

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

URMC DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

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RESIDENTS SHOWCASE PATHOLOGY AT MEDICAL CAREERS EVENT



Three Pathology residents volunteered their time at the annual Student National Medical Association (SNMA) Pre-Medical Conference hosted by current medical students on Saturday, Jan. 30.

Drs. Sapna Patel, Diana Agostini-Vulaj, and Sachica Cheri participated in the daylong event which exposed high school and college students to the field of medicine. The residents were joined by former cytopathology fellow and URMC resident, Dr. Amanda Martin, as well as current URMC medical students. Pathology faculty, Dr. Metlay and Dr. Goldman, also helped residents choose pertinent cases for the workshop.

Residents organized a hands-on activity; a pathology lab with a focus on cardiac pathology. In addition, Sachica and Diana participated in the physician luncheon where they answered student questions and spoke more in depth about their journeys into the medical field.



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CHAIR'S COLUMN



Dr. Bruce Smoller



Dr. Hiroshi Myamoto



Dr. Michael Drage



Dr. Nicole Pecora



Dr. Yi Ding

We are very excited about the continued growth and development of our department. Dr. Hiroshi Myamoto will be returning to Rochester as the director of the GU Pathology section on July 1 after several years spent at Johns Hopkins University. In addition to overseeing our expanding GU unit, Hiroshi will continue with his groundbreaking research in prostate cancer. Dr. Michael Drage will be joining the GI Pathology section this summer, having finished training in GI Pathology and Cytopathology at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. His wife, Dr. Nicole Pecora will also be joining the department as a new member of the Microbiology Division. Nicole will be expanding the molecular diagnostics aspects of the Microbiology laboratories and pursuing research in the field.

Dr. Yi Ding, will also be helping with our rapidly burgeoning Molecular Diagnostics unit, joining us in July upon completion of her fellowship training in Molecular Pathology and Hematopathology at Cornell and NYU.

Dr. Caroline Dignan will be moving from the Medical Examiner's office to URMC beginning in June. Caroline will serve as the new director of our Autopsy service. She has many years of experience at the ME's office where she has served since completing her Forensic Pathology fellowship program at the University of New Mexico, one of the most prestigious programs in the country. At least for now, the clinical services at Strong Memorial Hospital are replete with subspecialty expertise across all aspects of our field. Embodied within these same personnel, our clinically oriented research endeavors continue to grow and to improve.

As UR Medicine continues to develop a regional strategy throughout New York, the Department of Pathology and



Dr. Caroline Dignan



Tiina Walsh



Susan Less

Laboratory Medicine remains a central part of the program. We are actively recruiting for a pathologist to help with the work at FF Thompson and are involved in strategic planning discussions with each of the affiliated hospitals regarding optimization of laboratory testing across the entire enterprise. In some cases, centralized testing will make the most sense, while in other situations, testing will be best situated in on-site laboratories at the affiliated hospitals. The driving forces at play include preservation of patient care while providing standardized quality measures across the enterprise and providing enterprise-wide efficiencies during these difficult financial times. The department was saddened to lose Tiina Walsh in a "shuffling" of Human Resource/Business Partners throughout the institution. Tiina served the department admirably in many different positions over several decades. Her expertise will be missed. Ms. Susan Less has been assigned to our department moving forward and we are optimistic that she will continue to serve the needs of our huge and complicated department.

-Bruce Smoller, M.D.

RESEARCHERS PRESENT ABSTRACTS AT USCAP MEETING

Abstracts authored by more than 20 URMC researchers were presented at the annual meeting of the U.S. and Canadian Academy of Pathology held March 12-18 in Seattle, Wash.

Seven Pathology faculty, nine residents, and two fellows attended the meeting. A total of 17 abstracts were represented out of the 2,000 total at the event. The following collaborated on at least one abstract: Diana Adlowitz, Sohaib Abu-Farsakh, Diana Agostini-Vulaj, Rebecca Amorese, Mary Barrett, Laura Bratton, W. Richard Burack, Sachica Cheris, Amber El-Halaby, Jennifer Findeis-Hosey, Raul Gonzalez, David Hicks, Chad Hudson, Jerome Jean-Gilles, Hani Katerji, Amy LaLonde, Loralee McMahon, Nisha Patel, Paul Rothberg, Kristin Skinner, Janice Spence, Shana Straub, Ping Tang, Bradley Turner, Guang-Qian Xiao, Xi Wang, Tong Tong Wu, Qi Yang, and Zhongren Zhou.

In addition to presenting research, URMC Pathology held its first ever cocktail reception during conference week for current trainees and faculty and department alumni on March 14.

HIGH MARKS FOR BI-ANNUAL LABORATORY INSPECTION

The department celebrated high marks for biannual inspections, first by the College of American Pathologists (CAP) in November 2015 and again by New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) in March 2016. Nathan Loria, director of operations, said both teams of inspectors shared positive feedback on the overall quality of our lab procedures. “We have excellent quality across this department,” said Loria. “The supervisors in every area have been very compliant. It just confirms my belief that we have an excellent laboratory. I walk away impressed by the people we have here.”

FRIENDS OF STRONG CONTRIBUTES OVER \$110K TO DEPARTMENT



Our department is benefiting from donations provided by Friends of Strong, a volunteer-based fundraising organization that supports Strong Memorial Hospital.

Friends of Strong allocated a total of \$110,004 in 2015. These funds were used to purchase lab equipment including a triple headed microscope, four centrifuges, a spectrophotometer, a tissue cassette printer and gel photography system.

“The Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine is both thankful and gratified at the generous contributions from the Friends of Strong,” said chair, Dr. Bruce Smoller. “So often, a supporting department such as ours, and its needs fall beneath the radar screens of well-meaning organizations and individuals and we are

genuinely delighted that the Friends of Strong recognize the manifold important functions of our department.”

Friends of Strong is supported by proceeds from the SMH Gift Shop, Finger Lakes Coffee Roasters locations, the Specialty Shop, and Baby Prints Photography. Visit www.fos.urmc.edu to learn more.

In photo: From left, Friends of Strong Council President and volunteer, Rose Faucette, Pathology Department Chair Dr. Bruce Smoller, Friends of Strong Director Sandy Arbasak, and Pathology Vice Chair for Administration David Strong.

SHOWING OUR COLORS



Pathology staff participated in Jersey Day for the department’s annual post holiday luncheon. The event was held in Café 601 on Thursday, Jan. 28. Staff were encouraged to wear a jersey of their favorite sports team, snack on jersey cookies provided by Sweet Blessings Bakery and enter drawings for prizes.

RESIDENCY TRAINING PROGRAM OFFERING NEW FELLOWSHIP

The residency program is pleased to announce its first ever transfusion medicine (TM) fellowship. Led by Drs. Scott Kirkley and Amy Schmidt, the program is currently accepting applicants for July 2016. This one-year fellowship program, approved by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), will include training held at URMC and the Northeast Division Red Cross Blood Services.

Schmidt said the fellowship is an excellent opportunity for residents to specialize in TM.

“It’s nice to teach residents the background, but this will be a chance to really instruct someone who is part the next generation of blood bankers,” said Schmidt.

The blood banking and transfusion medicine training programs received ACGME accreditation this year. This is a national certification conducted each year based on criteria including resident board exam scores and survey data from residents and faculty. Dr. Kirkley, director of the Pathology residency training program, said the designations signify the program’s consistency with standard guidelines for graduate medical training programs nationwide.

RESIDENT ROOM GETS FACELIFT



Pathology residents celebrated the opening of a new and improved study room. Renovations to the space included new cubicle walls, carpet and a fresh paint job. The room is located on the second floor at 2-6440 and was previously home to cytopathology offices, which moved to 2-2100 in 1997.

WHERE THEY’RE HEADED

Where will our current Pathology residents and fellows be going from here? Here are their plans to move on to new professional opportunities come July.

RESIDENTS (2015-16)

Chad Hudson, MD, PhD – Hematopathology Fellowship / University of Rochester Medical Center (2-yr.)

Michael Magguilli, MD – Cytopathology Fellowship / University of Rochester Medical Center, following 2017-18 – Forensic Pathology Fellowship / Cuyahoga Cleveland Medical Examiners Office

Meenal Sharma, MBBS – GI Fellowship / University of Rochester Medical Center

Bibiana Steinbauer, MD – Cytopathology Fellowship / University of Jacksonville Florida

YEAR-OUT STUDENT FELLOW

Sandra Toth – Continuing Medical School / University of Rochester Medical Center

FELLOWS

Mary Barrett, MD (Current GU Fellow) – Dermatopathology Fellowship / Boston University

Laura Bratton, MD (Current GI Fellow) – Entering Practice - Delta Pathology, Lafayette, LA

Dion Middleton, MD (Current Department Fellow) – Surgical Pathology Fellowship / Hartford Hospital, Hartford, CT

RESIDENTS (2016-17)

Diana Agostini-Vulaj, DO – GI Fellowship / University of Rochester Medical Center

Meenakshi Bansal, MBBS – Hematopathology Fellows / University of Rochester Medical Center

Sachica Cheris, MD – Cytopathology Fellowship /Duke University, Durham, NC, Surgical Pathology Fellowship directly after Cytopathology Fellowship / Duke University

Sapna Patel, MD – Hematopathology Fellowship / University of Pennsylvania

Shana Straub, MD – Forensic Fellowship / New York City – Office of Chief Medical Examiner

PATHOLOGY KEY IN TISSUE BANK PARTNERSHIP



What it is: The department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine is now the gatekeeper of a human tissue bank at URM. The University has signed a 3-year contract with German-based company, Indivumed, to allow patients to give access to having their tissues classified and used for cancer research worldwide. The operation is fully funded by Indivumed, a startup founded by Dr. Harmut Juhl in 2002. The company will fully fund the biobank in exchange for half of the available samples.

How does it work? Cancer patients at Wilmot will have the option of giving consent to allow samples of their tissues - taken from biopsies and other procedures - catalogued and used for research. When consenting patients are in surgery, an employee will be stationed in the operating room to immediately take tissue to Surgical Pathology to be examined by a pathologist. The process must be completed within moments of the extraction. When the tissue arrives, a pathologist must first examine a segment to determine a patient diagnosis. Once confirmed, the remaining tissue is divided into samples that are labeled and entered into a database. Some will be set aside for Indivumed's use. This whole process is overseen by Dr. David Zhou who serves as director of the bank. Dr. David Hicks helped establish protocol for managing samples from the second they arrive to Surg-Path.

How will it be used? URM has not yet established protocol for deciding who gets access to the tissue first. Dr. Smoller said this will be determined by a group of URM leaders. "(Participating) will increase our profile in the research realm at URM," said Smoller. "One of the goals is to build our research profile by accessing the available resources."

POSTER SESSION SET FOR APRIL 26

Pathology will hold a poster session in the north end of Café 601 on Tuesday, April 26.

This event coincides with Laboratory Professionals Week and will feature posters from different areas within the department. Pathology is the first URM department to pilot the open house format.

Members of the public and URM community are invited to learn about our operations and professions. URM staff will have the opportunity to sign up for tours of the various laboratory areas. Posters will be staffed at various times throughout the day (schedule forthcoming).

FOND FAREWELL



In March, Billie Briscoe retired after 45 years of service in the Phlebotomy division. During that time, she impacted the lives of many patients and coworkers. She addressed her colleagues at the Phlebotomy staff meeting on Feb. 24 and encouraged them to support each other "like family" in the workplace. Thank you, Billie, and you will be greatly missed!

FOCUS ON FACULTY: DR. PING TANG (CONT.)

Dr. Tang's expertise has become a valuable resource to the department and greater URM community. She recently provided recommendations to a team of researchers led by Edward Brown III, Ph.D., associate professor of biomedical engineering at the James P. Wilmot Cancer Center, who published findings in the Journal BMC Cancer on light patterns emitted by malignant cancer cells. Dr. Tang advised Braun to focus on the clinical implications of his experiment, which helped him steer the research toward breast cancer treatment prior to bone metastasis.

Ping had a lifelong desire to become an MD. Both her parents were history teachers, and her father was often ill. She learned how to give him shots and administer an IV as a middle-schooler, and this planted a seed of inspiration that later became a career in medicine.

In her twenties, she planned to return home to China after finishing a two-year fellowship in Germany, but changed course and moved to the U.S. after the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989. Since then, Ping and her husband have made a home away from home.

In her free time, she enjoys drawing, oil painting, and photography. She and her husband, an acupuncturist, have two daughters and live in Pittsford.



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FOCUS ON FACULTY: DR. PING TANG



Dr. Ping Tang has devoted her life's work to cracking the microscopic code of breast cancer.

An accomplished surgical pathologist, she has a subspecialty in breast pathology and currently serves as professor and director for Breast Pathology and the Breast Pathology fellowship program at URMC. Her current research interest is exploring the panels of IHC predicting markers for high risk ductal carcinoma in situ and bone metastasis of breast carcinoma.

Ping received her PhD. in cancer biology from University of Texas MD Anderson Hospital, where she also had a fellowship. She earned her MD from West China University of Medical Sciences and completed fellowships at Harvard Medical School and Yale New Haven Hospital. She was recruited to join URMC in 2003 and

has since served as a faculty member for CAP training courses for ER, PR, and HER2 testing.

Ping's ongoing work is motivated by the simple desire to close the gap between the lab and patient.

"People in the lab are doing things that may not necessarily apply to the clinical part of the work, so a lot of really smart experiments are wasted, in my opinion," she said. "If you don't know medicine, it's really hard to ask the good questions."

Her most recent research is devoted to finding a molecular pattern in tumor tissue that can predict whether a returning case of in situ carcinoma will become invasive. Rather than looking at one individual type of tumor molecule, she examines a panel of different cells to study how they interact (*continued on page 5*).

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We have been fortunate to receive philanthropic support from many individuals, which allows the Department of Pathology to maintain and accelerate vital clinical, educational, and research initiatives. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible gift today, or as part of your estate plans, please visit urmc.rochester.edu/urmc-labs/pathology.aspx and look for the "Make a Gift" button, or contact Jon Sussman, Associate Director of Advancement at 585-276-4976 or jon.sussman@rochester.edu. Thank you!