

UCSF PATHOLOGY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 2: MAY 2019

LETTER FROM: OUR CURRENT CHAIR

Dear Alumni and Friends,

It is a wonderful honor and pleasure for me to be recently appointed as the Chair of Pathology. I first arrived at UCSF in 2005, as an assistant professor and over the last 14 years, I observed the transformation of our department into one of the preeminent departments of academic pathology in the U.S. This was poignantly illustrated this spring at the 2019 USCAP Meeting in Washington, D.C., where I witnessed first-hand the breadth and depth of the outstanding scientific accomplishments and diagnostic excellence of our faculty, fellows, residents and alumni. I am deeply grateful to Dr. Abul Abbas for his vision and leadership as our outgoing Chair and to countless individuals in our previous and current leadership for building a Department that is thriving academically. Over the upcoming years, my goal is to combine our Department's existing strengths in research and diagnostic pathology with emerging institutional efforts in genomic and precision medicine to further build an academic pathology department with an international reputation for cutting edge research in basic science, translational and diagnostic pathology.

Since I started as Chair in summer 2018, the Department has been fortunate to recruit nine outstanding faculty into our ranks. These individuals possess a wide spectrum of expertise in key specialty areas, including cytopathology, bone and soft tissue, genitourinary, gastrointestinal, head and neck, hematopathology, molecular and digital pathology. This vigorous growth in our faculty represents a crucial step forward for sustaining diagnostic excellence in our specialty-based practice model as well as for infusing new creativity and energy into our research and educational programs. In April 2019, we appointed Kelly McNeill as our new Director of Finance and Administration (also called our "MSO"). Kelly recently served as the Division Manager for Hematology/Oncology in the UCSF Department of Medicine, and she brings a wealth and breadth of experience in academic and clinical operations, human resources, and research management, as well as a strong understanding of the many complex systems within UCSF. I look forward to working with Kelly on the strategic needs of our Department, including our continuing clinical expansion, and the further development of our research, educational and academic missions.

Looking toward the future, the Department has been actively pursuing new opportunities and platforms to implement digital pathology as part of routine diagnostic practice. Although many challenges remain, creating a robust and practical digital workflow will be critical for incorporating computational tools and artificial intelligence into the future practice of pathology. In the research arena, we continue to seek new faculty, both basic science and translational, in order to solidify and expand our Departmental strengths in the basic mechanisms of disease, especially in the areas of cancer biology, neuropathology, and immunology.

An immensely exciting recent development at UCSF has been a major campus-wide initiative to re-imagine the Parnassus Heights campus, including ambitious plans to build a new hospital and several new research buildings. Our Department is committed to leading these efforts, which will afford new opportunities (and much needed space!) to grow our research and clinical enterprise. You can view the latest news on UCSF Parnassus at the following URL: <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2019/04/414306/ucsf-leaders-unveil-long-term-vision-transform-par-nassus-heights-campus>

Finally, we remain committed to train the next generation of pathologists. For our Department to remain in the upper academic echelon, it will be essential to sustain our competitive residency program, which recruits the nation's best medical students and trains them to become outstanding pathologists and physician-scientists. Once again, we have a stellar incoming class of residents and fellows, thanks to the efforts of numerous faculty and staff, and due to the leadership of our residency directors, Dr. Sarah Calkins (Pathology) and Kristie White (Lab Medicine). Looking ahead, we anticipate that our trainees will require a sophisticated understanding of new disciplines and innovations, such as bioinformatics and computational biology, given the ever-increasing push to integrate large datasets from genomics and other disruptive technologies into diagnostic practice.

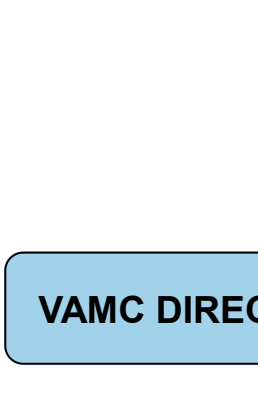
As you can see, these are tremendously exciting times for the Department of Pathology at UCSF. We welcome your input and I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you at USCAP and other venues in the years to come.

Best wishes,

Jayanta Debnath
Distinguished Professor and Chair
UCSF Department of Pathology

UPDATES

VAMC DIRECTOR



Dr. Laura Tabatabai, Professor of Pathology, T.S.B. Yen Endowed Chair for Chief of Pathology at SFVAMC, earned her medical degree from University of Missouri-Columbia, followed by residency training in AP/CP at Harvard Medical School's Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston, MA and subsequent Cytopathology fellowship training at M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, TX. She has served in leadership roles as the Co-Chair of our Current Issues in Anatomic Pathology Annual Meeting since 2009, and as the primary Chair now for 3 years; she also has chaired the UCSF Cytopathology Seminar as part of the Current Issues since 2004. Other leadership roles have included Executive Board for the Papanicolaou Society of Cytopathology for two consecutive elected terms (2013-19), Education Committee for the CSP since 2010, CAP Cytopathology Committee (2011-2017), Chair of PSC Education and Training Task Force, ASC's Cytology e-conference committee, and the American Board of Pathology as member of the Test Development and Advisory Committee.

She has served on several international working groups and co-authored chapters in seminal books including The Milan System for Reporting Salivary Gland Cytopathology, and The Paris System for Reporting Urinary Cytopathology, which has been widely adopted by leading academic institutions nationally and internationally. She is co-investigator on several NIH and DOD funded research grants aimed at investigation of epigenetics and molecular biomarkers in the progression and metastasis of genitourinary cancers, published more than 75 original peer reviewed articles in leading pathology and medical journals, and has served as the Chief of Pathology at SFVAH since 2015.

VAMC DIRECTOR MESSAGE

Our History:

The SFVAMC has been affiliated with UCSF for over 50 years. As an integral part of the larger UCSF academic family, SFVAMC Pathology is deeply committed to excellence in education, research, and service to further the greater UCSF academic Department mission while providing excellent care to our Veteran patients. Our distinguished faculty have made significant past, present and (likely future) contributions to the UCSF Department. The SFVA has provided career opportunity and served as a springboard for many of the current faculty leaders at UCSF and other academic institutions. Such leaders who all began their careers at the SFVAMC include:

- Dr. James McKerrow, Dean of the UCSD Skaggs School of Pharmacy
- Dr. Eric Huang, our current Autopsy Director, recently appointed as Vice-Chair of Research for the UCSF Department
- Dr. Sanjay Kakar, our former Chief of Pathology, now the Director of GI/Liver Service GI/Liver Fellowship Program at UCSF
- Dr. Sarah Calkins, now the current UCSF Residency Program Director
- Dr. Grace E. Kim, Vice-Chair of Clinical Operations at UCSF

We are proud to have succeeded in the recruitment and hiring of some of our top recent and upcoming graduates to join our team (more on that to come!) who will no doubt continue our clinical, educational, research, and service mission and to make significant contributions to the larger Department in the years to come.

Our Initiatives: Quality, Safety, and New Technology

- In the last few years, we've made quality of care and safety a priority and have implemented several initiatives to guarantee that our patients receive the best and safest care. These initiatives include:
- Acquiring a new state of the art portable ultrasound imaging equipment and examination table for safer and more efficient sample procurement in our FNA Clinic.
- Implementation of VoiceOver's new Voice recognition software and reporting system for improved efficiency, turnaround time, standardization, and the latest CAP tumor synoptic reporting that meet ACOS guidelines.
- Utilization of LEAN techniques to streamline internal and external consult processing and tracking.
- Hiring of additional laboratory staff and Lab Manager to oversee the Cytology laboratory, gross room, and autopsy room functions.
- Expansion of our multithreaded microscopes and revitalization and remodeling of conference rooms in re-purposed space with 4k microscope digital cameras and high resolution video monitors for increased viewing participation and enhanced conferencing experience.
- Importantly, in the age of molecular diagnostics, the VA's National Precision Oncology Program in partnership with Foundation Medicine now also allows us to provide our physicians with access to state of the art technology and genomic profiling assays to provide personalized cancer care to our patients.

Education and training—we have undertaken initiatives to enhance the education and resources available for our residency program. Our enthusiastic and well-versed faculty are fully committed and actively involved in:

- Teaching residents at regular weekly unknowns or didactic sessions
- Organization and participation in UCSF's annual Current Issues course and the weekly UCSF Grand Rounds conferences
- Medical student lab and small group teaching, and
- Presentation at multiple national and international meetings including the USCAP and other prominent pathology societies

The SFVAMC remains renowned for its research and development program:

- Our center is one of the largest VA R&D programs nationally, with over 200 principal investigators and career scientists and recipient of the largest allocation of research funding and five Centers of Excellence within the VHA.
- Within SFVA Pathology alone, our faculty have contributed to more than 50 publications and projects in the past two years alone (2018-2019) and, together, serve as primary or co-investigator on projects totaling more than \$1.1 million in funding.

Our People:

While we are extremely delighted about the initiatives from the last few years, we are most excited and proud of our department's most valuable resource: our people. Our faculty and staff are an incredibly talented, caring, and dedicated group of professionals committed to providing the best care to our Veteran patients in a generally under-resourced and heavily bureaucratized environment.

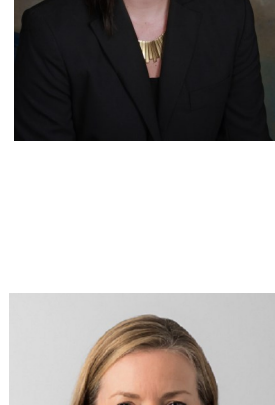
They are the front line who go the extra mile each day to assure our patients receive the best possible care despite inherent systemic and infrastructural challenges. And now, with our new talent, there's no doubt these efforts will continue to provide our patients with the best possible care.

Our Future:

With the successful implementation of recent initiatives, recruitment of new top talent, and our commitment to excellence, our future is certainly bright. We look forward to strengthening our partnerships and alliances, continuing to support and make significant contributions to the larger UCSF academic program, and embarking on a new journey and shared vision with our new Chair, Dr. Jay Debnath.

RESIDENCY PROGRAM:

Directors



**Sarah Calkins, MD, Assistant Professor:
Residency Program Director, Dept of Anatomic Pathology**

Dr. Calkins did her residency training in both Anatomic and Clinical Pathology at UCSF, as well as did fellowships in both surgical pathology and cytopathology from 2008-2014. She was the recipient of the Resident Teaching Award during her surgical pathology fellowship. She joined the UCSF faculty in 2014 (SFVA and UCSF sites), providing clinical service in cytopathology and surgical pathology with a focus on head and neck Pathology. She was appointed Associate Program Director in July 2016 to assist Dr. Patrick Treseler, and assumed the role of Program Director in June 2017 when Dr. Treseler retired.



**Kristie White, MD, MAEd, Associate Professor:
Residency Program Director, Dept of Laboratory Medicine**

Dr. White did her residency training in both Anatomic and Clinical Pathology at UCSF, as well as did fellowships in both surgical pathology and hematopathology from 2008-2014. During this time period, she also took time off to obtain a Masters Degree in Education at UC Berkeley (2012). She joined the Laboratory Medicine Department as faculty in 2014, where she provides clinical service in hematopathology with a focus on pediatric leukemia/lymphoma. Her research interests are in education related to competency and curriculum development. She served as Assistant Program Director to Dr. Enrique Terrazas upon her appointment as faculty, and was appointed program director in March 2015 when Dr. Enrique Terrazas stepped down from that position.

About the Program

Sarah and Kristie are a great team, and have embarked on several innovations in our already successful program. A major area of focus by the program directors is the resident selection and recruitment process. They have focused on holistic review of applications in an effort to foster diversity within the residency program, and an expanded formal selection committee that is being formed for the upcoming year. Residency interviews have also changed to a group interview day allowing the applicants to meet more trainees and faculty. This year the residency successfully matched 13 highly desired applicants. Innovations in education include changes in format from strictly lecture-based didactics to variations including small group and case based sessions. They have also created several sessions on professional development topics, including sessions on bioethics, professionalism, patient safety, and career development which have been received with great enthusiasm. The career development activities have ranged from interviewing skills to negotiating contracts. They've even brought in private practicing pathologists to share their experiences and welcome more if you've never's interested in volunteering! Our residents continue to be highly successful both in clinical and academic achievements during their training, and on followup, continue to do well in their professional careers in private practice, academics, and industry.

NEWS

Report on Department Involvement at United States and Canadian Academy of Pathology (USCAP) Annual Meeting

The 2019 Annual Meeting of USCAP (National Harbor, Maryland, Mar 16-22), involved a record number of UCSF faculty and trainees (66), who either co-authored 46 accepted abstracts (64 co-authors). Platform presentations accounted for 12 abstract presentations. UCSF trainees (18 total residents and fellows) were involved with at least 1 abstract, and several were involved with more than 1 abstract. Trainees were 1st authors on 19 of these abstracts, and 4 trainees presented a platform. Not all the abstract authors were able to attend, as someone had to remain at UCSF to sign out cases, but we were well represented, with 50 UCSF faculty and trainees attending the meeting. UCSF faculty members were not only very engaged as USCAP abstracts, but also involved in USCAP or Companion Society invited lectures or other leadership roles. Department faculty had invited presentations as part of Short Courses (Joseph Rabban, Thad Mully, Tarik Tihan, Karuna Garg), Companion Societies (Arie Perry, Melike Pekmezci, Tarik Tihan, Vignesh Walavalkar), and other speaking events, including a Special Course (Arie Perry), Interactive Microscopy (Sarah Umetsu), Long Course (Weih Wei) and Evening Specialty Conferences (Sanjay Kakar, Joseph Rabban, Melike Pekmezci).

Notable Leadership Roles in USCAP:

Dr. Arie Perry, our Chief of Neuropathology, was elected onto the Board of Directors for USCAP for a 3-year term, 2018-2021. The Board is very engaged in the governance of USCAP, so his role as 1 of 8 elected members is not only highly prestigious but also is a demanding as well as important role. Dr. Perry also serves on the Executive Council of the American Association of Neuropathologists. Dr. Kristie White serves as the Chair of the USCAP Membership Committee. Other faculty engaged in executive leadership roles in Companion Societies include Drs. Sanjay Kakar and Grace Kim as the President and Secretary-Treasurer respectively of the Hans Popper Hematopathology Society, Dr. Grace Kim as Executive Council Member of the Papanicolaou Society of Pathology, Dr. Britt-Marie Ljung as the Treasurer of the Papanicolaou Society, and Dr. Joseph Rabban as the Secretary of the International Society of Gynecologic Pathologists.

Awards:

UCSF faculty and trainees also were winners of prestigious awards from USCAP and other companion subspecialty societies. Kwon Wah Wen, MD, PhD, was the 2019 recipient of the F. Stephen Vogel Award for the best publication by a trainee in Pathology in the USCAP journal, *Modern Pathology* in 2018. His paper was entitled "Use of DNA flow cytometry in the diagnosis, risk stratification, and management of gastric epithelial dysplasia" (*Modern Pathology*, 2018; 31:1578-1597). This prestigious award not only recognizes his research and paper, but also honors the memory and achievements of Dr. Vogel as an outstanding pathologist, human being and mentor. Dr. Wen received a plaque and \$1000 during the USCAP Honors segment of the Maude Abbott Legacy portion of the USCAP Annual Meeting. Dr. Wen is now currently in his first year as Assistant Professor in the GI and Hematopathology subspecialty areas at UCSF. His mentor and senior author on the paper was Won-Tak Choi MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Pathology, who has considerable expertise in the flow cytometry application to dysplasia evaluation. The Papanicolaou Society of Cytopathology awarded Teresa Darragh, MD the prestigious 2019 Lifetime Achievement Award, presented at the PSC Companion Society. Of note, Drs. Theodore Miller and Britt-Marie Ljung have both received this award as well in recent years. The PSC also awarded Soo-Ryan Yang, MD, Cytopathology Fellow, 2nd prize, "Targeted deep sequencing of cell-free DNA from body cavity fluids with malignant, suspicious, and benign cytology", Faculty Mentor and senior author: Steve Long, MD. Dr. Long was also one of the co-authors on the 1st prize paper with a Stanford trainee as awardee.

USCAP Reception at USCAP:

The annual USCAP reception (Sunday evening Mar 17, 7-12 pm) was once again a great success, and very well attended by UCSF faculty and trainees (about 50), UCSF alumni, and other friends of the Department, for an estimated 300 attendees overall. There was never a dull moment for the entire 5 hours!! The department would like to thank Ms Ana Narvaez, Assistant to the Chair, for her work in organizing this reception and helping to maintain and update our alumni email list.

Other USCAP Courses in 2019:

UCSF faculty have already given an Interactive Microscopy Course at the new USCAP facility in Palm Springs in 2019. The faculty and subject area were as follows: Elham Khanafshar, Sarah Calkins, Annemieke VanZante, and Britt-Marie Ljung (FNA cytopathology); Sanjay Kakar (liver); and Rylan Gilmer (liver). In addition, Arie Perry is scheduled for a cytopathology course in Sept 2019.

UPCOMING EVENTS

You are Cordially Invited to:

Current Issues in Anatomic Pathology
May 22nd to May 25th

The Department of Pathology is pleased to announce that the 35th Annual Meeting of the Current Issues in Anatomic Pathology is still going strong after all these years!!

For any of you planning on attending, please note the new site this year:

The InterContinental Hotel,
Located at 888 Howard Street,
(at 5th Street near Yerba Buena Gardens, BART stop at Powell Station),
San Francisco, CA 94103.

The Henry Moon Lecturer this year is

Dr. Stuart Schnitt,

and

our other guest faculty includes:

Jason Hornick, John Goldblum, and Victor Reuter

(see attached brochure for more details).

Even if you don't attend the course, all alumni are invited to the Henry Moon

Lectureship at 4 pm, Friday, May 24, and to the reception that follows on Friday at

5 pm, and there will be no charge to attend these two events, unless you want to

receive a 1 hr credit for CME/SAMS. For CME credit, there is a nominal charge of \$45,

paid to the UCSF CME office (not to Pathology).

[Current Issues Brochure](#)

[Current Issues Registration](#)

[UCSF Pathology Department](#)