

@UlowaNeuro Notes

March 2025

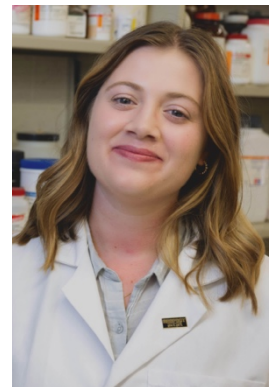
I've been fortunate in my career to develop meaningful connections with colleagues across the country and around the world. Some are people with whom I collaborate actively, and some are people I've come to know and respect and whose ideas and insights inspire me even though we have never worked on a research project together.

With the busy schedules that we face each day, it can be hard to find the time to step away from the lab bench or out of the clinic, but it is so important to take opportunities that allow us to look around, connect, understand the bigger picture. This fresh perspective and the expanded network more than make up for any time away.



Chris Ahern had an opportunity in early January to participate in a White House Cell and Gene Therapy Forum, where he met with other scientists as well as patient families, government officials, philanthropists, and pharmaceutical company representatives. His takeaway: "We all have to work together. We have to keep going out and meeting with people, make connections, see who we can work with to make advances."

Banu Gumusoglu attended the National Academy of Medicine Emerging Leaders Forum in spring 2024 and came away with renewed perspective on how her preclinical science might be directed to advance human health. Conversations with other NAM Fellows about lifespan health encouraged her to pursue a new line of research in the lab, examining pregnancy impacts on neurodegenerative mechanisms.



Four INI colleagues—Susan Shen, Nick Trapp, Michelle Voss, and Jan Wessel—as well as three additional Iowa faculty members are among those invited to participate in the 2025 NAM Emerging Leaders Forum next month.



I will also be there and am looking forward to the chance to connect with broad conversations about the state of health care and biomedical research in the United States. Susan noted the unique opportunity to bring ideas from different disciplines together, which is helpful for her as someone whose work is often at the interface of multiple fields.

We should also be mindful of opportunities for connection right here on campus when colleagues from around the world are invited to present their work in seminars in the INI and in our departments. The hour you spend attending a seminar, engaging with science other than your own, could be the pathway to your next breakthrough. You never know how one meeting might start a chain of discovery.

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