



# UCSF PATHOLOGY ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 8: APRIL 2020

## Message from the Editor

This newsletter is one we had originally planned to send about this time before the COVID-19 pandemic. I am not going into detail about our response again, but I do want to give you the brief followup that our pathology team is continuing the plan presented in the previous email and our workforce remains vigilant and well. UCSF is also responding as a unit to deal with the local pandemic, not only with hospital beds and excellent patient care, but also with the development and implementation of testing and by sending volunteer medical personnel to NYC. Stay vigilant, safe, and well!

Linda Ferrell

## Report about UCSF Pathology at 2020 USCAP Annual Meeting, Feb. 29 - Mar. 5, Los Angeles, CA

Although we are now working in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, before this took place, our department was highly involved with the USCAP Annual Meeting. (Of note, no one from our department was infected at that meeting, fortunately.) In total, our department had 54 faculty and 23 trainees (residents or post-docs), plus 1 staff member (Sarah Bowman) attending and/or involved with the meeting. We sent about 60-65 attendees who were presenting abstracts or performing other activities at the meeting. Our abstract presentations (52 total) included 18 of which were platform presentations, and the remaining poster sessions. UCSF trainees (23 residents and fellows) were involved with 21 of these abstracts, with multiple trainees involved with more than 1 abstract, and 6 trainees presented a platform session. One of our trainees, CJ Lucas, was also invited to do a “moderated poster sessions”, a new program at USCAP designed to highlight a few of the accepted abstracts.

UCSF faculty were not only as USCAP busy with abstracts, but also busy presenting at USCAP and Companion Society course or participating in other leadership roles. Dept faculty had invited presentations as part of Short Courses (Karuna Garg, Joe Rabban, Tarik Tihan), Companion Societies (Kirk Jones, Sanjay Kakar, Grace Kim, Britt-Marie Ljung, Joe Rabban, Richard Jordan), and other speaking events, including Interactive Microscopy (Umetsu) and Evening Specialty Conferences (Elhan Khanafshar, Joe Rabban, Thad Mully, David Solomon, Sarah Umetsu, Iwei Yeh, Annemieke Van Zante).

Awards: Two of our UCSF faculty also were winners of highly prestigious awards from USCAP:

David Solomon, MD, PhD, Ramzi S Cotran Young Investigator Award, which recognizes a body of investigative work which has contributed significantly to the diagnosis and understanding of human disease. This award is restricted to USCAP members who are under the age of 45.

Linda Ferrell, MD received the Distinguished Pathologist Award as recognition of distinguished service in the development of the discipline of pathology. This award is presented to an individual who is recognized for making major contributions to pathology over the years.

In addition, USCAP has an “Honored Mentors” program, where trainees and mentees can honor a mentor through a donation to the USCAP foundation, and multiple UCSF faculty were honored in this manner:

<b>Honored Mentor</b>	<b>Mentee</b>
Linda Ferrell	Wendy Frankel, Sarah Umetsu
Charles Zaloudek	Steve Long
Andrew Horvai	Amir Qorbani
Zoltan Laszik	Vighnesh Walavalkar
Robert Ohgami	KW Wen
Joe Rabban	Rebecca Wolsky

Other Society awards presented at USCAP: Britt-Marie Ljung, MD, received the International Cytopathology Society’s James Reagan Award, which is a lifetime achievement award honoring her work in Fine needle Aspiration, her support and contributions to Acta Cytologica and the International Academy of Cytopathology, and her exemplary care of her patients. The IAC announced this award in 2019, but was not able to present the award to her in person until now.

Notable leadership roles in USCAP: Dr Arie Perry, our Chief of Neuropathology, continues to serve on the Board of Directors for USCAP (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 is also a demanding and important USCAP leadership role. Others serve in committee roles in USCAP as follows: Dr Kristie White as the Chair of the USCAP Membership Committee, Kwun Wen as member of the Vogel Award Committee, and Dianna Ng as member of USCAP abstract review board.

Other faculty engaged in executive or other leadership roles in Companion or other affiliated Societies include: Drs Sanjay Kakar and Grace Kim as key members of the Hans Popper Hepatopathology Society, Sanjay as President and Grace as Secretary-Treasurer; Dr Grace Kim as Chair of Membership/Website Committee of the Pancreatobiliary Pathology Society; Dr Grace Kim as Council Member for the Association of Directors of Anatomic and Surgical Pathology, and as a presenter at that meeting; Dr Joseph Rabban as the Secretary of the International Society of Gynecologic Pathologists and Chair of their Educational Committee; Ron Balassanian as 2 memberships in committee roles for American Society of Cytology.

UCSF reception at USCAP: The annual UCSF reception (Sunday evening Mar 2, 8-11 pm) was once again a great success, and very well attended by UCSF faculty and trainees, UCSF alumni, and other friends of the Department, for an estimated 200+ attendees overall.

## Other Awards

The American Society of Investigative Pathology has awarded 2 of their 6 annual 2021 Meritorious Awards to Dr. Jayanta Debnath, Chair, and Dr Abul Abbas, Emeritus Professor and former Chair. This ASIP award recognizes outstanding achievements at various stages of a career in biomedical research and are presented in recognition of contributions to pathology, excellence in research, outstanding teaching, mentorship, and leadership in the field of pathology.

# Undergraduate Pathology Education

## Directors:



**Raga Ramachandran, MD PhD, Associate Professor  
Director of Medical Education**

Dr. Ramachandran joined the UCSF GI-Hepatobiliary Division as a faculty member in 2010, after completing AP and Lab Medicine residency training as well as fellowships in Surgical Pathology and Gastrointestinal and Hepatobiliary Pathology, all at UCSF. She is the San Francisco site pathologist for the Hepatitis B Research Network, a consortium of hospitals with expertise in care for individuals with chronic infection with the hepatitis B virus.

Her interest in education governance began in her senior year of high school, when she was appointed by Gov. George Deukmejian as the student member of the California State Board of Education; in this capacity, she had full voting rights on this 11-member policy-making body for the state's K-12 academic standards, curriculum, assessments, and accountability. In 2014, Dr. Ramachandran was selected for the Harvard Macy Institute Program for Educators in the Health Professions, enabling her to take on a leadership role in curricular innovation at UCSF. Currently, she serves as a Co-Director of the Pathology Longitudinal Foundational Science Thread, a Co-Director of Ground School (the first block of MS1, in which students are introduced to foundational concepts in pathology, pharmacology, structural anatomy, radiology, and immunology), and the departmental career advisor for medical students. Dr. Ramachandran has chaired several curriculum-related committees at UCSF and serves as the extramural member of the Curriculum Review Subcommittee at the UC Davis School of Medicine. In 2016, she was elected to the UCSF/Haile T. Debas Academy of Medical Educators, a collaborative faculty society supporting the education mission of UCSF, and was appointed to a five-year term as the Academy Endowed Chair in Pathology Medical Student Education in 2017. Her interests include faculty development in teaching, mentoring of students and residents, and exploring the emerging field of diversity, equity, and inclusion as seen through the lens of pathology.



**Marta Margeta, MD PhD, Associate Professor  
Associate Director of Medical Education**

Dr. Margeta joined the UCSF Neuropathology Division as a primarily research-focused faculty member in 2007, after completing her residency in Anatomic Pathology in 2003, a fellowship in Neuropathology in 2005, and additional postdoctoral research training in 2007, all at UCSF. Clinically, her work centers on neuromuscular pathology, and she has served as the Medical Director of Neuromuscular Pathology Laboratory since 2012. In the period from

2005 to 2015, Dr. Margeta's main educational focus was on the neuropathology curriculum, which she has directed since 2009 and in which she has had a chance to successfully pilot various innovative pathology education methods. In 2015, during the transition to Bridges curriculum, Dr. Margeta was appointed Associate Director of Medical Education; currently, she is involved in all aspects of UCSF pathology education and serves as a Co-Director of the Pathology Longitudinal Foundational Science Thread. In addition, Dr. Margeta has chaired the Neuropathology Fellowship Clinical Competency Committee since 2016, is an active participant in several UCSF and system-wide Academic Senate committees, and serves as an Associate Editor of three different scientific journals. Within the education domain, her interests include education scholarship, curriculum development, and dissemination of curricular innovations; she served as a member of the UCSF Mapping and Integration Curriculum Governance Committee from 2017-19 and currently serves as a Co-Chair of the Resource Bank Committee for the Group for Research in Pathology Education (an international pathology society). As a recognition of her medical education accomplishments, Dr. Margeta was elected to the UCSF/Haile T. Debas Academy of Medical Educators in 2018, where she currently serves as a member of the Academy's Scholarship Committee.

# Program Curriculum

Throughout the US, traditional discipline-based medical school curricula have been replaced by the systems of medical education that emphasize both horizontal and vertical integration of medical knowledge: students study multiple medical disciplines in parallel, rather than sequentially, and are exposed to both basic science and clinical subjects throughout all four years of medical school. Keeping students engaged in pathology (both as a knowledge domain and as a career option) in such an integrated curriculum can be a challenge. Since the introduction of UCSF Bridges Curriculum in 2016, Raga and Marta have successfully tackled this challenge by working closely together, and with the help and support of other departmental faculty, to advance all aspects of UCSF undergraduate pathology education.

The Bridges Curriculum consists of three phases, Foundations 1 (months 1-18), Foundations 2 (months 19-30), and Career Launch (months 31-48); pathology is taught in all three phases, either as a required or an elective subject. [We have 155 students in the current MS1 class, including those in the traditional MD program, Medical Scientist Training Program, PRIME-US (program in medical education for the urban underserved), and SJV-PRIME (San Joaquin Valley PRIME); the number of students is expected to grow to 162 with the incoming first year class.]

In Foundations 1, the bulk of pathology education occurs in 2-hour small group discussion seminars of up to 15 students, which are facilitated by faculty, fellows, or residents, and are based on the curriculum and teaching materials developed by Marta and Raga. These small groups provide an opportunity for students to closely interact with a core group of pathologists throughout their pre-clerkship studies, thereby mastering the fundamentals of pathology while getting a chance to observe and be inspired by practicing pathologists who serve as positive role models. During this phase, our pathology curriculum emphasizes mechanisms of disease and clinicopathologic correlation, but also introduces students to various key aspects of diagnostic pathology.

In Foundations 2, students primarily concentrate on their core clerkships, but are also required to attend longitudinal curriculum sessions on diagnostic testing and resource management as part of the Appropriate Use of Diagnostic Tests seminar series, which covers radiology and pathology topics. [At this point, the class includes another 16 students from the UCSF-UC Berkeley Joint Medical Program (JMP), a five-year combined degree program that enables students to earn an MS in Health and Medical Sciences at UC Berkeley's School of Public Health.] During Foundations 2, our department also offers a new elective called Demystifying Pathology, which is directed by Marta and is open to UCSF clerkship students for two weeks at a time. Students on this introductory elective rotate through diagnostic pathology services at Mission Bay and Parnassus to learn about diagnostic pathology workflow, specimen processing, and effective communication with the Pathology Department. Over the past two years, this elective was taken by ~30 UCSF students, who have rated it very highly (4.6 in 2018 and 4.7 in 2019 out of a maximum of 5).

During Career Launch, we offer 2- and 4-week advanced electives under Raga's supervision; the primary goal of these electives, which are open to both UCSF and visiting applicants, is to nurture the students who are seriously considering or are already committed to a career in pathology by further developing their diagnostic skills and by fostering their interest in different aspects of our field. A secondary goal is to promote cross-talk between departments for students who are matching outside of pathology but want to understand our clinical workflow. In addition, the department offers many opportunities for student scholarly projects, which are a graduation requirement for all Bridges students.

Another innovative aspect of Bridges Curriculum is the replacement of standard multiple-choice questions by open-ended (essay-style) questions on all high-stakes exams in Foundations 1; these questions are designed to promote deep learning and content integration across multiple areas of study. UCSF students now take USMLE Step 1 after Foundations 2, and the results from the first cohort of Bridges students indicate that the use of open-ended questions is effective: all students in the class of 2020 passed the exam on their first try and with a higher average score compared to the prior three classes. Importantly, Bridges students also performed better on the pathology portion of the Step 1 exam compared to the recent pre-Bridges student cohorts. In addition to these measurable improvements in the students' pathology knowledge base, Raga's and Marta's efforts have led to rekindling of student interest in pathology as a career: our Pathology Student Interest Group, for which Raga serves as the faculty advisor and which has been revitalized under new student leadership, stimulates early interest in our field and is a promising source of elective students and potential residency applicants.

To highlight the effectiveness of these new educational approaches in an era when many of our peer institutions are concerned about decreasing student interest in pathology, Raga and Marta take an active role in two societies that focus on pathology education [Group for Research in Pathology Education (an international society) and the Undergraduate Medical Education Section of the Association of Pathology Chairs (a US society)] by serving in leadership roles and by regularly presenting plenary lectures and faculty workshops on various educational topics.

## Department Research Retreat 2020

The Department hosted our third annual Research Retreat, Feb 8, 2020, Presidio Officers Club, San Francisco. The retreat centered around fourteen 20-min oral presentations by faculty and fellows of some aspect of their recent studies, supplemented by 14 posters from other department members for discussion at breaks. About 65 dept members, both faculty and trainees, attended. The organizers were Eric Huang (chair), Kelly McNeill (office manager) and Brad Stohr, with Anatoly Urisman, Nancy Joseph, David Solomon, and Linda Ferrell assisting as committee members.

The day kicked with a timely topic related to diagnostic methods for rapid diagnosis of infections (as also used for corona virus) using metagenomic sequencing, given by invited guest Laboratory Medicine faculty Dr Charles Chiu. Dr Arun Wiita, guest faculty from Lab Med spoke on proteomics and nanobodies as new approach to cellular immunity. Other presenters included Sarah Bowman (Staff), Emily Chan, Jarish Cohen, Eric Huang, Su-Yang (SY) Liu, Ursula Lang, Steve Nishimura, Amber Nolan, Bob Ohgami, Rushika Perera, Gabrielle Rizzuto, Carolyn Sangokoya, Eliah Shamir, and David Solomon.

Poster presenters were Beatriz Rodriguez Alonso, Jyoti Goad, Nancy Greenland, Rohit Gupta, Alex Kikuchi, CJ Lucas, Aras Mattis, Gabrielle Rizzuto, Emily Sloan, Carolyn Sangokoya, and David Solomon.

As we look forward to the future for the department and the exciting initiatives ahead, please consider supporting us. Your support impacts the greatest needs of the department, clinical research, and education and training

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