Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As we reach the final quarter of 2015, I would like to look back and celebrate a number of particularly important accomplishments in the Division of Gastroenterology over these last 12 months.

First, we have added to our clinical and research faculty with the hiring of eight new clinicians and researchers: Drs. Brigid Boland, John Dever, David Kunkel, Vipin Kumar, Wilson Kwong, Frederick Park, Siddharth Singh and Irine Vodkin.

We continued to increase our endoscopy services, offering our patients the convenience of outpatient endoscopy at the University Ambulatory Surgery Center near the UC San Diego campus in La Jolla and expanding the inpatient and outpatient interventional GI endoscopy services we provide at UC San Diego Health.

In our education mission, we had another year of success in our fellowship programs and our T32 and non-T32 trainee programs. We also strengthened our efforts to engage internal medicine residents in digestive disease research, achieving success that has inspired other UC San Diego internal medicine subspecialty training programs to follow our lead.

We had record attendance at the 3rd Annual Advances in Gastroenterology and Hepatology Conference with Dr. Samir Gupta as course director, and we look ahead to offering the 4th annual conference this coming February, which Dr. Gupta and I will direct. Our Isenberg Lecture and Research Symposium events were also very successful, and will be offered again in 2016.

In our research, we saw healthy growth in our volume of scholarly publications and presentations as well as an increase in our total research funding over the two prior years, a very positive sign after a lean period that affected medical research programs nationally.

In May, we celebrated the beginning of Dr. Sheila Crowe’s three-year term of leadership in the American Gastroenterological Association, which will culminate in the AGA Presidency. Perhaps the greatest acknowledgment of excellence that a physician in our specialty can achieve, this is a tremendous honor for Dr. Crowe and for our entire Division.

And finally, UC San Diego GI and GI Surgery were named in the top 50 GI hospitals in the country (out of more than 1,500 hospitals assessed) for the third year in a row. Since last year, our program has risen in rank from #38 to #24 nationally in the U.S. News “Best Hospitals” report, a very significant rise and an achievement of which we can all be extremely proud.

We have accomplished our Division’s level of medical excellence and professional esteem through the dedicated efforts of every member of our clinical, investigational and administrative faculty and staff. I would like to thank everyone in our Divisional family for their contributions.

Best regards,

William Sandborn, MD
Professor and Chief, Division of Gastroenterology
New Faculty Spotlight

Welcoming Dr. Brigid Boland to the UC San Diego GI Faculty

The Division of Gastroenterology welcomes new faculty member Brigid Boland, MD, Assistant Adjunct Professor of Medicine.

With a research and clinical focus on inflammatory bowel diseases, Dr. Boland is an alumna of the UC San Francisco School of Medicine and UC San Diego’s Physician-Scientist Training Pathway and Division of Gastroenterology and Advanced Inflammatory Bowel Disease fellowship programs.

She is focused on translational research in the inflammatory bowel diseases and is working to enhance clinical and basic science collaborations. With training in immunology and clinical research, she has developed methodologies for future mechanism of action and proof-of-concept trials in inflammatory bowel disease. She conducted a study validating use of gene expression biomarkers for colonic biopsy-based studies in ulcerative colitis and Crohn’s disease. This work led to first author publications in *Alimentary Pharmacology and Therapeutics* and *Inflammatory Bowel Diseases*.

Her laboratory research has focused on investigating fundamental mechanisms underlying autoimmunity, immune deficiency and inflammation. This work led to a first author publication in the *Journal of Immunology*, and she contributed to work published in *Nature*.

Most recently, she received a Career Development Award from the Crohn’s and Colitis Foundation of America to identify early biomarkers predicting response to vedolizumab in patients with inflammatory bowel diseases. Preliminary data from this study was reported in an oral presentation at Digestive Disease Week in 2015.

Dr. Boland is board certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology.

“I really enjoy creating long-lasting relationships with my patients with inflammatory bowel diseases, getting to know patients and their families,” she says. “There is nothing more rewarding than helping treat a patient’s disease and seeing my patients start feeling better.”

She says her father Dr. Rick Boland (previous GI Division Chief at UC San Diego) and his passion for his work on studying hereditary colon cancer were her main inspiration for going into medicine and specializing in gastroenterology.

(Continued on page 3)
New Faculty Spotlight, continued: Dr. Brigid Boland

Dr. Boland earned her undergraduate degree at Yale University and her MD degree at UC San Francisco. Then, in UC San Diego’s Physician-Scientist Training Pathway, she completed her residency in internal medicine and a research fellowship in gastroenterology. She completed a postdoctoral year in the immunology laboratory of Dr. John Chang and a year of advanced inflammatory bowel disease fellowship under the mentorship of Dr. William Sandborn focusing on the basic science and clinical practice of treating inflammatory bowel diseases.

Dr. Boland’s chief personal interest is currently her family as she welcomed a baby boy, Cooper, in July 2015. Her hobbies include running, swimming, and staying active.

Selected Publications


Selected Presentation

New Faculty Spotlight

Welcoming Dr. Siddharth Singh to the UC San Diego GI Faculty

The Division of Gastroenterology is pleased to welcome Assistant Clinical Professor Siddharth Singh, MD, MS, to the faculty in the Inflammatory Bowel Diseases Interest Group.

Dr. Singh completed medical school at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi, India. He received his internal medicine training at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City in 2011. He subsequently completed his gastroenterology fellowship as well as an advanced fellowship in inflammatory bowel diseases at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota.

His research interests include comparative effectiveness of strategies for diagnosis, monitoring and treatment of inflammatory bowel diseases and other gastrointestinal conditions. He is also interested in harnessing ‘big data’ for improving clinical care and patient-centered research, and he is pursuing an NIH-funded fellowship in clinical informatics in the Division of Biomedical Informatics at UC San Diego.

Dr. Singh has published over 60 research articles in leading peer-reviewed journals including Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Gut. He also serves on the editorial board of Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics and has been recognized as a top reviewer for the American Journal of Gastroenterology and Clinical Gastroenterology and Hepatology.

During his fellowship, Dr. Singh was the recipient of the J. Arnold Bargen Award for excellence in research by a gastroenterology fellow and also the William H. J. Summerskill Award from the Department of Medicine for outstanding research during fellowship.

Dr. Singh is an active member of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA), American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) and Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA), and serves on the Clinical Guidelines Committee at the AGA. He is board-certified in internal medicine and gastroenterology.

“It is a privilege to move to this world-class institution and work with a terrific team of physicians and ancillary staff. The mission of this institution -- to deliver outstanding patient care through commitment to the community, groundbreaking research and inspired teaching -- resonates with my personal goal.”

“(Continued on page 5)
New Faculty Spotlight, continued: Dr. Siddharth Singh

commitment to the community, groundbreaking research and inspired teaching – resonates with my personal goal,” says Dr. Singh.

Outside of work, Dr. Singh loves spending time with his wife and their 2-year old son, trying exotic cuisine and watching cricket.

Key Publications


Keep in Touch

Faculty, Fellows and Alumni:

Join us on Facebook by logging into your Facebook account and typing in the search menu "UCSD Gastroenterology Fellows and Alumni" and click "ask to join."

You can also go to http://www.facebook.com/groups/114277778649025

A great way for alumni to keep in touch with the GI fellows and a way for fellows to contact alumni. Includes interesting links, photos of the fellows, faculty and alumni, and division and fellowship events.
Research Spotlight

UC San Diego Gastroenterology Researchers
Addressing Cancer Disparities
By Drs. Samir Gupta and Sheila Crowe

UC San Diego Gastroenterology Division faculty members are an integral part of a unique collaborative partnership between UC San Diego Health’s Moores Cancer Center, San Diego State University and local community health centers focused on addressing cancer disparities, including colorectal cancer.

The National Institutes of Health’s National Cancer Institute (NCI) has awarded UC San Diego Health’s Moores Cancer Center (MCC) and San Diego State University (SDSU) a grant to renew support for the SDSU/UCSD Comprehensive Cancer Center Partnership. The five-year grant is part of NCI’s Comprehensive Partnerships for the Advancement of Health Equity (CPACHE), headed by the Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities. This unique initiative was created by the NCI to develop partnerships between minority-serving institutions and NCI-designated cancer centers. The total federal award to UC San Diego is over $6.5 million (2U54CA132379-06A1, 2U54CA132384), with a similar amount awarded to SDSU.

The partnership is jointly led by two principal investigators (PIs) from each institution: Elena Martinez, PhD (UC San Diego lead PI), Sheila Crowe, MD (UC San Diego PI, pictured above), Elva Arredondo, PhD (SDSU lead PI) and Mark Sussman, PhD (SDSU PI). The partnership has outstanding institutional commitment from SDSU, Moores Cancer Center and UC San Diego School of Medicine. Future work will be guided by a stellar group of external advisors and an outstanding internal advisory committee. By combining talents, expertise and resources from SDSU and UC San Diego, the partnership will continue to provide unique, significant and impactful programs in cancer research, research education and community outreach.

Notably, UC San Diego’s Division of Gastroenterology is heavily represented through Dr. Crowe, as well as Dr. Samir Gupta, pictured at left, who serves as both co-leader of the partnership’s Community Outreach Core and PI for a randomized trial included in the partnership. Further, colorectal cancer is a major focus of multiple research projects and cancer prevention initiatives within the initiative.

The overarching goal of the SDSU/UC San Diego partnership is to reduce the burden of cancer among Hispanic/Latino communities in San Diego and Imperial counties. The new award supports three main areas under one umbrella:
Research Spotlight, continued: Addressing Cancer Disparities

1. State-of-the-art research aimed at developing cancer research capacity at SDSU and enhancing cancer disparities research at UC San Diego.

2. Research education programs in cancer and cancer disparities for promising undergraduate students from underrepresented groups.

3. Active and sustainable collaborations amongst community partners, researchers and students.

Throughout the five years of the grant, the partnership will support approximately 30 research projects jointly led by SDSU and UC San Diego investigators and will provide research education opportunities to undergraduate students from both institutions. Close partnership with federally qualified community health centers that care for large populations of traditionally underserved Hispanic/Latinos is an innovative focus of the effort, including a research partnership with San Ysidro Health Centers, Inc., and a community outreach program partnership with Family Health Centers of San Diego.

“There are needs not being addressed in cancer education, prevention and care among Hispanics,” said Maria Elena Martinez, PhD, UC San Diego School of Medicine Professor of Family Medicine and Public Health and Moores Cancer Center’s principal investigator on the SDSU/UC San Diego cancer partnership.

“This partnership helps to reduce disparities by taking a comprehensive approach with the help of 29 community partners representing stakeholders in the Hispanic community in San Diego and Imperial counties.”

Hispanics have the highest rates for certain types of leukemia as well as cancers associated with infection, such as liver, stomach and cervical. Although Hispanics are less likely to develop the most common forms of cancers than non-Hispanic whites, such as breast, colon and prostate, they are more likely to be diagnosed with advanced stages of these cancers and less likely to survive after diagnosis. This is due in part to lower than average health screenings.

“The partnership will provide an opportunity for investigators from various levels to conduct innovative research which will strengthen the cancer research agenda at SDSU and UC San Diego,” said Elva Arredondo, PhD, San Diego State University associate professor in the Graduate School of Public Health.

“The grant will build on existing community partnerships and link SDSU and UC San Diego with new community organizations. These efforts will help address cancer disparities evident among racial/ethnic groups, including Hispanic communities.”

As an official Hispanic Serving Institution, a designation of the federal government that means the university is eligible for extra resources to expand educational opportunities for and improve the attainment of Hispanic students, San Diego State University has strong ties to the Hispanic community. Together with Moores Cancer Center, an NCI-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center with world-renowned research, the two institutions can achieve much more than either can on their own, said Martinez.
Program Highlight

Interventional GI Endoscopy Expansion at UC San Diego Health – Hillcrest

By Drs. Thomas Savides and Wilson Kwong

The UC San Diego Division of Gastroenterology is excited to announce the expansion of its interventional gastrointestinal endoscopy services at UC San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest that will complement and expand services currently only available at UC San Diego Medical Center in La Jolla.

Dr. Wilson Kwong, left, who was recently recruited to UC San Diego after completing his gastroenterology fellowship and advanced endoscopy fellowship training at UC San Diego followed by four additional months training in pancreatology at Mayo Clinic Rochester with their renowned pancreatology group, will lead the Hillcrest expansion.

Dr. Kwong, as well as Dr. Abbas Fehmi (right) and Dr. Thomas Savides (below left), will provide weekday daytime coverage for interventional endoscopy procedures on inpatients at UC San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest, and also will allow for a more convenient endoscopy location for outpatients coming from the southern and eastern parts of the county.

The expansion includes the addition of state-of-the-art interventional endoscopy equipment including therapeutic endoscopic ultrasound and direct cholangioscopy. This new expansion will allow UC San Diego Health to provide the highest quality of gastroenterology care in an expedited manner to minimize wait times for patients needing highly specialized procedures not available at most hospitals. These procedures will especially benefit patients with pancreatico-biliary diseases, complicated gastrointestinal bleeding and cancers of the esophagus, stomach and colon.

Dr. Kwong will also develop UC San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest as a referral center for complex benign pancreatic disorders including acute and chronic pancreatitis, autoimmune pancreatitis, hereditary pancreatitis and complex pancreatic cystic lesions.

The UC San Diego Interventional GI Endoscopy group will continue to partner with our internal and outside referring physicians to provide the highest quality and timely care for challenging patients referred from throughout Southern California.
Events

2015 Update: Women GI Clinicians and the UC San Diego Gastroenterology Division
By Sheila Crowe, MD

Female gastroenterologists and hepatologists continue to make up a substantial portion of the faculty and fellows in the Division of Gastroenterology at UC San Diego. This group enjoys get-togethers outside of work on a regular basis (see photograph below). The female faculty comprises specialists in hepatology (Yuko Kono, Irine Vodkin), interventional endoscopy (Denise Kalmaz, Mary Lee Krinsky), general GI (Nedret Copur-Dahi), inflammatory bowel disease (Brigid Boland) and celiac disease (Sheila Crowe).

Getting together at the Crowe-Ernst home in August 2015. Back row from left to right: Nanae Takatori, Katherine Shaffer, Evelyn Marquez-Mello, Irine Vodkin, Anna Veerappan, Heather Patton. Front row: Denise Kalmaz, Yuko Kono, Brigid Boland and baby Cooper, Sheila Crowe, Melanie Green, Mamie Dong with baby Sienna, and Thuy-Anh Le. Unable to attend: Nedret Copur-Dahi, Mary Lee Krinsky, Shireena Desai and Laura Pace.

(Continued on page 10)
Events – 2015 Update – Women GI Clinicians, continued

Of the group of 12 fellows this academic year, four are women, including first-year fellows Katherine Shaffer and Nanae Takatori and upper level fellows Anna Veerappan and Melanie Green.

Evelyn Marquez-Mello is a fourth-year research fellow who completed her GI fellowship at Washington University and is currently supported by the UC San Diego NIH T32 grant.

Laura Pace is also a fourth-year T32 research fellow.

Irine Vodkin recently graduated from our fellowship program and Brigid Boland completed an advanced IBD training year; both have joined the UCSD GI faculty.

Shireena Desai graduated in June 2015 and is now working at Kaiser in Orange County.

The group also includes alumni of the fellowship program and faculty of UC San Diego: Mamie Dong and Heather Patton are working at Kaiser in San Diego and Thuy Anh Le is now back in San Diego working at Sharp.

Ninth Annual GI Division Research Symposium

The Division of Gastroenterology Ninth Annual Research Symposium was held September 11, 2015, at UC San Diego on the topic, “Precision Gastroenterology: New Approaches to Define, Study and Manage the Microbiota and Immune-Mediated Diseases.”

The goal of the symposium was to use clinical scenarios from luminal disease in gastroenterology to illustrate the complexity of disease conditions and how approaches in precision medicine can be applied to improve the stratification of patient phenotype.

Precision medicine utilizes a patient’s biological profile to stratify complex and heterogeneous diseases to facilitate evidence-based medicine and improve decision making that improves outcomes.

The program included UC San Diego faculty members as well as visiting speakers from other United States and Canada institutions. To see the complete list of program speakers and topics, visit this page in the Research section of the Division of Gastroenterology website:

http://gastro.ucsd.edu/research/Pages/res-symposium-2015.aspx
Save the Dates

**February 6, 2016**
4th Annual Advances in Gastroenterology and Hepatology Conference: What’s New in Gastroenterology and Hepatology?
Course directors Samir Gupta, MD, MScS, and William J. Sandborn, MD
Hyatt Regency La Jolla at Aventine
*Registration and Continental Breakfast:* 7:00 a.m.
*Welcome and Introductions:* 7:30 a.m.
*Presentations:* 7:35 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Details: [https://cme.ucsd.edu/gi/](https://cme.ucsd.edu/gi/)

**March 23, 2016**
Endowed Jon I. Isenberg Lecture
Presented by
**Richard M. Peek, Jr., MD**
Vanderbilt University School of Medicine
Medical Education and Telemedicine Building Auditorium
UC San Diego School of Medicine Campus
*“Meet and Greet:” 6 – 6:30 p.m.*
*Lecture:* 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

**June 17, 2016**
Annual UC San Diego Division of Gastroenterology Research Symposium
Dietary Effects on Gut Signaling: Diet, Microbiome, and GI Diseases
Medical Education and Telemedicine Building Auditorium
UC San Diego School of Medicine Campus
1:00 – 5:30 p.m.
*Reception and light refreshments to follow*
Details: [http://gastro.ucsd.edu/research/Pages/res-symposium-2016.aspx](http://gastro.ucsd.edu/research/Pages/res-symposium-2016.aspx)
Scientific Achievements

Awards and Honors

Individual Honors

Intercept Pharma has endowed a two-year fellowship for a young hepatologist in Emeritus Professor Dr. Alan Hofmann’s name.

The Alan Hofmann Clinical and Translational Research Award in Liver Diseases is made possible through an independent grant from Intercept Pharmaceuticals and donors to The American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) Liver Research Fund.

Dr. Thomas Savides was named in San Diego Magazine as one of the “Top Doctors” in Gastroenterology based on survey of members of the San Diego County Medical Society.

The “Top Doctors” list was announced in October 2015.

Grants Awarded

Dr. Yuko Kono

CIP Pilot Grant (Co P.I Claude Sirlin & Yuko Kono) 8/1/2015 - 7/31/2016. Role: Co-PI  
Title: Abbreviated MRI vs. Standard Ultrasonography for HCC Surveillance in Cirrhosis

NIH CA186566 (P.I. Manal Hassan, MD Anderson Cancer Center) 4/10/2015 – 3/31/2020  
Role: Site PI  
Title: Genome-Wide Association Study in Hepatocellular Carcinoma

NIH: 1R01CA194307 (PI John Eisenvrey, Thomas Jefferson University) 1/1/2016-12/31/2021  
Role: Site PI  
Title: 2D and 4D Contrast-Enhanced Ultrasound Evaluation of Hepatocellular Carcinoma Chemoembolization
Scientific Achievements, continued

Division Publications

Dr. Pradip Ghosh


Dr. Alexander Kuo


Dr. Fred Park


Dr. William Sandborn


**Division Publications, continued**

**Dr. William Sandborn**, continued


**Dr. Thomas Savides**


**Dr. Bernd Schnabl**


**Dr. Katherine M. Shaffer**


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**Abstracts and Presentations**

**American Association for the Study of Liver Diseases (AASLD) - The Liver Meeting® 2015**

Jeffrey E. Edwards, Carl LaCerte, Thomas Peyret, Nathalie H, Gosselin, JF Marier, **Alan F. Hofmann** and David Shapiro. Understanding the Relationship between Systemic and Hepatic Exposure of Obeticholic Acid for the Treatment of Liver Disease in Patients with Cirrhosis.

**Radiological Society of North America (RSNA) Annual Meeting**


Invited Speaker at Academic Institutions

Drs. Kim Barrett, Sheila Crowe and Peter Ernst served as invited faculty in the 2015 International Conference on Ulcer Research in Ottawa, Canada, October 1-4, 2015.

Dr. Sheila Crowe presented four invited lectures on celiac disease, RCD and various enteropathies in an international course on intestinal disorders (Curso Internacional de Intestino Delgado) and the tenth Latin American Capsule Endoscopy and Enteroscopy meeting (Xth Encuentro Latinoamericano de Capsula Endoscopica y Enteroscopia) held in Cartagena, Colombia, November 19-21, 2015.

Planning Ahead

Making the Most of Your Charitable Gifts

Here are just a few options on how you can support UC San Diego Division of Gastroenterology:

Option 1

The simplest way to donate is a gift of cash (including checks and credit cards). Remember: if you itemize, you may be able to receive a charitable deduction for 2015 for your gifts received on or before December 31.

You may contribute directly to UC San Diego GI by visiting our website at http://www.gastro.ucsd.edu and clicking on the ABOUT tab and choosing “Support Our Work” on the left-hand column.

Option 2

A gift of appreciated securities also offers an attractive opportunity to support the Division of Gastroenterology. By contributing appreciated securities that you have held longer than 12 months, you will receive a charitable income tax deduction, in most cases for their full fair market value, and avoid any capital gains tax liability.

It is important to remember that your securities must be transferred to the UC San Diego Foundation by December 31 for the 2015 tax year.
Organization Statement
The UC San Diego GI Division will provide the best clinical care to those afflicted with gastrointestinal and liver diseases, investigate at the clinical and basic levels the best way to improve those diseases, and educate trainees on how to best approach the care of patients with those diseases. The UC San Diego GI Division will strive to be nationally recognized through its faculty as well as innovations that will improve the care of patients with gastrointestinal and liver diseases nationwide.

History

The GI Fellowship Training Program commenced in 1974 and the NIH Training Grant was initially funded in 1976. The division has trained several local gastroenterologists in San Diego, as well as developed several academicians at University-based medical schools, including some with leadership and administrative positions.

GI Division Office
9500 Gilman Drive (MC 0956)
La Jolla, CA 92093
East Campus Office Building
V: 858-657-5284  |  F: 858-657-5022

GI Division at VA Medical Center
Gastroenterology Section (111D)
3350 La Jolla Village Drive
San Diego, CA 92161
Tel: (858) 552-8585 x2631
Fax: (858) 552-4327

UC San Diego GI Clinical Referral
General GI 619-543-2347
Hepatology 619-543-6303
Interventional Endoscopy 858-657-6882
Motility 619-543-6834
IBD 858-657-8787
Celiac 619-543-2347
Our Fellows are an important part of the Division of Gastroenterology. They are a very bright and talented group who work extremely hard at their research and clinical work. Their dedication to their field in turn is an excellent representation of this Institution and beyond.

To assist our Fellows, the Division of Gastroenterology has implemented the Fellowship Education Fund to support their Fellowship education. These funds go directly to support our Fellows in their education during their course of their tenure at UCSD. There are currently little or no funds to support such endeavors, and the Division is appealing to you as a former Fellow, former Faculty or an affiliated physician with UCSD to consider contributing with a tax-free donation to the Fellowship Education Fund.

Please complete the information below, and mail your donation to the address listed below. We will also send you a receipt for tax purposes. On behalf of our fellows we thank you for your support.

Note: For tax purposes your envelope needs to be postmarked by Dec 31, 2015.

DONATION

Donor Name: ________________________________

Address: __________________________________

Donation Amount:

$5,000 ________ $500 ________ Other ________

$2,000 ________ $250 ________

$1,000 ________ $100 ________

Make checks payable to UC Regents and mail to:
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UC San Diego, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, CA 92093-0956
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or

Donate online go to http://gastro.ucsd.edu under the “About” tab - Support our Work.