

ACADEMIC CONNECTIONS

THOUGHTS AND UPDATES FROM DR. W. P. ANDREW LEE

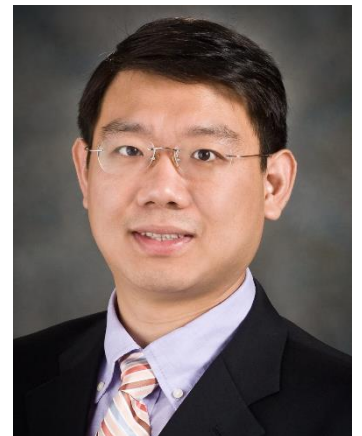
Oct. 22, 2026

Dear Colleagues,

I am delighted to announce the appointment of **Han Liang, Ph.D.**, as the new Chair of the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics, effective Dec. 1. He will hold the Patrick E. Haggerty Distinguished Chair in Basic Biomedical Science and also serve as the Scientific Director for AI-Enabled Discovery in the Office of the Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer.

Dr. Liang joins us from the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center, where he is the Barnhart Family Distinguished Professor in Targeted Therapies, Interim Chair of the Department of Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, Professor of Systems Biology, and an affiliate member of the Institute for Data Science in Oncology.

Following his undergraduate education at Peking University, Dr. Liang earned his doctorate in quantitative and computational biology from Princeton University. He then pursued postdoctoral training in evolutionary and computational genomics at the University of Chicago. He joined UT MD Anderson Cancer Center for his first faculty position and established the Liang Lab in 2009.



Dr. Liang's research focuses on AI-driven integration of multimodal data to elucidate cancer biology and identify novel therapeutic strategies. His team has been at the forefront of developing AI-enabled and natural language-based platforms for omics data analysis and has pioneered agentic AI approaches for biomedical research. Collectively, these bioinformatics tools have more than 200,000 users worldwide.

Over the past 15 years, Dr. Liang has published more than 200 articles in prominent scientific journals and led multiple large-scale grants from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the National Cancer Institute (NCI), and the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) as PI or MPI, with more than \$20 million in external research funding.

Throughout his career, Dr. Liang has remained deeply committed to education and mentorship. He has taught at the MD Anderson Cancer Center UT Health Houston Graduate School of Biomedical

Sciences and Baylor College of Medicine and has mentored postdoctoral fellows and Ph.D. students across computational biology and cancer informatics.

His leadership extends nationally and internationally through large cancer data initiatives including service as Chair and co-Chair of multiple working groups in The Cancer Genome Atlas, co-leader of the International Cancer Genome Consortium's Pan Cancer Whole Genome Project, and co-Chair of the NCI Genomic Data Commons Quality Control Working Group.

His contributions to the field have been recognized with honors that include the 2025 Outstanding Achievement in Basic Cancer Research from the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR), the 2023 UT MD Anderson R. Lee Clark Prize, the 2020 AACR Team Science Award, and the 2018 UT MD Anderson Faculty Scholar Award. Dr. Liang is an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering.

I would like to express my appreciation to Michael Rosen, Ph.D., Chair and Professor of Biophysics, for his service as Chair of the Search Committee, and to all the Search Committee members – Samuel Achilefu, Ph.D., Wendy Chapman, Ph.D., Jaehyuk Choi, M.D., Ph.D., Nick Grishin, Ph.D., Anke Henning, Ph.D., Gary Hon, Ph.D., Steve Jiang, Ph.D., Amil Shah, M.D., Guanghua Xiao, Ph.D., Joan Conaway, Ph.D., and Eric Peterson, M.D., M.P.H. – for the dedication and insights they brought to this comprehensive national search. I am also grateful to the services of W. Lee Kraus, Ph.D., Professor and Director of the [Cecil H. and Ida Green Center for Reproductive Biology Sciences](#), who has served capably as the Interim Chair of the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics.

Dr. Liang brings extensive experience building multidisciplinary research programs and advancing artificial intelligence for biomedical discovery. In his dual roles, he will lead the continued growth of the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics while helping shape UT Southwestern's broader strategy for AI-enabled scientific discovery, strengthening connections among data science, basic research, and precision medicine.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Liang to UT Southwestern.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid.

W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D.

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Dean, UT Southwestern Medical School