EVCP Expresso ? July 2016

July 1, 2016

Dear Colleagues,

It?s the Fourth of July weekend and, as we celebrate our independence, I want to share with you a bright and shining mind ready to light up the world. Harvard graduate Donovan Livingston?s spoken-verse speech at his 2016 commencement, ?Lift Off,? has gone viral. I encourage you to take five minutes, preferably with a young person in your life, and watch this dynamic individual [1] (or read the text [2]). I am sure you will find him as wholly inspiring as I did.

And, in this July issue of *Expresso,* I?d like to tell you about some of the things we?re working on:

- Technology to the Core: Sharing for the common good
- Can You Hear Me Now?: Improving classroom technology and videoconferencing
- California?s Sunshine Law: The California Public Records Act (CPRA)

If you?ve got some firecracker ideas that you?d like to share with me, you can reach me at ExecutiveViceChancellor@ucsf.edu [3].

Sincerely,

Dan

Technology to the Core: Sharing for the common good

Technology comes with a hefty price tag. At UCSF, as principal investigators, we have access to an impressive array of cutting-edge technology, from the latest sequencing platforms to mass spec flow cytometry?but knowledge about the technology available and, better yet, how to use it is sometimes difficult in our multi-site, multi-institute, world-renowned university.

The NIH definition of a core facility is, ?A centralized, shared resource that provides scientific investigators with access to instruments; technologies; services; cellular, animal or human study support; and expert consultation.? Why expend the resources to purchase when another lab might have exactly what you need? The Research Resource Program (RRP) is trying to make your life easier in this regard.

Elizabeth Sinclair, PhD, was named executive director of the program earlier this year. With her past experience as a postdoc at the Gladstone Institute working on AIDS and lead of the

UCSF Core Immunology Laboratory at San Francisco General Hospital for 15 years, Elizabeth is very familiar with the issues. ?As technology gets more and more expensive to purchase and maintain, it also requires a higher level of expertise to run these complex instruments and analyze the data,? Elizabeth says. ?It makes sense to have the technology available in cores, as a centralized resource that anybody can use.?

She?s been working with a newly formed advisory committee as well as the cores themselves to figure out better ways to organize cores and meet the needs of researchers at UCSF more efficiently. At the fifth Core Leadership Retreat in June, core directors, managers, and administrators brainstormed ways to make their technology resources and services easier to find. Ideas included working with CTSI to improve the Cores search engine [4], which people have found hard to use in the past. The RRP [5] is also beefing up its own website to give users a better point of entry to the program.

Who?s running the shop? Having technology in cores means we are essentially running a whole lot of small businesses within UCSF, and they are being overseen by really smart scientists who are not typically well-versed in best business practices. Predictably that can lead to problems. ?There's always this tension between charging investigators too much, and not bringing in enough money to cover the core expenses,? Elizabeth says. ?Many of the cores have this kind of financial struggle.?

The RRP intends to help resolve these business and financial challenges, leaving us to do what we do best?research. It?s working with UCSF?s Program Management Office (PMO) to develop business process improvements with some of our core laboratories and put on workshops to help ease the pain of managing core labs. RRP is already helping more than a dozen cores with recharge proposals. ?We?re centralizing the process of writing these proposals in our office, so individual departments don't have to deal with that really specialized financial knowledge and complex regulations,? Elizabeth says.

Another problem is the expense of upgrades. ?Every year or so, Illumina comes out with a new sequencer,? she says. ?It might cost up to a half a million dollars, and it?s really hard to keep buying that new implementation. Cores have a problem finding money to purchase equipment so that we can really stay cutting-edge at UCSF.? Fortunately, RRP was just awarded new funds from the campus to invest in core development and technology. Information on how to apply for these funds will be released in early fall.

Then there?s all the data and what to do with all of it! It?s a product of cores? success. Elizabeth?s team is working with the high performance computing steering committee to integrate different high performance cluster facilities at UCSF with a single point of entry. No more searching, searching, searching?it will be a one-stop shop.

Using technology in cores is practically a requirement for many of us. If you apply for a grant from NIH, they?ll want to know if you?re utilizing assets already at UCSF before they give you money to buy new equipment. The improvements to the cores program should help us demonstrate this effort. Most of all, it is another prime example of how we can all work collaboratively to improve the systems that make our great research possible.

Can You Hear Me Now? Improving classroom technology and videoconferencing

Skype, Jabber, WebEx, BlueJeans?you?ve undoubtedly heard of at least one of these applications that promise to provide remote face-to-face meeting functionalities. Whether from Parnassus to Mission Bay, or from either to Peking, London, Mexico City?you?ve had a need to connect via video to someone in another location. Easy, right? I?ve heard from many of you who report that this isn?t your experience?quite the opposite. This video captures the pitfalls nicely [6], and I certainly got a lot of laughs out of it. (I also recommend its companion on how conference calls can fail hilariously [7].) In reality, though, enduring a bad videoconference is highly annoying if not disabling, as technology plays a critical role in connecting us to each other?especially with our increasingly far-flung campus?and to colleagues around the world. It?s been a bumpy road, but I?m glad to report that the immediate horizon is actually beginning to look much brighter.

With the addition of the Mission Bay hospitals and Mission Hall, UCSF nearly doubled the number of conference rooms available to providers, staff, faculty, and students. John DeAngelo, assistant vice chancellor for Educational Technology Services (ETS), says his team of 14 people is responsible for the 100 classrooms, a quarter of which have videoconferencing capabilities, and services include supporting, producing, streaming, and capturing video. I learned from John that over the past five years, ETS has spent nearly $5 million on classroom enhancement, partly to take advantage of new technology and partly in response to user feedback. For instance, some rooms had cameras that could only be used for videoconferencing and not for online services like WebEx. Those are getting converted for multiple uses. In addition, some rooms are being reconfigured, enabling the microphone to better pick up the voice of everyone in the room, a key functionality for grand rounds or tumor board discussions.

And, while we would like technology to be straightforward, all of this video work is actually still quite complex. ETS primarily serves UCSF?s educational mission, assisting the four professional schools and the graduate division, and ETS has heretofore operated as separate from the IT organization under CIO Joe Bengfort. Some snags arise in trying to connect the two systems, such as an IT Field Services (ITFS) conference room at the hospital communicating with an ETS classroom on Parnassus. Historical and organizational structures are no excuse to not work toward our core mission, so the two groups?ETS and ITFS?are working together to serve all of our mission areas.

According to John, ?It?s taken the better part of two years to make this more seamless for our users. Now we?re in a position to say, ?It doesn?t make any difference how we got here. Let?s make sure it all works.??

That?s great, because when you can?t get it to work and you call someone in support, the last thing you want is a bureaucratic runaround. Regardless of who you call, steps are in place to make sure the problem gets fixed as quickly as possible, either remotely or by someone coming to your room. As John says, ?We want the user to make just one call or send just one email message, and it gets taken care of,? with the main goal being to ?build something so intuitive, with an iPad-like interface,? that anyone can get their videoconference up and running without calling in a pro.

But should you want extra assistance, ETS offers a ?white glove? concierge service for $79 an hour for particularly important meetings, and I can assure you that?s a bargain price compared to what the private sector charges for similar services (like Zoom, the company that produced those comical videos I linked to).

Let the experts help you figure out what service you need, the best way to get it, or how to troubleshoot any problem you might be having. The ETS/ITFS videoconferencing web page has been improved and includes a great FAQ [8] that should address most questions.

There you have it. The demand for videoconferencing at UCSF will only grow?please let us know how well we are serving your needs.

back to top

California?s Sunshine Law: The California Public Records Act (CPRA)

In 1822, James Madison gave the following advice, ?Knowledge will forever govern ignorance; and a people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives.? This ultimately led to the establishment of what are known as Sunshine Laws, and in California, it?s called the California Public Records Act (CPRA). I am all over transparency and am going to take a few hundred words to explain UCSF?s obligation.

Did you know that 80 to 90 percent of what we do is public?our salary, our job description, contracts and agreements, publications, our email and correspondence, and other records and documents, and the public has a right to inspect and request copies of these records? Because UCSF is a public agency, compliance with the California Public Records Act, or CPRA [9], is mandatory, and the work that we do and the way we conduct business are fair game. No reason for the request is necessary.

If you know about the federal Freedom of Information Act (FOIA [10]), CPRA is its state counterpart. Greta W. Schnetzler, UCSF?s chief campus counsel, and Tom Dellner, paralegal in the Office of Legal Affairs [11], want you to know that they have your back. While Tom cautions that you should ?anticipate that everything you do in conducting the University's business is generating a public record,? Greta adds that exemptions exist to protect an individual?s privacy as well as for ?unpublished scholarly work, raw data, and certain records that might chill a researcher?s ability to conduct research.?

Some of the most significant requesters are animal rights advocates and groups that oppose certain types of research which may be controversial. In these situations, safety and security play a big role in the review process, and we redact or withhold certain records accordingly. Due to the history of violence carried out by some members of groups opposing certain types of research, we?ve also gone to court to ensure that we protect our employees.

Other common requesters are watchdog groups, members of the media, labor unions, people with litigation against the university, and companies that want to know more about competitive bids for a particular project.

If you get a request, you should first contact Brenda Gee [12] in my office. **Don?t respond to it yourself.** While we must acknowledge receipt and determine whether we have any responsive documents within 10 days, production can take weeks or months, depending upon the volume of records and the complexity of applicable exemptions.

?We?ll gather all the documents and review them,? Greta says. ?Sometimes faculty are wary of handing the material over to us. We are on their side. If they have specific concerns about production of certain records, they should let us know. We always consult with the faculty member before we produce anything. We?re protecting the faculty's academic freedom as much as we can.? In cases where the requester has used FOIA to go after an NIH grant, for instance, Legal Affairs works with federal agencies to make sure material is redacted as appropriate. If you hear from a federal agency that they?ve received a request, make sure to contact Brenda or Legal Affairs immediately; if you don?t respond, that?s the same as giving permission to release the information.

The CPRA allows institutions to charge 20 cents per page produced to cover the cost of duplication, but there are caveats to that, and this hardly covers the staff and counsel time to ensure that the production is thorough. It?s an unfunded mandate. Noncompliance can result in costly litigation against the university, Regents, and individuals. (Yes, individuals!) If you want to learn more about the CPRA, UCOP has a good resource called The ABCs of Privacy and Public Records [13].

I?ve saved email for last because it?s the most prolific. On the national and local news level, we?ve learned that disclosure cannot be circumvented by using a personal email account (e.g., Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail, etc.) or self-destructing apps like Telegram, Snapchat, Wickr, and Frankly. Wherever you are conducting UCSF business, consider that a public forum. Any work-related email or mode of communication is public, and if disclosed could end up on the front page of the *San Francisco Chronicle*?or as discovery in a lawsuit. Email is particularly persnickety because it takes on a life of its own. As Greta points out, ?Once it goes out of your inbox, it can go anywhere.? Enough said.

back to top

Dan?s Tip of the Month

group photo of UCSF team at AIDS Walk 2015

On Sunday, July 17, get out in the fresh air, enjoy the

Image not found
https://evcprovost.ucsf.edu/sites/evcprovost.ucsf.edu/files/aidswalk2015.jpg

beauty of Golden Gate Park, and take a walk with thousands of your closest friends to support AIDS research and care. Last year UCSF AIDS Walk teams raised $123,032 to become the number one fundraiser! This year is special: it not only marks the 30th year of AIDS Walk San Francisco [14], it will also honor UCSF?s Dr. Paul Volberding [15], who treated the city?s first patient with Kaposi?s sarcoma?one of the original AIDS-defining illnesses. So, help us meet this year?s goal of $200,000. Visit AIDS Walk San Francisco [14] and search for a UCSF Team to join. We cannot do it without you!

back to top

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[1] http://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2016/05/29/harvard-commencement-speech-orig-vstan-bpb.cnn?sr=fbCNN053016291240AMVODtop
[2] http://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/16/05/lift
[3] mailto:ExecutiveViceChancellor@ucsf.edu
[4] http://cores.ucsf.edu/
[5] https://rrp.ucsf.edu/
[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMOOG7rWTPg

[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYu_bGbZiiQ

[8] http://it.ucsf.edu/services/videoconference-support

[9] http://ag.ca.gov/publications/summary_public_records_act.pdf

[10] https://www.foia.gov/

[11] http://legal.ucsf.edu/

[12] http://profiles.ucsf.edu/brenda.deperalta

[13] http://www.ucop.edu/information-technology-services/policies/it-policies-and-guidelines/records-mgmt-and-privacy/files/abc_priv_pub_recs.doc

[14] http://sf.aidswalk.net/

[15] http://profiles.ucsf.edu/paul.volberding