Professor Matthew Griffin receives V Scholar for Cancer Research Award

The award honors interdisciplinary work to understand the human microbiome.

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The lab of Professor Matthew Griffin of the UC Irvine Department of Chemistry sits at the intersection of multiple fields, including not just physical chemistry, but pharmaceutical sciences, molecular biology and biochemistry.

Picture Credit:
Matthew Griffin

Professor Matthew Griffin of the UC Irvine Department of Chemistry recently won the V Scholar for Cancer Research Award from the V Foundation — a charity founded in 1993 by ESPN and basketball coach Jim Valvano. This national award recognizes young tenure-track faculty who are early in their cancer research careers. Griffin joined UCI Chemistry in 2022, and his lab researches the human microbiome — the collection of trillions of microbes in human guts that shares no genetic relation to us — and how our bodies respond to the different molecules that the microbiome creates. “Because each of us possesses a personalized set of these microbes, the compounds that they produce are unique to the individual and can have profoundly different effects on our health,” said Griffin, who will receive $600,000 over three years as part of the award. “This award builds on our prior work showing that molecules from our gut called glycopeptides can shape how well certain immunotherapy drugs stop tumor growth.” The V Scholar Award will fund studies in the Griffin lab aimed at identifying new ways that the microbiome generates these molecules. If researchers can better characterize individual microbiomes and their metabolism, then they should be able to design tailored, more effective cancer treatments. “This award will allow us to explore a completely new connection between our microbiome and patient responses to cancer treatment,” said Griffin. “It will also continue to build connections between my lab and other groups on campus in the UCI Microbiome Center and the Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center.”

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