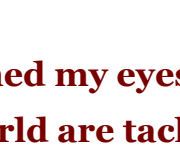
In this edition learn about the accomplishments of our amazing students, multiple funding opportunities, and save the date for Discover USC!

Research Spotlights



Second year medical students Kendall Leigh (left) and Srikar Alapati (right).

SOAR Students Publish Cancer Research in Brain Sciences!



We are proud to highlight 2025 SOAR students **Kendall Leigh** and **Srikar Alapati**, who completed their research under [Dr. Swapan Ray](#) and each produced a **peer-reviewed publication**. 🌟 They will present their work at **Discover USC** this April. 🎉

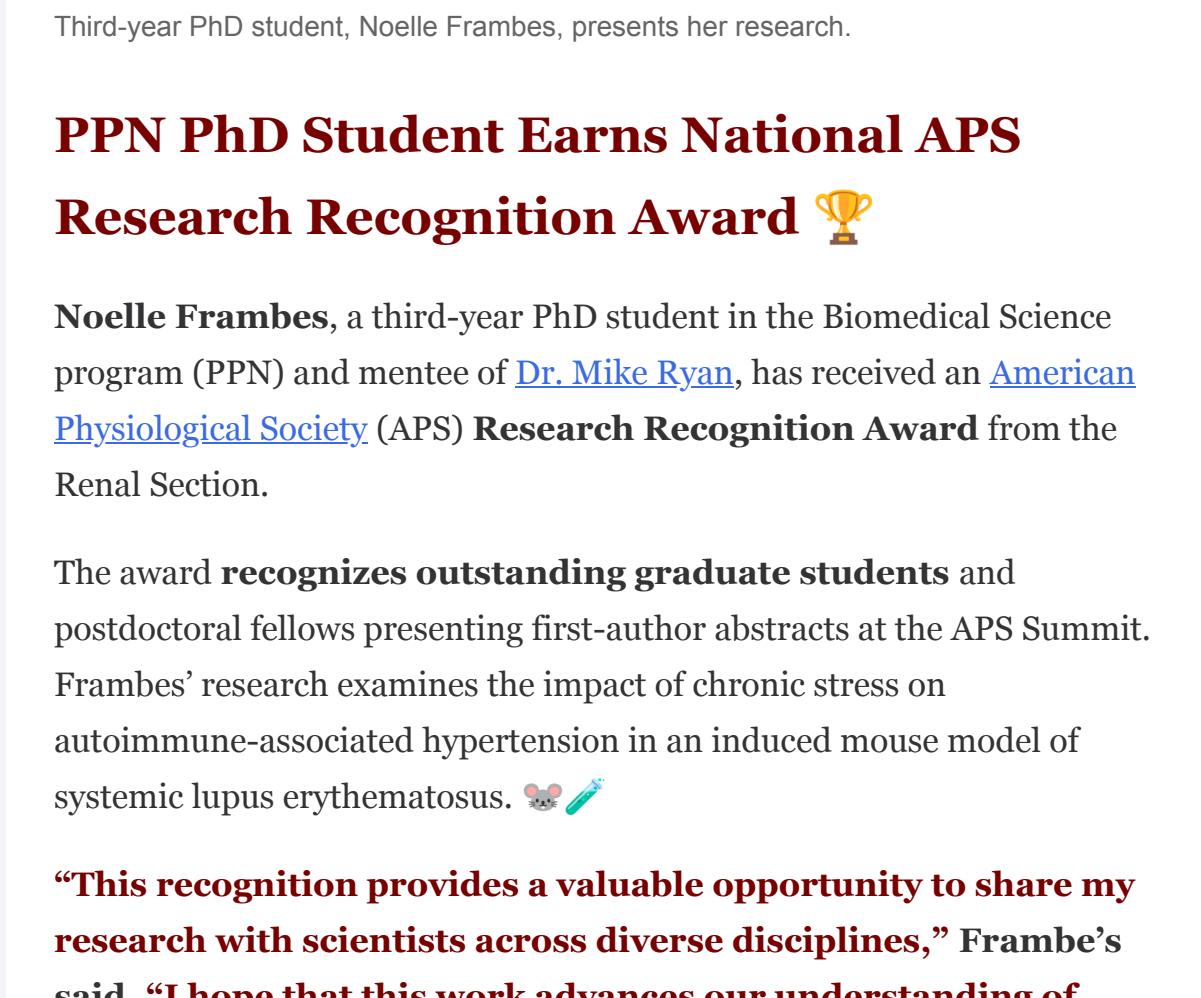
Alapati's article, "[Controlling Biogenesis and Engineering of Exosomes to Inhibit Growth and Promote Death in Glioblastoma Multiforme](#)," explores how engineered exosomes may help overcome therapy resistance in aggressive brain tumors by targeting survival pathways like angiogenesis and autophagy.

💬 **"This project really opened my eyes to seeing how so many people from around the world are tackling one problem in so many different directions," said Alapati. "It made me value research from the basic science level all the way to clinical trials."**

Leigh's article, "[Exosomes as Specific Vehicles for Delivery of Combination Therapies in MYCN-Amplified Neuroblastoma](#)," examines how engineered exosomes could deliver targeted therapies to high-risk pediatric cancers while blocking tumor survival mechanisms.

😊 **"Working with Dr. Ray enhanced my ability to apply scientific inquiry and critical analysis beyond the traditional medical curriculum," said Leigh. "This experience reinforced the importance of evidence-based research and innovation in advancing patient care."**

Their accomplishments reflect the strength of student dedication and the impact of committed faculty mentorship at the School of Medicine. 🙌



Third-year PhD student, Noelle Frambes, presents her research.

PPN PhD Student Earns National APS Research Recognition Award



Noelle Frambes, a third-year PhD student in the Biomedical Science program (PPN) and mentee of [Dr. Mike Ryan](#), has received an [American Physiological Society](#) (APS) **Research Recognition Award** from the Renal Section.

The award **recognizes outstanding graduate students** and postdoctoral fellows presenting first-author abstracts at the APS Summit. Frambes' research examines the impact of chronic stress on autoimmune-associated hypertension in an induced mouse model of systemic lupus erythematosus. 🧪🔬

"This recognition provides a valuable opportunity to share my research with scientists across diverse disciplines," Frambe's said. "I hope that this work advances our understanding of how chronic stress influences the brain, kidneys and other pathways that contribute to hypertension and autoimmune disease."

Let's congratulate Noelle on this well-deserved national honor for an outstanding PPN scholar. 🌟

Funding Opportunities



💰 Duke Endowment Grants – Internal Competition Now Open

The [Duke Endowment](#) is accepting applications through its **Health Care Division** and **Child & Family Wellbeing Division** to support innovative projects that improve community health outcomes, strengthen systems of care, and advance evidence-based programs benefiting children and families.

This is a **limited submission opportunity** open to USC faculty across all campuses whose work aligns with the Endowment's priorities.

📅 **Internal Deadline:** April 1, 2026

👉 More information and [program details](#).

Faculty interested in being considered for institutional nomination must submit required materials by the internal deadline.

💎 Funding Opportunity for Early Career Investigators: Gilead Research Scholars Program in HIV

Applications are now open for the [Gilead Research Scholars Program in HIV \(US\)](#), supporting innovative clinical research, implementation science, and HIV cure-focused basic science.

Areas of interest include:

- Health inequities 🌍
- HIV prevention ❤️
- Comorbidities (including aging) 🧓👉
- AI and digital models 📱📊
- Health outcomes research 📈📋

Eligible applicants are early career, junior faculty who meet NIH Early Stage Investigator criteria (no prior R01, P01, or U01 as PI).

Key Dates 📅

LOI (1-page Specific Aims) due June 25, 2026

Invited full proposal due October 15, 2026

Funding decisions announced January 2027

💡 Not seeing any funding opportunities that apply to you? 💡

👉 Check out the [Limited Submissions page](#) for the latest listing of limited funding opportunities.

Upcoming Conferences & Events



Discover USC is Almost Here!

[Discover USC](#)—our university's annual celebration of research, scholarship and creativity—is happening **Friday, April 24, 2026**, at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center!

👤 Call for Reviewers & Judges

Faculty, staff, graduate students and postdocs: we need your expertise! Sign up to serve as a *reviewer or session judge* and help recognize and support student scholarship.

📅 **Reviewer registration deadline: Friday, March 27, 2026**

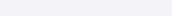
Not reviewing? Join us as an **attendee** to celebrate the work of Carolina's emerging scholars! 🌟

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