

SIU SDM's Eapen earns coveted Investigator Award for Cancer Research

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EDWARDSVILLE - Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine's Assistant Professor Asha Eapen, PhD, has been presented the Vaughnie Lindsay New Investigator Award from the SIUE Graduate School for FY17. The award recognizes Eapen's research and it's promise of making significant contributions to her field of study, the School and the University.

Eapen will receive a combined \$12,500 from the SIUE Graduate School and the SIU School of Dental Medicine to be used in a one-year period. The funding will support her research poised to impact tremendously the fields of dentistry and salivary gland cancers.

"I am deeply honored to receive this award," said Eapen. "My laboratory's contributions reflect the energy, enthusiasm and dedication of hard working students who were recruited through the School's Deans and Mentored Summer Student Fellowships, and SIUE's undergraduate research and creative activities and master's of biological sciences programs. This award, I dedicate to them."

According to Eapen, cancers in salivary glands account for 2-6.5 percent of all head and neck cancers. Her research has the potential to open new doors that will unveil the signaling pathways activated in salivary gland cancers, resulting in early, timely diagnoses and treatment options for salivary gland cancers.

"Cancer remains a major challenge with no simple cure," she said. "Research from our laboratory aims at using small molecule inhibitors to further investigate the specific role of Dentin Matrix Protein 1 (DMP1) in activating signaling pathways that regulate proliferation and differentiation.

"Results from this study will help us to understand how these functions are uncontrolled in cancer cells and will further represent a promising strategy for cancer treatment."

Stephen Hansen, PhD, interim chancellor, and graduate school dean emeritus, established the Lindsay Research Professorship Endowment that funds the award in honor of Dr. Vaughnie J. Lindsay, who served as graduate dean from 1973 until 1986.

"As dean of the Graduate School, Vaughnie Lindsay was a source of innovation and energy," said Hansen. "She vigorously supported research and creative activities for faculty, and created the foundation for SIUE's teacher-scholar model. Dr. Eapen is an outstanding scholar who exemplifies the tradition of excellence in research fostered by Vaughnie Lindsay."

Faculty and the emeriti faculty at the time of the award's conception donated the funds to endow the award. Those wishing to help support new investigators through the

Vaughnie Lindsay Award may make a donation to the Graduate School section of the endowment at: <http://www.siu.edu/give/>.

By preparing the next generation of leaders in a knowledge-based economy, [SIUE's Graduate School](#) fulfills the region's demand for highly trained professionals. Graduate school offerings include arts and sciences, business, education, engineering, nursing and interdisciplinary opportunities. SIUE professors provide students with a unique integration of theoretical education and hands-on research experiences. Students can obtain graduate certificates or pursue master's degrees, and be part of a supportive learning and rich intellectual environment that is tailored to the needs of adult learners. The Graduate School raises the visibility of research at SIUE, which ranks highest among its Illinois Board of Higher Education peers in total research and development expenditures according to the National Science Foundation. Doctoral programs are available in the Schools of Education (Ed.D.) and Nursing (DNP). The School of Engineering and the Department of Historical Studies feature cooperative doctoral programs (Ph.D.).