

## EVCP Expresso ? March 2016

March 1, 2016

Dear Colleagues:

EVCP *Expresso* is now six months old and going strong due to your enthusiastic reception and response. You may know the familiar saying, "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." I believe that over the past six months we have tackled some lion-sized topics and have, hopefully, removed some of their bluster, so they are now more lamb-sized.

All I can say is, "thank you" and give you my word that we will keep providing insight into areas with significant impact on a cross-section of our academic community.

So, in that vein, this month you'll read about:

- We're in this together: Making UCSF truly inclusive for women
- Removing bottlenecks: Streamlining human subject review
- Cutting even more red tape: Improving review of animal care and use

Please share your feedback with me at [ExecutiveViceChancellor@ucsf.edu](mailto:ExecutiveViceChancellor@ucsf.edu) [1]. I enjoy hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Dan

## **We're in this together: Making UCSF truly inclusive for women**

Fostering a supportive, inclusive environment for everyone is a top priority for UCSF. We need to be vigilant in our efforts to continually improve the status quo.

To start, my October issue about "Balancing the scale: Faculty salary inequity and gender disparity" [2] described the review that the four schools conducted. The results of the study and the measures UCSF is taking to correct inequities are now available online [3]. In addition, the Committee on the Status of Women [4] (CSW), a diverse mix of faculty, staff, students, and trainees, has developed valuable materials to help address unconscious gender biases, ensuring that women have every opportunity to succeed at UCSF.

Through the efforts of the CSW, the Office of Diversity and Outreach recently launched a positive, proactive campaign to help women thrive and succeed at UCSF. They have condensed several great ideas into some very straightforward actions that any and every one

can do, every day?actions that apply to us all within the multiple roles we are asked to fulfill towards advancing the university?s mission. I wanted to learn more, so I checked in with three committee members, representing faculty, trainees, and staff ? Lauren Weiss [5], PhD, associate professor of psychiatry; Katie Thompson-Peer [6], PhD, a postdoc in physiology; and Larisa Kure [7], who manages departments in two schools, the Department of Cell and Tissue Biology in the School of Dentistry and the Department of Microbiology and Immunology in the School of Medicine.

They shared with me the valuable tools created by the committee. The first is a series of tip sheets [4] for people in specific roles at UCSF ? folks who chair a committee; serve on a search, hiring, or admissions committee; organize a seminar or conference; or who mentor, supervise, or manage others. People responsible for fulfilling those roles can have a big impact on the inclusiveness and equity of the hiring process and help identify valuable opportunities for professional development and growth. The tip sheets are constructive and remind all of us to take simple steps, such as allowing people to speak without interrupting, distributing work evenly, and setting objective criteria before deciding on candidates for a position. If you have one or more of these roles, you?ll want to get hold of the corresponding sheet. During my three decades at UCSF, I?ve had the privilege to serve in all of these capacities, and I find these new materials to be a great reminder and resource.

The other tool is a simple and concise card listing ?10 Actions to Ensure that UCSF is Inclusive for Women [8].? I won?t mention all ten, but they include:

- Regard female colleagues as peers and refer to them as women or by professional titles.
- Recognize that women are diverse and that one woman is not the spokesperson for her gender.
- Include women in your networking.

One interesting observation Larisa, Katie, and Lauren described to me is that, often, women may tend to have less extensive professional networks than men. So if you are a supervisor, manager, or mentor consider bringing women into your professional network. Larisa reminds me that this issue is even more important for staff. Women who want to advance their career but who are in junior level classifications may be inexperienced and need a little help. So let?s leverage their ambition by utilizing these resources ? because the excellence of the university depends upon retaining the best and the brightest.

?These tip sheets are intended for everyone, not only men or only women,? Lauren said. ?Women and men tend to both share unconscious gender bias.?

?Almost everyone works with the best intentions,? Katie said. ?No one is trying to be biased. We just all need to be conscious of how decisions we make affect the people around us.?

March is Women?s History Month, not only an opportunity to celebrate achievements but also a call to work together to make disparity and inequity truly a part of our past. Start today by incorporating the messages in the materials [4]. You set the tone ? make a difference!

back to top

## **Removing bottlenecks: Streamlining human subject**

## review

I shared in September 2015 <sup>[9]</sup> some of the efforts to reduce the amount of red tape that hinders our efforts to actually conduct our research. My exact words were, "Red tape is a bane of a researcher's existence." I'm glad to report that more progress has been made on this front. Researchers know the huge effort behind a successful grant application, but then there's the waiting, waiting, waiting for what feels like an eternity to get clearance from the Committee on Human Research <sup>[10]</sup> (CHR). UCSF feels your pain, and we're doing something about it.

The CHR – more accurately known as the Institutional Review Board, or IRB, in line with other universities around the country – is working hard to streamline its review process. (You may have similar feelings about the Institutional Animal Use and Care Committee; that's coming up next.)

The most significant action goes back to 2013 when Vanessa Jacoby, MD, an obstetrician gynecologist and associate professor, received a Clinical Translational Science Institute (CTSI) Annual Pilot Award to Improve the Conduct of Research <sup>[11]</sup>, laying the groundwork for a fresh approach. Just this past June, Christopher Ryan <sup>[12]</sup>, PhD, joined UCSF as our IRB director (actual title: director, Human Research Protection Program?HRPP). Chris, a longtime researcher himself, had success streamlining similar processes at the University of Pittsburgh, and he understands exactly what principal investigators go through when they endure endless questions from the IRB.

"A couple of years ago, the median turnaround at UCSF was 90 days, which is unconscionable," Chris told me. "Some studies took hundreds of days to get approval. Some could take up to nine months!"

How things have changed since June. Kate Nolan, MPH, the IRB coordinator, tells me that the IRB has reduced time to approval to about 55 days. They're looking to go even lower, and I think they will, in large part due to the crucial funding support from the Regulatory Knowledge and Support program, part of CTSI.

For one thing, they have a fantastic new "smart form" for researchers to complete. Chris took me through it, and it's a beautiful thing. The old forms asked for irrelevant information and posed confusing questions. With the new form, as you fill out one box, other sections either appear or disappear, so you only need to answer the relevant questions. If you put in something that could be challenging to understand for the reader, a red flag alerts you and offers tips on how to answer it better. Chris credits the form to his "brilliant programmer," Liz Tioupine. Chris and Liz continue to tweak the form, so please give them feedback if you're using it. Illustrating the form's extreme potential, they turned around a pair of "just in time" requests from the NIH in two days each.

There's more. It used to be the IRB would return 90 percent of studies back to PIs with questions before the committee met, only to learn that the committee had even more questions. According to Kate, it's now down to 42 percent, saving time and eliminating duplication.

Alice Fishman, MS, assistant director of CTSI programs, told me that CTSI is also helping train study coordinators, who often are the ones filling out the forms, to provide the information that the IRB needs. They're even working on making short training videos that will be

available online ? you can watch in advance of starting the form.

I realize these improvements are but one step to reduce byzantine paperwork. But when, in the midst of remaining bureaucracy, you start feeling that the process is becoming onerous, please keep in mind that these regulations exist to ensure the safety and protection of the people participating in our pursuit of discovery.

But these efforts are having a positive impact due to the teamwork of CTSI and HRPP. Together they are doing a great job!

back to top

## **Cutting even more red tape: Improving review of animal care and use**

With the same tenacious determination as the groups in HRPP and CTSI, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Program (IACUP) is launching three new initiatives to engage more of our researchers and help make our reviews and protocols easier for everyone on campus. A key individual behind the improvements is Theresa O'Lonergan <sup>[13]</sup>, PhD, MA, who is Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer here at UCSF, with oversight of both the IRB and Institutional Animal Use and Care Committee (IACUC).

Because UCSF receives more grant money than any other public institution in this country, we have a huge responsibility to make sure our programs are not only beyond reproach, but also serve as peer contributors to improving animal programs nationwide. I'm glad to report that our animal care programs received exemplary marks in our most recent accreditation by the American Association for Accreditation of Laboratory Animal Care (AAALAC), with only commendations from the organization.

"We've met the highest mark that's been set for us and we want to move up from there," Terri said. "We really want to make this efficient, lessen the burden on PIs and IACUC staff, and maintain the credibility with the accreditation organizations. We have a lot of momentum now, coming off a very positive AALAC, so the timing is right to do something."

One of the main objectives is to improve the infrastructure of the animal program to decrease investigator burden and improve processes, while maintaining compliance with regulations and accreditation requirements, and continuing to provide the best conditions for our animals.

I know it takes action to drive change, so here's what's taking place to get us there:

- **Animal Program Inspection Readiness:** In the past, scheduling inspections of animal facilities was difficult, but now IACUC is dividing the animal facilities into sectors and announcing well in advance when it will inspect each one. They're also moving reviews to iPads, instead of paper ? a wonderful approach that will speed inspections and enable IACUC to report back to researchers in a timely manner what they need to fix. Score one for technology!
- **Revamping the application process:** Many of you will agree that the application required to do anything with IACUC has been fairly onerous. IACUC has convened a group of

researchers to make the application more user-friendly for investigators, while still collecting the information that the committee needs.

- Pilot program at Mission Bay: IACUC is starting a six- to nine-month experiment to have an IACUC panel based at Mission Bay rather than only meeting twice monthly at Parnassus. The pilot will be all about efficiency in compliance with animal research regulations and will likely thrive with the heavy involvement of active animal users located at Mission Bay.

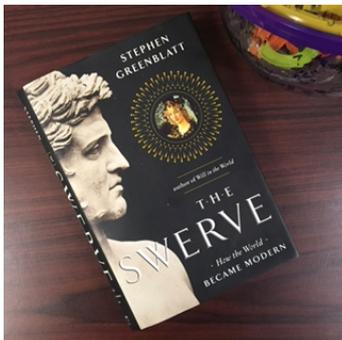
What I'm most excited about is that the new panel will have novel ways for researchers to be part of IACUC and will facilitate and support research in a forward-looking way. I agree when Terri says it should bring new blood into the system and speed up the time to approval.

?We really need the people who know the animals best to be a much bigger part of our program. The pilot project at Mission Bay is going to test this,? Terri says. ?This process of trying to figure out how we can be better, more efficient, more supportive of investigators has also resulted in a more collegial environment between investigators and our office.? In that spirit, Terri and her team are reaching out by speaking at investigators? meetings. If you have questions, suggestions, or want to be involved, please contact Terri [14].

So, there you have it: two examples of processes that could cause significant delay and how the teams in HRPP and IACUP are trying to make our work as researchers more timely and predictable.

[back to top](#)

## Dan?s Tip of the Month



People often ask me to name my favorite book of all time. I can?t

name just one, but among those in the past 5 years, it is definitely ***The Swerve: How the World Became Modern***, by Stephen Greenblatt. I am indebted to Steve Hauser for originally giving me the book as a gift.

Unless you are already familiar with the Roman poet Lucretius, 15th-century book hunters obsessed with ancient writings, or the nature of manuscripts prior to Gutenberg, this book will forever change your perspective on the unpredictability of forces of change and the current revolution in the ways humans learn.

[back to top](#)

# Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor & Provost

513 Parnassus Ave, Medical Sciences  
San Francisco, CA 94143

## Connect With Us!

TwitterFacebook

Contact Us  
About Us  
UCSF Main Site

© 2020 The Regents of the University of California

---

**Source URL:** <https://evcprovost.ucsf.edu/evcp-expresso/201603>

### Links

- [1] <mailto:ExecutiveViceChancellor@ucsf.edu>
- [2] <https://evcprovost.ucsf.edu/evcp-expresso/201510#salary>
- [3] <https://www.ucsf.edu/news/2016/02/401571/ucsf-faculty-salary-equity-review-finds-few-gender-based-inequities>
- [4] <http://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/committees/3296631>
- [5] <http://profiles.ucsf.edu/lauren.weiss>
- [6] <http://profiles.ucsf.edu/katherine.thompson-peer>
- [7] <https://directory.ucsf.edu/people/search/id/54373>
- [8] [http://diversity.ucsf.edu/sites/diversity.ucsf.edu/files/296222\\_CACSW\\_10\\_Actions\\_V4.pdf](http://diversity.ucsf.edu/sites/diversity.ucsf.edu/files/296222_CACSW_10_Actions_V4.pdf)
- [9] <https://evcprovost.ucsf.edu/evcp-expresso/201509#redtape>
- [10] <http://www.research.ucsf.edu/chr/>
- [11] <http://open-proposals.ucsf.edu/2013-ctsi-pilot-awards/proposal/1304>
- [12] <http://compliance.ucsf.edu/news/welcome-dr-christopher-ryan>
- [13] <http://chancellor.ucsf.edu/campus-leadership/executive-cabinet/theresa-olonergan>
- [14] <mailto:Theresa.OLonergan@ucsf.edu>