Gonzalez Named NC State University Faculty Scholar [1]

Submitted by Kimberly Ann Massa Núñez [2] on 18 February 2021 - 4:54pm

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Groundbreaking intestinal disease clinician-researcher Liara Gonzalez [3] has been named to this year's class [4] of NC State University Faculty Scholars.

Gonzalez, assistant professor of gastroenterology and equine surgery at the NC State College of Veterinary Medicine, is one of 21 early- and mid-career faculty earning this year's distinction.

Launched in 2012, the University Faculty Scholars program recognizes outstanding academic achievements and teaching, service and scholarship contributions. Cross-disciplinary honorees carry the title through their NC State employment. Scholars are nominated by individual colleges and reviewed by senior faculty.

"I am overwhelmed with excitement and appreciation for this prestigious designation," says Gonzalez. "This award speaks to the amazing support and guidance that I have received from mentors here at NC State since I arrived as a large animal surgery resident in 2007. I am humbled to be nominated and then selected."

Gonzalez is behind some of the most innovative research coming out of the CVM in recent years, using large animal models to translate laboratory findings into clinical treatments for both humans and animals. Gonzalez and her Intestinal Regenerative Medicine lab [5] team were the first to develop a large animal pig model to study intestinal stem cells.

Her lab was also the first to identify these cells in horses and the first to grow and expand intestinal stem cells into 3D structures derived from both pigs and horses.

Liara Gonzalez

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Such stem cells, sources of intestinal renewal, are integral to Gonzalez's goal of creating new therapies for intestinal diseases, including colic, the leading known cause of death in horses, and gastrointestinal conditions that impact about 70 million Americans a year. Her work also targets intestinal ischemia and reperfusion injury, which causes lack of blood flow to the intestine in both humans and animals.

Gonzalez is currently working with Duke University scientists on a first-of-its-kind study [6] to improve the effectiveness of intestinal transplants. Ongoing National Institutes of Health-funded research has revealed how the body uses reserve stem cells to recover from severe intestinal injury.

Gonzalez co-directs the large animals model core for the Center for Gastrointestinal and Biological Disease (CGBID), a research center partnership between the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and NC State, and regularly collaborates with other researchers through NC State's Comparative Medicine Institute.

A clinician specializing in large animal medicine, Gonzalez is a diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons. After completing her residency she stayed at NC State, earning an Ph.D. in comparative biomedical sciences.

Gonzalez also chairs the CVM's diversity committee [7], a group of faculty, staff and students focused on supporting and elevating equity and inclusion on campus and within the veterinary profession.

“The environment at NC State has allowed me to develop as a clinician, a researcher, a teacher and a mentor to other students over the years,” says Gonzalez. “It has given me the opportunity to recognize that although hard work and drive is a big component of being successful, that being surrounded by people who are rooting for your success and providing support along the way is absolutely critical.

“I have been lucky to have gotten that support from the leadership at the CVM, from my colleagues and, importantly, from my family. I also have an amazing research team.”

CVM professors are regularly named University Faculty Scholars. Last year’s class included Cristina Lanzas [8], associate professor of infectious disease, and Casey Theriot [9], assistant professor of infectious disease. Lauren Schnabel [10], assistant professor of equine orthopedic surgery was named a scholar in 2019.

Other previous CVM honorees include Ke Cheng [11], the Randall B. Terry, Jr. Distinguished Professor in Regenerative Medicine, and Troy Ghashghaei [12], professor of neurobiology (both in 2016); Jody Gookin [13], FluoroScience Distinguished Professor in Veterinary Scholars Research Education and professor internal medicine (2015); Sid Thakur [14], director of global health at the CVM and NC State (2014); and Nanette Nascone-Yoder [15], associate professor of developmental biology (2012).

~Jordan Bartel [16]/NC State Veterinary Medicine

Tags:

- #LiaraGonzalez [17]
- #NCSU [18]
- #Borinqueña [19]

Links
[1] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/blogs/cerebros-boricuas/gonzalez-named-nc-state-university-faculty-scholar [2] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/user/kimberlymassa [3] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/gonzalez-liara/ [4] https://news.ncsu.edu/2021/01/2020-21-university-faculty-scholars-named/ [5] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/research/labs/clinical-sciences/intestinal-regenerative-medicine/ [6] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/a-game-changing-approach-to-intestinal-transplantation/ [7] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/diversity/ [8] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/lanzas-cristina/ [9] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/theriot-casey/ [10] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/schnabel-lauren/ [11] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/cheng-ke/ [12] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/ghashghaei-troy/ [13] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/gookin-jody/ [14] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/thakur-siddhartha/ [15] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/nascone-yoder-nanette/ [16] https://cvm.ncsu.edu/directory/bartel-jordan/ [17] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/liaragonzalez [18] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/ncsu [19] https://www.cienciapr.org/en/tags/borinquena-0