CTSI eNewsletter - July 2009

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From the Executive Director's Desk

Summer is upon us and it's time for CTSI's annual retreat. The focus of this year's retreat will be to discuss gaps in services and new ideas that could become components of our renewal application. The deadline for the renewal, June 2010, will be here before we know it. As we've done before, we are using an online "Open Forum" (see featured story) to propose and comment on ideas. The Open Forum has been a great tool, allowing the UCSF community to post innovative ideas, collaborate to develop the ideas of others and form teams of interested faculty and trainees. The first set of ideas submitted prior to Monday July 20th will be discussed at our retreat on the 22nd. All faculty, trainees and staff are invited to post, so be sure to get your ideas submitted.

As you know, CTSI has been making organizational changes to further streamline our operations and improve the impact we make on campus. We believe that new ideas to enable clinical and translational research are best explored by focused teams of faculty leaders. As ideas and fledgling programs find their own footing, we will reorganize the programs to add professional management with faculty advisory groups to ensure that the needs of researchers are met. With that model in mind, we are building on the success of the consulting services provided by "Biostatistics, Research Ethics & Design" (BREAD) to create a larger and broader offering. The new CTSI Consultation Service will continue to provide all of the services that were available through BREAD and will add consultation for database management, regulatory issues, community engaged research, and use of the integrated data repository. Our long-term vision includes building a robust consultation infrastructure that will streamline the addition of new services, whether they are part of CTSI or not. Mark Pletcher and Mini Kahlon, as Co-Directors of Consultation Services, will provide faculty and professional staff oversight to lead the consolidation and expansion of services. As part

of the rationalization of service delivery, the Data Management Unit that had been part of BREAD and the data services offered by the CTSI Academic Research Services managed by Michael Kamerick will now be integrated as a single unit, managed by Michael and accessed through the new Consultation Service. Alka Kanaya will head the Design Unit of Consultation Services, allowing Mark Pletcher who previously led this unit to focus with Mini on overall management.

Other changes include the coordination across all T2-related activities, such as Community Engagement and Health Policy. Clay Johnston is working with program leaders to craft an overarching strategy in T2 in comparative effectiveness and population health. Beyond organizational change, new initiatives have been launched by CTSI including the development of a new participant recruitment service, a research methods training program for UC Berkeley undergraduates, "Profiles" (a faculty expertise discovery and matchmaking tool), and an upcoming clinical trials symposium that will include industry and government partners to develop innovative approaches to improve the design and conduct of clinical trials. Look for our next newsletter which will substantively detail our progress on these and other key initiatives.

Finally, the CTSA national consortium has been continuing efforts to streamline the organization and focus on national activities. I have been working closely with leadership of other participating CTSAs as part of an initiative by NCRR to design and implement structures and operational processes that will allow the work of the consortium to be more coordinated, focused on strategic needs, and have the appropriate support, funding and staff to carry out ambitious goals.

This year should be exciting, both for the UCSF CTSI and for the CTSA national consortium. We invite you and your colleagues to join us and contribute to the vision and planning for our grant renewal, which will set our goals and activities for the next five years and beyond. Our success will be based on broad involvement by dedicated faculty and staff at UCSF and our partner institutions. With your help, I look forward to continually improving the services, infrastructure, and training we provide researchers.

Susan A. Autry, MBA
Executive Director, CTSI

Do you have a specific question you would like the Executive Director to answer? Let us know at ctsi@ucsf.edu ✉. We will select one to answer for each upcoming newsletter.

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Featured Resource

A National Model: CTSI's Mentor Development Course Goes On-line

CTSI's Mentor Development Program has brought its unique and comprehensive course materials on-line. The project, designed and implemented by Virtual Home, will allow mentors and mentees to learn from the wealth of knowledge contributed by both the faculty that designed and attended the course. As the first Mentor Development Course to be offered within the CTSA Consortium, we hope this broad distribution of course materials allows other institutions to benefit from our model. A highlight of the online resource is the rich case scenario knowledge base that allows users to read about other's mentoring experiences and submit their cases and comments. View the materials on-line.

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Introducing

Virtual Home Publishes Blog on Using the Internet to Advance Research

The blog Biomedical Research 2.0 explores new web and other technologies that catalyze connections, collaborations and innovation within the research community. Did you know about the 50 Open Source projects in medicine? Have you heard about a platform that invites researchers to do the unthinkable and share preliminary results? Learn about Google Wave and it's implications for us. Or read about research on gender differences in the usage of Twitter. Get in contact with us ✉ or post a comment if you want to join the conversation about building our future research environment.

Featured Story

CTSI's Open Forum: Crowdsourcing Ideas to Improve Research

Imagine you could take your best ideas about how to improve UCSF and get the smartest people in our community to help improve them. Imagine you could peruse a whole set of such ideas, selecting the ones you want to engage with, improve or even help implement. That's the environment CTSI wants to create for the UCSF community, enabling anyone who's interested in improving the research process at UCSF to contribute to the CTSA renewal proposal, due in June 2010. We're using a novel online Open Forum tool to enable not just contributions, but open engagement and submission of the broadest set of ideas.

The Renewal Open Forum allows anyone from UCSF or our CTSI affiliates to submit ideas online that describe existing problems and gaps as well as present innovative solutions that promise to advance research processes at UCSF. Those ideas can be reviewed and commented on by anyone in the community. We believe this open forum for ideas, from the broadest possible base, will result in the best possible proposals being selected for the renewal.

Previous experience using the Open Forum has helped CTSI identify innovation projects for year 4 of the current award, as well as select and craft the best ideas for the Stimulus-related Administrative Supplement submissions."The forum helped us identify potential collaborators, some of whose comments informed the proposal. Others even ended up collaborating on writing the final proposal", says Lisa Bero, PhD, UCSF Professor of Clinical Pharmacy and Health Policy Studies. "Communicating through the Open Forum allowed us to get rapid feedback on an idea from several people at once, each building on others' comments. In fact, we liked it so much that we opted to use a similar communication tool in the proposal that we submitted."

CTSI's Open Forum is an experiment not just in open idea brainstorming, but also in using on-line tools as more than mere information outlets. The easy part is implementing the tools – much harder, though, is building a broad base of engaged users. Appreciating this challenge, CTSI has tied the forum usage with clearly defined goals. In addition, the forums themselves are actively promoted by CTSI leadership. In fact, the Open Forum project is spearheaded by CTSI Director, Clay Johnston, MD, PhD, who is "very interested in leveraging the Internet in ways that transform and optimize how we work not only at UCSF, but in research in general." "Science has been driven by innovations created privately and competitively," he says. "At CTSI we're testing a different version that is open and collaborative, with a much lower bar for participation. Hopefully, it will prompt a broader group to contribute innovative ideas and proposals." Mini Kahlon, PhD, Director of CTSI's Virtual Home program, provides additional reasons for the success of the forums. "CTSI leadership tied the on-line experiment with actual open discussions of ideas and critiques at a variety of physical workshops and forums," she says. "And, to encourage user engagement, we've continually fine-tuned features of the tool in rapid response to the needs of our user community."

The latest Open Forum offers new features, including the ability to subscribe to ideas and comments for automatic updates by E-mail and the ability to filter ideas by topics and by status. If you are part of the UCSF community or from our affiliates, we invite you to post a comment or suggest a new idea here.

Clay Johnston and Steve Hauser introduced the concept of crowdsourcing for research in their editorial "Crowdsourcing scientific innovation." Read on here. The Open Forums were implemented and continue to be improved by Brad Bulger, Kristine Moss and Cynthia Piontkowski of CTSI's Virtual Home program.

Updates and Announcements

Request for Proposals announced by the UCSF Center for Translational and Policy Research on Personalized Medicine

TThe Center is looking for proposals from UCSF junior investigators interested in collaborations and funding for pilot projects examining how personalized medicine can best improve health outcomes for cancer. A preference will be given to proposals focusing on breast or colorectal cancer. A maximum budget of $30,000 will be awarded – with the potential to be renewed or expanded. Letters of intent are due by September 8, 2009. Learn more about the Pilot Research Awards.

Free Consultation Services for Eligible Career Development Grant Applicants

Junior investigators applying for a mentored career development (K series) grant, if enrolled, will have a 50% chance of being randomized to receive up to 15 hours of free multidisciplinary consultations from CTSI's Consultation Services towards grant preparation. Basic science applicants are also encouraged to apply to take advantage of our faculty statisticians and experienced grant writers. To apply: Submit a Consultation Request and indicate that you would like to participate. Read more and see if you are eligible. Please call David Bui at 415-514-8086 for a quick phone assessment.

New Report on Best Practices in Community Engagement

A new report Researchers and Their Communities: The Challenge of Meaningful Community Engagement is available on-line. The authors, members of the National CTSA Community Engagement (CE) Key Function Committee, have synthesized the standards and principles of best practices in community-engaged translational research that were developed during the 2007-08 regional and national workshops and conferences. UCSF's CE Program Manager, Ellen Goldstein, facilitated the day-long Western Region workshop that included community and academic partners from 8 CTSAs.

Designing Clinical Research Course for Pre-Health Undergraduate Students

This summer the Clinical and Translational Science Training Program (CTST) will pair up undergraduate students from the University of California, Berkeley (UCB) with UCSF students, who participate in the Pathways to Careers in Clinical and Translational Research (PACCTR) program, for a course in Designing Clinical Research. The purpose of the course is to train UCB students, who are planning to attend dental, medical, nursing, pharmacy or physical therapy professional schools after graduation, to evaluate medical literature, to design clinical and translational research studies, and to encourage long-term collaborations between UCSF and UCB students. This year 12 UCB students from diverse fields, such as Bioengineering, Chemical Biology, English/Psychology, Integrative Biology, Public Health, Neurobiology, Molecular and Cell Biology, and Molecular Environmental Biology, were selected and will start the course on July 28. The program was jointly planed by UCSF faculty and the UCB Biology Scholars Program. Learn more.

Researcher receives Media Coverage after Community Engagement Program training on Research Dissemination Planning

As a result of the Effective Research Dissemination Planning for UCSF Investigators training provided by the CTSI Community Engagement Program and the Office of Community and Government Relations, Stuart Lustig, MD, MPH, Assistant Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, developed and implemented a successful dissemination plan for his study of secondary trauma suffered by immigration judges across the US. After the training, Lustig received ongoing consultation from one of the trainers, Pamela DeCarlo, Dissemination Manager at UCSF's Center for AIDS Prevention Studies. Lustig was able to create and publish persuasive summary materials to garner stakeholder support and achieved recognition by a range of press outlets, including UCSF and the *New York Times*.

New Website launched by the UCSF Center for Translational and Policy Research on Personalized Medicine (TRANSPERS)

The website provides information about ongoing research at TRANSPERS on personalized medicine and its translation into clinical care and health policy. The goal is to provide information about the Center and personalized medicine for a broad audience and to inform individuals who are interested in collaborating with the Center. The website will continue to expand over the next few weeks. Visit the site.

Clinical Research Scholars Graduation and Teaching Awards

On May 29, 2009, the Training in Clinical Research (TICR) program honored graduating scholars in the Advanced Training in Clinical Research (ATCR) Certificate and Master's in Clinical Research degree programs – 33 scholars earned the ATCR Certificate and 10 scholars earned the Master's degree. This year's TICR teaching awards went to: Jeff Martin, for a faculty member who exhibits outstanding teaching in lectures or small group sections; Elvin Geng, for a TICR scholar Teaching Assistant, who exhibits outstanding teaching in one of the TICR courses; and Peter Bacchetti, for a faculty member recognized as providing outstanding advising to TICR Scholars.

Successful K Proposal On-line Library expanded

TK24 grant proposals have been added to the library of successful K08 and K23 grants at the CTSI Virtual Home. In addition, the access process has been streamlined, since all materials are viewable on the Virtual Home website. Contact us to request access. ✉

2009 CTSI K Scholars

The CTSI K Scholars for 2009-2010 have been announced. The CTSI K Scholar Program is part of the Clinical & Translational Science Training (CTST) program and has grown since 2005 when as the Roadmap K12 Program it rewarded six junior faculty with career development awards. Beginning July 1, 2009 the CTSI K Program will include 62 scholars, over half of whom obtained individual career development awards, e.g., K23, K01, K08, K12. The scholars participate fully in the CTSI K program, along with 25 CTSI KL2-funded scholars. The program is directed by Stephen B Hulley MD, MPH. Ralph Gonzales MD, MSPH, and Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo PhD, MD, MAS are Associate Directors. Christine Ireland MPH is the Deputy Director. View the full list of scholars and their mentors.

Feedback

The purpose of the eNewsletter is to keep you informed of key CTSI activities and their impact on the UCSF community. Please submit news from your CTSI program for possible inclusion in the "Updates & Announcements" section. We hope you enjoy this issue and encourage your feedback. Please contact us by email at ctsi@ucsf.edu ✉.