

Welcome to the Graduate Research Annual Forum 2025

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I am delighted to welcome all students, faculty, postdocs, and visitors to the **43rd Graduate Research Annual Forum (GRAF 2025)**. For over four decades, the **Council of Biomedical Graduate Students (CBGS)** has proudly organized this event, providing an invaluable platform for students to showcase their research and receive insightful feedback from expert postdocs and faculty. Beyond presentations, GRAF serves as a unique opportunity for all tracks to engage with one another and foster interdisciplinary collaborations.

Our students are very excited about this year's forum, including 37 posters and oral presentations. We have 20 volunteer judges to evaluate the presentations. We want GRAF to benefit scientists and trainees at all levels, whether that is in the form of presenting to a new audience, organizing the event, or evaluating the presentations.

We are excited to have this year's keynote speech being delivered by **Dr. Priya Shah**. Dr. Shah is an Associate Professor of Chemical Engineering and Microbiology & Molecular Genetics at the University of California, Davis. Her research bridges the fields of chemical engineering and microbiology, where her lab employs quantitative systems biology tools to investigate virus-host interactions. With over 40 publications on topics ranging from protein behavior and aggregation to virus-host protein interactions, Dr. Shah is a leading voice in her field. In 2024, she authored "**Pride and Prejudice (and Ph.D.s)**" which connects themes from Jane Austen's classic novel "Pride and Prejudice" with experiences in academic research.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt gratitude to my executive team members and track representatives for their dedication to planning this event. A special thank you to **Dr. Kandace Williams** and **Dr. David R. Giovannucci** for their invaluable guidance as Faculty Advisors to the Council. I am especially grateful to **Allison Spencer** and **Paige McVay** from the Graduate Program Office for their unwavering support. This event would not have been possible without the generous funding from the **UTCOM&LS Foundation, the COMLS Alumni Board of Trustees, the Student Allocation Committee, the COM&LS Graduate Program Office, and the departments within our program**, we truly appreciate their contributions. A sincere thank you to **Margaret Hoogland, Dr. Robert Smith**, and the journal *Translation* for collaborating with us on the abstract booklet and the publication of abstracts. Last but certainly not least, I deeply appreciate the assistance of all **judges, moderators, and volunteers**. I hope all attendees find this forum to be a valuable and enriching experience.

Sachin Aryal
President
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