



SUE & BILL GROSS
STEM CELL RESEARCH CENTER
 UNIVERSITY of CALIFORNIA • IRVINE

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Researchers at the Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center believe stem cells offer hope to

APRIL 2015

From the Director's Desk



It is spring, the season of seeds sprouting and flowers blooming. It is appropriate to celebrate the beauty and promise of spring with our third annual Stem Cells Offer Hope art exhibition and wine reception, ***Bold Expressions***. Once again, on May 7 we will enjoy views through the microscope of the beauty of cells and tissues regaining health and function with the aid of stem cells. These striking images are made even more interesting by the opportunity to talk with the scientists who made them and learn about their research and the exciting potential of stem cells to advance medical science. I hope you will join us on May 7 at ***Bold Expressions***. I know you will enjoy meeting the scientists and viewing the colorful photomicrographs. You may even want to bid on one of these unique images for your home or office.

This has been a period with lots of important news for us at the Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center. Leading the headlines are two developments in the clinical application of stem cells in patients. We recently learned that the stem cell therapy developed by UCI's team led by Dr. Henry Klassen and Dr. Jing Yang has been given the "green

treat a host of conditions from cancer to stroke and from age related blindness to diabetes. They are dedicating their lives to make it happen. Your involvement is vital to their success.

Your Gift Can Help Us Go Further Faster ~ Thanks for Your Support!

light" by the FDA for administration to patients with the blinding disease Retinitis Pigmentosa. This study will be done in cooperation with UCI's Gavin Herbert Eye Institute and will be supported by UCI's new "Alpha Stem Cell Clinic" directed by Dr. Steve Cramer. The Alpha Clinic is a joint program with UCLA supported by CIRM, the California stem cell agency, and is designed to support and assist clinical development of new stem cell programs. We are thrilled to see our vision of stem cell therapeutics coming into reality. The promise of stem cells as therapy is truly blossoming now.

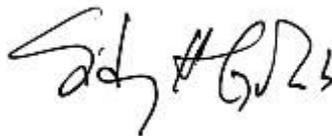
Other great news includes recent major stem cell grants to Dr. Mathew Blurton-Jones for Alzheimer's disease research, Dr. Leslie Thompson for her program in Huntington's Disease research, and Dr. Weian Zhao received a major new NIH grant to develop new diagnostic technologies. Dr. Zhao was also honored by UCI's Institute for Clinical and Translational Science as the Outstanding Junior Faculty Scientist of the Year. Further details about these and other stories are contained in the newsletter.

These grants were won by our faculty in a time of extraordinary constraint of the federal medical research budget. New NIH grant applications face the daunting prospect of a funding competition in which less than 10% of the meritorious projects submitted are funded. To help our investigators, we instituted a stem cell "seed" grant program. These small grants will allow a scientist to test out a new idea and to obtain the preliminary "proof of concept" results that can grow into a competitive project. This "seeds for stem cells" program is an excellent way to support the most innovative ways to develop stem cell science.

Recognition of the Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center continues to grow as evidenced by recent visits to the Center by such notables as California State Assembly Member Travis Allen, Jonathan Thomas, the Chair of the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (the governing board of CIRM) and frequent visits by journalists.

You too are invited to visit our Center, to see what we are doing, and to meet our scientists. I hope to see you on May 7th. Stem Cells Offer Hope is a great way to learn about the exciting research that is happening here and to support novel, early-stage stem cell investigations.

Sincerely,



Sidney H. Golub, PhD

A SPECIAL INVITATION

Join us for "Bold Expressions"



Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center scientists invite you to **Bold Expressions** featuring extraordinary images of human cells that represent hope for people affected by life's most debilitating conditions. Join us for an exclusive opportunity to talk with internationally renowned scientists about the art of their research. Images will be sold that evening through silent auction, with proceeds supporting novel, early-stage stem cell investigations.

Tickets: \$50 general, \$35 with UC Irvine ID

Thank you to our Platinum sponsor: The Thorp Family

RSVP Required. For information, call: 949-824-9021 or email, jbriggs@uci.edu

[Click here to view artwork from past exhibitions](#)

RESEARCH NEWS

\$4 Million Retinal Disease Grant



A \$4 million CIRM grant was awarded to Dr. Magdalene J. Seiler, and partner Dr. Hans Keirstead president of Neostem Oncology.

The goals of the research are to generate three-dimensional retinal tissue, to investigate the ability of adult induced pluripotent stem cells to restore sight in rodent models of retinal degeneration and to make eventual preparations for clinical use of the tissue.

\$5 million Huntington's disease Grant



“These stem cell lines offer a possible long-term treatment approach that could relieve the tremendous suffering experienced by HD patients and their families,” Leslie Thompson said.

Leslie Thompson has been awarded \$5 million by the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) to continue her CIRM-funded effort to develop stem cell treatments for Huntington's disease.

\$1.15 Million Alzheimer's Research Grant



Dr. Mathew Blurton-Jones was awarded \$1.15 million as part of CIRM's Tools & Technologies Initiative to improve the ability to generate and study microglia from human pluripotent stem cells. Microglia serve as the primary immune cells within the brain and are strongly implicated in Alzheimer's disease and many other brain disorders.

[Read more here](#)

[For more on Matthew Blurton-Jones's research click here](#)

\$1.2 Million Grant for Diagnostic Technologies

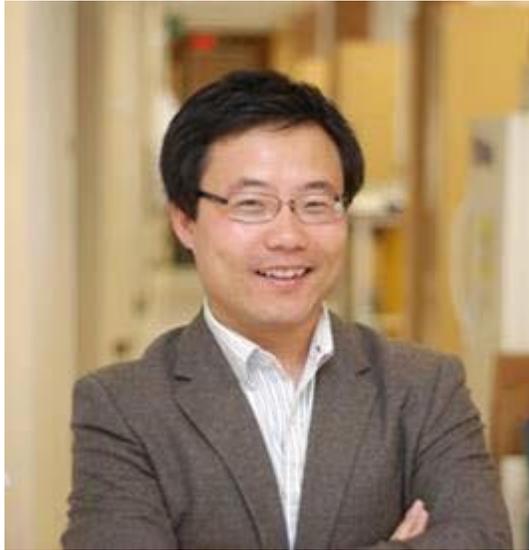


Dr. Weian Zhao and his team have received a \$1.2 million grant from NIH for their work on a new technology that can detect bacterial invaders with unprecedented speed, sensitivity.

In as little as 90 minutes, Integrated Comprehensive Droplet Digital Detection or IC 3D can detect bacteria in milliliters of blood with single-cell sensitivity; no cell culture is needed.

[Read more here](#)

Young Investigator of the Year



Dr. Weian Zhao has been selected to receive the Young Investigator of the Year Award from UCI's Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (ICTS). The award recognizes his contribution in developing new insights and knowledge in the pursuit of improving human health and in linking basic science with clinical application.

Dr. Zhao's talent and creativity have been recognized by numerous awards including 2012 MIT's Technology Review TR35 Award: the World's Top Young Investigators under age 35 and the 2014 NIH Director's New Innovator Award.

Snowboarder Tours Center



**“UCI’s ground-breaking work has the potential to one day cure many types of acute and chronic injuries, and brings hope for recovery for Alyona and thousands of others like her.”-
Assemblyman Travis Allen**

On Nov 27, Assemblyman Travis Allen (R-Huntington Beach) and world renowned snowboarder Alyona Alekhina toured Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center (SCRC) to learn more about our work to repair, regenerate, and recover mobility after spinal cord injuries.

[Read more here](#)

SEMINARS AND TOURS

A Healing Art: The Yin and Yang of Dance and Neurorehabilitation

Professor Kelli Sharp explains how dance (and all its components including human touch) and science can work synergistically together to improve the lives of individuals with neurological disorders.

April 22, 2015 from 3:30 - 5:30 pm

University Club Library

[Click here to rsvp](#)

Spring Seminar Series

Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center Spring Seminars are held in the Edward O. Thorp Conference Center on the fourth floor of Gross Hall: A CIRM Institute.

For more information about the seminar series which is open to the public contact Alma Castro 949-824-9621 almac2@uci.edu or [click here](#)

Tour Sue & Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center

Now you can get a behind-the-scenes peek at the center and learn first hand from the scientists about the hope that stem cells offer.

Upcoming 2015 Tour Dates:
September 24th – 1:30-3:00pm

For more information and to register for a tour, contact:
 Karen Kirkbride 949-824-1677
karen.kirkbride@uci.edu or [click here](#)

"When Science Outpaces Law: Stem Cells, Ethics and Informed Consent"

BIOETHICS CONFERENCE - Friday, November 13, 2015

Organizers include center interim director, Sidney Golub, SCRC faculty members Aileen Anderseon and Brian Cummings and Briare Michele Goodwin from UCI School of Law. They will be joined by keynote speakers in the field of bioethics for this informative one day conference.

GET INVOLVED

Stem Cells Offer Hope Society

The **Stem Cells Offer Hope Society (SCOHS)** is a newly formed annual giving society founded on the belief that stem cells offer hope to treat a host of debilitating diseases and conditions. Annual participation in the society allows you to become personally involved in our quest to improve the lives of so many suffering from disease or injury.

Your gift to SCOHS no matter the size will enable us to:

- Conduct early stage research
- Advance critical research in areas such as diabetes, cancer, eye disease and more
- Continue our viatl collaboration with researchers across the globe

You can be a part of this hope and champion progress as we strive to fulfill the promise of stem cells.

For more information on SCOHS, contact:
 Karen Kirkbride @ 949-824-1677 or karen.kirkbride@uci.edu

Support Our Stem Cell Seed Grant Program

These small grants will allow a scientist to test out a new idea and to obtain the preliminary "proof of concept" results that can grow into a competitive project. This "seeds for stem cells" program is an excellent

way to support the most innovative ways to develop stem cell science.

Stem cell research has the potential to change the future of medicine.

For more about the program and how you can help, contact:

Janice Briggs at 949-824-0091 or jbriggs@uci.edu

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