Office of Research

2023

The Year In Review

Highlights, accomplishments, and activities of the Office of Research throughout 2023.
Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for taking the time to read through our 2023 Year in Review. As we prepare for new opportunities in 2024, the Office of Research is pleased to share highlights and accomplishments from the Research Mission. A few of these high-level areas included:

- An institutional record in annual NIH funding during fiscal year 2023, with awards totaling $131.7 million
- Growth in clinical trial revenue to $30.1 million, a $6.2 million increase over FY23
- Continuing key investments in MCW research cores and support services to enhance MCW research with cutting-edge technologies

As the Office of Research plans for the future, we take pause to thank and commemorate our research teams in the Office of Research and throughout campus. The institutional Research Mission has seen excellent growth and success in 2023. We persist toward the common goal of our commitment to providing the best possible research environment to further the goals of our investigators and leaders to advance research forward.

Ann B. Nattinger, MD, MPH, MACP
Associate Provost for Research
Professor of Medicine
Lady Riders Professor of Breast Cancer Research

Cecilia Hillard, PhD
Associate Dean for Research
Professor of Pharmacology
Director, Neuroscience Research Center

Lisa Henk, MS
Assistant Dean, Research Operations
The Office of Research hosted “Research Week” April 17-20, 2023. The week included:

- **27** hours of in person, hybrid, and virtual programming along with the publishing of our robust digital Event Catalog.
- **79** researchers developed and presented posters across 5 sessions, each under themes of Community, Education, Population Science, Clinical, Translational, and Basic Science Research.
- **39** faculty and staff presented at 9 Center Mini-Symposia hosted by the Mellowes Center, Neuroscience Research Center, Cancer Center, Center for the Advancement of Women in Science and Medicine, Institute for Health & Equity, Center for Aids Intervention Research, Center for Imaging Research, Center for Advancing Population Sciences, Center for Injury Research, and Cardiovascular Center.
- **35** cores were represented at our Cores Fair, which also featured multiple breakout sessions with individual resources.
- In addition, **17** offices were represented at our Research Resource Expo, which highlighted administrative research support services.

The MCW Research Mission hit an institutional record in annual NIH funding during federal fiscal year 2023. Awards totaling $131.7M were granted by the NIH from October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023, allowing MCW to achieve a top-third ranking of US medical schools for NIH funding as reported by the Blue Ridge Institute for Medical Research. In addition, the institution hit another record for clinical trial revenues: $30.1M, a $6.2M increase over FY22. This information is reported to the National Science Foundation’s annual HERD survey.
With funding made possible by the Advancing a Healthier Wisconsin Endowment, the Office of Research awarded multiple grants across two unique mechanisms in 2023. Six Competitive Resubmission grants of $50,000 were also awarded to fund research projects specifically designed to strengthen federal grant applications that were well scored but outside of the funding window. The funding supports acquisition of additional data to enhance the applications for future funding. These six projects were led by Xiaowen Bai, PhD, (Cell Biology, Neurobiology & Anatomy), Ross Collery, PhD, (Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences), Xiaoyan Li, PhD, (Neurology), Andriano Marchese, PhD, (Biochemistry), Kajana Satkunendrarajah, PhD, (Neurosurgery), and Michael Widlansky, MD, MPH, (Medicine). Also, four Limited Needs grants of up to $30,000 were awarded to purchase specialty equipment, instrumentation, or software to enhance existing research projects. Limited Needs awardees in 2023 were Matthew Kudek, MD, (Pediatrics), Michael Mitchell, MD, (Surgery), Aoy Tomita-Mitchell, PhD, (Surgery), and Brian Volkman, PhD, (Biochemistry). These awards highlight a rich and targeted investment in our outstanding faculty.
Congratulations to Sanacor, a startup company developing novel drugs in cardiovascular and other therapeutic areas, based on MCW intellectual property, for winning the $10,000 top prize at the 2023 Healthcare Innovation Pitch (HIP) event in October in Milwaukee. Sanacor was co-founded by Michael Widlansky, MD, MPH, (Medicine) (pictured on pg. 3). Also presenting an MCW-related startup at the event was Nikki Johnston, PhD, (Otolaryngology & Communication Sciences) and co-founder of N-Zyme Biomedical. N-Zyme is developing therapeutics to treat laryngopharyngeal reflux, for which there are no effective treatments. HIP is Wisconsin’s largest open Healthcare and HealthTech startup-investor event. The event was hosted in partnership with the CTSI’s AMPDNR program.

The Office of Research is pleased to share that Hongwei Yu, MD, (Anesthesiology) was selected for the Falk Transformational Award through the Dr. Ralph and Marian Falk Medical Research Trust. These highly competitive grants seek to fund high-risk, high reward translational research in therapeutics for disease. The Falk Transformational Award, a $1,000,000 grant for the “best of the best” translational investigators to continue their breakthrough research, is awarded to highly successful Falk Catalyst awardees. Dr. Yu, together with Quinn Hogan, PhD, (Anesthesiology) were recipients of a 2021 Falk Catalyst Grant, which allowed him to be eligible to pursue the Falk Transformational Award in 2023.

The Center for International Blood and Marrow Transplant Research (CIBMTR) became the 5th center to transition and organizationally structure under the Office of Research. Under the leadership of Bronwen Shaw, MD, PhD, Chief Scientific Director for CIBMTR at MCW, (pictured on pg. 3) the center is a collaborative resource of data and experts supporting research in cellular therapies to improve patient outcomes. Many of the CIBMTR members are faculty in the Department of Medicine and the Division of Hematology & Oncology. CIBMTR joins the Center for Imaging Research (CIR), the Comprehensive Injury Center (CIC), the Center for Immunology (CFI), and the Center for the Advancement of Women in Science & Medicine (AWSM) in this new organizational structure. Matthew Lasowski, MS, CCRP, who joined the Office of Research in June, is the Project Manager supporting the oversight of the centers.
Making Research Better

The Office of Research held an **internal Strategic Planning Retreat** with unit leaders in May to brainstorm, strategize, and identify priorities in two specific areas: internal employee satisfaction and external stakeholder satisfaction. This involved review and analysis of satisfaction surveys issued earlier in the year, as well as exercises to creatively target survey themes. Several individuals from the Office of Research also participated in the Academic Committee/Human Research Operations Committee Retreat in May, which was directed by Dr. Nattinger. This retreat aimed to discuss clinical research goals in the context of MCW as the academic partner to Froedtert.

A new institutional faculty mentorship program, **CliMB (Clinical Mentoring Board)**, was established through the Office of Research under the leadership of Julie Freed, MD, PhD (Anesthesiology) to support physician scientists and other junior investigators. CliMB was developed in response to recommendations made by the Research Culture Workgroup within the framework of the Research Strategic Plan. CliMB initiated with targeted outreach and support for faculty pursuing K awards, and will continue to grow and develop in reach and resources.

Froedtert & the Medical College of Wisconsin adopted **OnCore Financials** in July 2023 as part of an ongoing commitment to standardize workflows and enhance the way clinical research is conducted at the institution. Supported by leadership, OnCore has become the primary tool to facilitate trial financial management including hospital and professional coverage analysis, study budget development, tracking protocol milestones, sponsor invoicing, and the recording of study payments. We are grateful to departments & study teams and our partners across campus for implementing this new workflow.

The **eBridge Agreements module** went live in August. This new module in eBridge will serve as the enterprise system solution for the routing, negotiation, execution, and maintenance of incoming and outgoing CDAs, MTAs, DUAs, and MDAs. The new module will leverage users’ existing knowledge of eBridge, streamline, automate, and centralize the review and execution process, and enhance transparency.

The Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) updated the **Consent Form Templates** page on mcw.edu. The update helps investigators find the correct templates they need more efficiently. The “Minimal Risk” and “Greater Than Minimal Risk” templates have been separated into their own separate pages, along with further separating templates for adults and minors.

A team in the Office of Research, along with a group of content stakeholders, published a new **Research Training website** on mcw.edu in April. The new site provides better search functionality and a consistent look and feel for users and offers more collaboration opportunities with other MCW content stakeholders. The former site, train.mcw.edu, has been retired.

The Research Systems team updated changes for supporting **ClinicalTrials.gov registration and compliance**. The Applicable Clinical Trial (ACT) checklist was incorporated into the PRO SmartForm. The CPR SmartForm will remind PIs and project teams to review their records at ClinicalTrials.gov annually. The final report SmartForm will serve as a reminder to report results.
MCW Libraries launched **Ovid Discovery** to assist with multiple avenues of searching all in one place. The application allows for the ability to search all MCW electronic resources, UpToDate, build a search in a PICO specific format, and more. An Ovid Discovery search result list will show how to bookmark articles, how to download full text resources, how many times an item has been cited, and where to find the full resource the article was published.

The **Amendment (AME) SmartForm** was updated with help from the IRB and Research Systems teams. The updates made are intended to better capture any new changes, the impact of changes and the communication plan for subjects for the IRB to review. The administrative burden on the PI and project teams, IRB reviewers and the IRB coordinators is anticipated to be reduced.

New efforts to elevate, enhance, and promote institutional research cores were at the forefront in 2023. In addition to releasing the new Core Equipment RFA (see page 4) and continuing under the guidance of the Cores Executive Board, the Core Managers group continued to meet to foster collaboration and discuss scientific and operational topics. New communication efforts to promote our research cores, such as highlighting cores in the Research Pulse newsletter and the development of internal marketing materials have also proven valuable. The **Core Connector**, a newsletter published by the Office of Research, was launched in April. The quarterly newsletter highlights news, recent publications utilizing core resources, cores events, and equipment available for use from the MCW cores and shared resources.

The Office of Research published a new **High-Profile Opportunities** funding page on **InfoScope** to raise awareness of the specialty opportunities offered through ARPA-H, the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health, and the High-Risk, High Reward programs through the NIH Office of the Director. Staff in the Office of Research began efforts to understand and engage with ARPA-H, a new federal agency established in 2022 to support transformative research.

Efforts to promote and enhance the institutional applications to the **NIH Shared Instrumentation Grant (SIG) program** have resulted in continued success with the funding mechanism. These efforts include an internal application process and support for application materials. In 2023, MCW investigators submitted three applications for Shared Instrumentation Grants. Two of the applications, from **Candice Klug, PhD**, (Biophysics) and **Francis Peterson, PhD** (Biochemistry), were awarded with specialty instrumentation through the SIG program.

The State of Wisconsin and the Wisconsin National Guard had been operating a **COVID-19 vaccine hub** hosted by MCW and the Office of Research since 2021. This hub was used as a central location for vaccine storage and distribution to regional clinics and community providers. The hub officially sunset on May 26, 2023, and the state was grateful for the support of MCW and team members in the Office of Research for sustaining operations throughout the pandemic.
Michelle Harrell, MLIS, Assistant Director, Public Services and Education, graduated from the NLM/AAHSL Leadership Fellows Program. Michelle was one of 5 fellows matched with a mentor. The 1-year fellowship program is designed to prepare high quality leaders in academic medical libraries in the US. Michelle’s program concluded with presentations and a graduation. Michelle and her mentor co-presented to the group on Clifton strengths and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Janette Lamb, PhD, Institutional Research Core Program Director, was invited to join the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Shared Resource Operations of the Versiti BRI. As a member of the SAC, Janette will ensure top-notch core operations by helping to harmonize shared resources between MCW and the BRI, identifying gaps and new opportunities for core technologies, and assessing cost effectiveness and performance of existing cores.

Kevin Boggs, MBA, PhD, Director of the Office of Technology Development, was designated a Registered Technology Transfer Professional (RTTP) by the Alliance of Technology Transfer Professionals. According to the ATTP: “The RTTP is the International Standard for evaluating the professional competence & experience of practitioners working in knowledge exchange/knowledge transfer/technology transfer defined as ‘a collaborative, creative endeavor that translates knowledge and research into impact in society and the economy’ whether such practitioners are working in universities, industry, or government labs”. Only 200 other technology transfer professionals in the U.S. have received this designation.

Ann Nattinger, MD, Associate Provost for Research, was elected to serve as the Chair-elect on the GRAND Steering Committee. GRAND, the Group on Research Advancement and Development, an affinity group of the Association of American Medical Colleges, provides a national forum for the promotion, support, development, and conduct of biomedical research in medical schools and teaching hospitals. The Steering Committee leads and directs the efforts of GRAND and brings national institutions together in a shared vision.

A team led by Cecilia Hillard, PhD, Associate Dean for Research, and Joseph Thulin, DVM, Assistant Provost for the Biomedical Resource Center, submitted a C06 application to the NIH to support the expansion of the vivarium. This project would initiate at a later stage when the Cancer Research Building comes online. Also critical to the success of the application were Jeff Bornemann, Vice President of Facilities and Operations, and Jessica Basile, Senior Director of Planning, Design and Construction, as well as Chelsea Hamilton, Grants Analyst III.
Two Office of Research team members successfully completed Leadership Academy in 2023. **Kevin Boggs, MBA, PhD**, Director of the Office of Technology Development (pictured on pg. 7) and **AshLeigh Sanchez**, Research Operations Manager had the opportunity to participate in this unique development opportunity that included coursework, instruction, and networking facilitated by the UWM Lubar School of Business. The Academy also facilitates project teams to work on a capstone project and present to classmates and MCW leadership. Kevin’s capstone team project focused on unique ways to facilitate shared office and work space using the Hub as a model. AshLeigh’s capstone team project centered around a pilot grant program specifically for postdoctoral fellows to afford protected time for professional development.

**Jennifer Brown** has been promoted to the role of Program Director, Clinical Research Operations Quality, in recognition of her leadership in this critical area. Since joining the Office of Research in 2018, Jen has built a team around resources and services for clinical trials quality, including systems such as OnCore Financials and Florence eBinders, as well as budget negotiation, study start-up, regulatory oversight, and other operational initiatives.

**Erika Krueger, BBA**, received a promotion to the role of Research Systems Manager, Development. In this new leadership role, Erika is bolstering the organizational structure of the Research Systems unit by overseeing the team of Developers that support and maintain the eBridge application. Erika joined MCW in 2010 within the Information Services department, and transitioned to the Office of Research with the eBridge development team in 2018.

**Eric Harding, MLS**, transitioned to the role of Reference & Circulation Services Lead Librarian in July. Eric joined the MCW Library team in 2015 supporting the Froedtert Hospital location as Clinical Services Librarian, providing literature and resource services for clinicians as well as patients. In this new senior role, Eric is responsible for the daily operations of reference and circulation services at the Todd Wehr Library and regional campus libraries.

**Debra Scott, PhD**, was promoted to the role of Director, Research Applications. Debbie joined the Office of Research in 2009, and has led the Research Systems unit through significant system changes and implementations over the years, as well as meaningful growth in scope, scale, and support. Debbie’s promotion recognizes her thoughtful leadership and extensive contributions to the development of reliable research applications, primarily eBridge.

**Alex Sherman, BS**, has been promoted to the role of Engineer II. Since joining the Office of Research in 2019, Alex has provided superior service and support in the MCW Engineering Core. With Alex’s in-demand skill set, the Engineering Core has continued or even expanded critical support for lab equipment maintenance and repair, custom design and fabrication, 3D-printed models, protocol development, and more.

**Neal Fitzgerald, JD**, was promoted to the role of Supervisor, Contracts Administration, in recognition of his leadership over a growing portfolio of research-related contracts and agreements. As a member of the Grants & Contracts Office leadership team, Neal oversees the review and execution of common documents such as clinical trial agreements or data use agreements, as well as more complex research contracts.
In January, the HRRP office welcomed Paulette Jacobs to their team as an HRPP Operations Supervisor. Paulette has earned a BS in biology, MS in physiology, and a CCRP certification. She most recently worked in the FH/MCW Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office where she was the Clinical Research Manager for Hematology trials. Paulette has been with MCW for 25 years and in human research for the past 17 years.

MCW Libraries welcomed Becky Alford as a Reference Librarian in March. Becky attended the University of Minnesota Morris where she received undergraduate degrees in English and French. She later attended the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee where she received a graduate degree in Library and Information Studies. Becky has over 10 years of library experience, helping nursing and liberal arts students with library research. Before starting at MCW, she worked for two years in the library at Northcentral Technical College in Wausau.

Shaun Sullivan Schmitt joined the HRPP office in March. She has a Bachelor of Applied Science Degree in Business Management & Leadership. Shaun has recently worked at Children’s Wisconsin, Corporate Office, Milwaukee, as an Administrative Assistant in Pediatric Urology, supporting the Chief Medical Director.

In June, the Office of Radiation Safety welcomed Jared Brokke to the team as Radiation Safety Program Coordinator. Jared attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in Physics and a minor in Mathematics in 2019. After graduating he moved to Bremerton, WA to work at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard as a Radiological Control Technician.

The Administrative unit welcomed Matt Lasowski (pictured pg. 4) to the team in the role of Project Manager, Research and Innovation. He received his bachelor’s degree in Biology and Physics from Lawrence University and received his master's degree in Clinical and Translational Science from MCW while working in the Cancer Center. Matt has over 15 years of experience with cancer clinical trials and has been with MCW for 10 years. Matt was most recently the Program Manager for Rare Cancers and Precision Medicine in the Cancer Center.

The Administrative team welcomed Ellie King as Administrative Associate in July. Ellie joined the Office of Research internally from the CIBMTR and is looking forward to continuing to grow and meeting people within MCW. She graduated from UW-Milwaukee in 2021 with a BS Healthcare Administration and a Business Administration Minor.

The Grants and Contracts Office welcomed Laura Hernandez as Grants Analyst I. Laura has been with MCW since 2019, working previously with the AHW Endowment and the Office of Postdoctoral Education. She graduated from The University of Texas at Austin with a degree in Public Relations and worked in concert and event marketing for five years before transitioning into roles within higher education.

In July, Melissa Silva joined the Grants and Contracts Office as Grants Analyst I. Melissa previously worked in the MCW Division of Cardiovascular Medicine where she was an Administrative Assistant. She graduated with her bachelor’s in Applied Health Science, and earned her Master’s in Healthcare Administration in December.
The Office of Research, through MCW-IS, welcomed Joe Clinton as Desktop Support Technician II in July. Joe received his bachelor's degree in Digital Media from Greenville University in 2019. After graduating, he moved back to his hometown of Benton, IL, to be the head IT administrator, head speech/drama coach, and head librarian at Benton Consolidated High School, where he worked for four years.

In September, The HRPP Office welcomed Mona Nolte to the team as an IRB Coordinator II. Mona graduated from St. Norbert College with a bachelor's in Biology and recently earned her CCRP certification. She previously worked in the Cancer Center Clinical Trials Office as a Clinical Research Coordinator and has been with MCW for almost 3 years.

In October, The Administrative unit welcomed Rafael Toro to the team as the iLab & Research Cores Coordinator in October. Rafael holds a master's degree in Genetics from the University of Iowa. He has worked in research environment for 20+ years at multiple institutions, including MCW in Dr. Blake Hill’s lab. He has also supported a variety of instrumentation for the Program in Chemical Biology and Department of Biochemistry and CVC.

In October, MCW Libraries welcomed Carly Schanock as the Clinical Services Librarian at Froedtert Hospital. Carly received a bachelor's degree in history from DePaul University and an MLIS from Drexel University. She previously worked at the University of South Dakota and Boston University.

Congratulations to the Office of Research staff members who celebrated a MCW service anniversary milestone in 2022 and were recognized in 2023. Thank you for all that you do in the Office of Research and for the research mission at MCW!

Megan Anderson, Biomedical Resource Center (5 years)
Taylor Anglin, Research Systems (5 years)
Neal Fitzgerald, Grants & Contracts (5 years)
William Baye, Research Systems (10 years)
Megan Campfield, Research Systems (10 years)
Chris Koceja, Human Research/Institutional Review Board (10 years)

Brian Taylor, Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (10 years)
Clarissa Brown, Biomedical Resource Center (15 years)
Joshua Jagemann, Biomedical Resource Center (15 years)
Kathie Holewinski, Biomedical Resource Center (20 years)
Gary Plate Sr., Biomedical Resource Center (20 years)
Kami Young, Biomedical Resource Center (20 years)
The Institutional Review Boards expedited approval for 70% of Amendments and 62% of Continuing Progress Reports. Additionally, 246 studies, or 26% of all new studies, were eligible for FLEX review. The Reliance Team also executed 120 agreements where MCW served as the IRB of record, and 19 additional studies relied on the NCI-CIRB.

The Office of Technology Development took in 49 invention disclosures and executed 12 licenses in 2023. OTD filed 26 new patent applications and MCW inventions earned 14 issued patents.

The Grants & Contracts Office submitted a record year of total 2,205 grant applications in 2023, 587 which were to the NIH. The GCO supported 356 unique faculty submitting to the NIH, with 167 unique faculty receiving awards in 2022.

The Research Systems Team logged hours on several special projects in 2023. Research System projects are large development efforts. Each project takes roughly 6-9 months to develop, test and go-live. Some of these projects include the implementation of GCO Agreements, changes for supporting ClinicalTrials.gov registration and compliance for the IRB, and the automation of the IACUC Facility Inspection Report. The Research Systems team was also pivotal in the OnCore Financials Phase 1, which launched in July. The transition and completion of migration of content from train.mcw.edu to the new Research Training website were projects also supported by the Research Systems team in 2023.

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By the Numbers

**Biomedical Resource Center Stats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stat</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Board Days</td>
<td>4,745,232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Annual Animal Count</td>
<td>36,233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mice</td>
<td>30,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rats</td>
<td>5,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Daily Census</td>
<td>12,995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mice</td>
<td>10,313</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rats</td>
<td>2,612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Imports/Exports</td>
<td>152</td>
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</tbody>
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The BRC continued steady average daily census counts of both mice and rats in 2023. The BRC support team offered 791 training opportunities for animal researchers in the year.

**MCW Libraries Stats**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stat</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Library Gate Count</td>
<td>88,564</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circulation: Physical Items</td>
<td>1,501</td>
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<tr>
<td>Circulation: Electronic Items</td>
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<td>Inter-Library Loan Items Borrowed</td>
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<td>Inter-Library Loan Items Lent</td>
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<td>Classes Taught</td>
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<td>Library Guides Pagviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posters Printed</td>
<td>1,571</td>
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<td>Library IS Requests Answered</td>
<td>689</td>
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</table>

The MCW Librarians staffed the Todd Wehr Library on the main MCW campus, as well as the Froedtert Library and Children’s Wisconsin locations. Reference services, training, and other support have been available virtually.

**Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee**

**AUA Approval Activity**

The IACUC Office processed 94 Animal Amendments, 398 Personnel Changes, and 264 Funding Changes. The IACUC Post-Approval Monitoring (PAM) program also conducted 53 In-Lab Visits and Follow-Ups in 2023.

**Institutional Biosafety Committee**

**IBC Approval Activity**

The Institutional Biosafety Committee kept support running smoothly for researchers in 2023. The committee saw an increase in Amendments and Total IBC Applications in State of Approved for Designated Timeframe in the year.

**Research MRI Safety Committee**

The Radiation Safety Committee saw an increase in Human Use Applications and Animal Use Applications. In addition to facilitating submission reviews, the Radiation Safety Office assisted with a number of clinical projects utilizing radioactive material, and processed renewals for 7 authorized users.
The MCW Research Cores continued to see growth in 2023. MCW Cores service centers recorded a record $20.2M in revenue in iLab, an $8M increase in FY23. MCW Cores also saw increases in service requests, with 8,700 more requests and 640 more customers in FY23. iLab saw an increase in Service Centers, with 43 online this year. MCW Cores that brought in the most revenue in FY23 included the Center for Imaging Research, Mellowes Center GSPMC and the CRI Histology Core. MCW Libraries Poster Printing recorded the most customer activity in FY23 with 684 patrons.