Gran named CEO of USC faculty physician practice; will work closely with clinical chairs

By Ina Fried
Keith Gran has taken the helm as CEO of USC Care Medical Group, the clinical practice plan for more than 500 physicians who are full-time faculty members of the Keck School of Medicine of USC. His appointment took effect Aug. 1.

Gran, who has almost 20 years’ experience in health care finance and operations, reports to the executive committee of USC Care.

“We’re very pleased that Keith has joined us. He will help enhance revenue cycle and other operations of USC Care, develop partnerships with our hospitals and coordinate business development to enhance growth of the practices and the hospitals, while working closely with the clinical chairs,” said Edward Crandall, chair of the USC Care executive committee and chair of the Keck School’s Department of Medicine.

The clinical ambulatory practices are being transitioned to hospital-based outpatient procedures, or being admitted to USC University Hospital or USC Norris Cancer Hospital.

Gran comes to USC from the position of CEO of the faculty practice at the University of Mississippi, where he was instrumental in bringing the hospital and practices together for improved business operations and implementation of an electronic health record.

He also worked for nine years at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, where he served as chief operating officer of the faculty practice organization and chief revenue cycle officer.

“My philosophy is to work toward whatever is best for the patients and for the faculty. I’m here for the faculty. I want them to be proud of the medical practice.’”

—Keith Gran, CEO of USC Care

By Amy Hamaker
Work is almost complete on the new 120,000-square-foot, three-story Soto Street Building, with the first tenants scheduled to move in beginning on Aug. 18. The move-in will take place in three phases between Aug. 18 and Sept. 9.

The additional space helps meet a growing need on campus. “Administrative units moving into the building will now have adequate space to provide services to the entire health sciences campus,” said Robert Cooper, vice provost for planning and budget.

“Amenities such as the gym and café will be a welcome addition to the campus.”

The opening of the Soto Street Building will also unite the different divisions of the Keck School of Medicine Department of Preventive Medicine under one roof.

“This move is momentous for the department,” said Jonathan Samet, chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine. “Most of the faculty, students and staff will finally be in one location and in a building that has been designed to match our needs. The move into the building comes at the right moment, as the department continues to evolve and to coalesce.”

See SOTO, page 2

New Soto Street Building ready for staged move-in starting Aug. 18

Campus fitness center opening soon

USC students, faculty and staff—including hospital employees—at the Health Sciences Campus will soon be enjoying a fitness center, one of the newest additions to the University’s enhancement of the quality of campus life.

The URC Fitness Center will be located on the first floor of the new Soto Street Building at 2001 Soto Street (at the corner of Soto Street and Valley Boulevard) and will be managed by USC Recreational Sports.

Keck School of Medicine Dean Carmen A. Puliafito said the development of the fitness center was a high priority of his administration.

“The health of our students and faculty is of the greatest importance to us,” Puliafito said. “This new 120,000-square-foot building is designed to match our needs and to be a major addition to the student experience and quality of life on the Health Sciences Campus.”

Justine Gilman, senior director of recreational sports, added, “With opportunities for personal training, group sessions and

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The Weekly ETCETERA

Alice Stek, assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the Keck School of Medicine, recently received the “Provider Award” for her excellence in providing care for women living with HIV, from the LA HIV/AIDS Women’s Task Force. Stek, who is also director of Perinatal Services at the Maternal, Child and Adolescent HIV Programs (MCA) at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center, received the award on July 11 at the group’s annual meeting to honor agencies and individuals providing care to women living with HIV.

Her work at LAC-USC includes individual patient care as well as teaching and training of residents, fellows, medical students and physicians in the community. She is especially proud of the fact that in the past 14 years none of the HIV positive women receiving care at MCA during their pregnancies have transmitted HIV to their infants.

Peggy Farnham, the William M. Keck Professor of Biochemistry, has been selected as the 2012 recipient of the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB) Herbert A. Sober Lectureship Award. The Herbert A. Sober Lectureship recognizes outstanding biochemical and molecular biological research, with particular emphasis on development of methods and techniques to aid in research. Farnham will present a lecture at the 2012 ASBMB Annual Meeting as recipient of this award.

GYM: Slated for Aug. 22 opening

Continued from page 1

The new building’s basic hours are 8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Limited parking is available onsite for building occupants, and metered parking is available for guests and visitors.

A new shuttle between the Soto Street Building, the Valley Boulevard parking lot, the San Pablo parking lot and the main HSC drop-off point on Eastlake at the corner of San Pablo is being added; a second separate shuttle will run between the new building and Union Station. No direct access between the Soto Street Building and the University Park Campus is planned at this time. The new shuttle will be available between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, and will come in 15- to 18-minute intervals.

SOTO: Shuttle service to link new building with HSC parking lots, Union Station

Continued from page 1

The ground floor will feature a new café, Purchasing (which is moving out of ParkView), Human Resources for the Keck School and the USC hospitals, the Center for Work and Family Life, classroom conferencing space, and a 10,000-square-foot fitness center.

The second floor will house Contracts and Grants, Administrative Services, including payroll, equity and diversity, and employee relations; and some divisions of the Department of Preventive Medicine, including the division of biostatistics, the division of environmental health and Preventive Medicine student affairs. The third floor will consist entirely of divisions of the Department of Preventive Medicine, including the Los Angeles Cancer Surveillance Program, the division of health behavior and institute for prevention research, and the division of disease prevention and global health.

Tentative move-in dates are as follows:
- Aug. 18-19: Several divisions of the Department of Preventive Medicine, including the division of biostatistics, Preventive Medicine student affairs, the division of health behavior and institute for prevention research, and Purchasing, as well as the classroom conferencing space and the gym facilities.
- Aug. 26-27: More divisions of the Department of Preventive Medicine, including the Los Angeles Cancer Surveillance Program, and the division of disease prevention and global health, as well as the Center for Work and Family Life and Contracts and Grants.
- Sept. 8-9: The remainder of the Department of Preventive Medicine, and the Keck School and USC hospitals Administrative Services.
- Late October: ‘The café is scheduled to open.

A SUCCESSFUL ENDING—The Bridging the Gap summer research program came to a successful end on Aug. 5 at a reception at the home of them Ford, vice dean of medical education at the Keck School. Student participants, faculty mentors and donors gathered to view the students’ research and enjoy a Southern California-style backyard barbecue. Here, Ford (left) listens to student Kimberly Aboukhaled (right) describe the research she performed with mentor Thoma Segall-Gutierrez (center), assistant professor of clinical medicine in obstetrics/gynecology. Bridging the Gap allows outstanding minority students to gain exposure to the Keck School’s research and clinical programs.
Keck School and Thornton School of Music collaborate to aid singers’ voices

Faculty from the Keck School of Medicine and USC Thornton School of Music are embarking on a first-ever study focused on improving the consistency of the female voice during monthly hormonal variations. Beginning in fall 2011, Thornton School associate professor of vocal arts Cynthia Munzer and Keck School clinical professor Uttam Sinha, chief and program director of the Keck School Department of Otolaryngology, will research the effects of vocal therapy on vocal quality in 25 female singers ranging in age from 20 to postmenopausal. The purpose is to determine therapeutic methods for female vocalists to achieve consistent vocal quality.

“Research has shown that monthly hormone fluctuations and menstruation affect the range and quality of the female voice, which can be problematic for professional voice users,” said Sinha, the Watt Family Chair in Head and Neck Cancer. “We collaborators are trying to determine if the professional female voice can be stabilized or enriched with vocal therapy during these times, which would improve vocal performance.”

Munzer, a mezzo-soprano with more than 220 performances in more than 20 roles with the Metropolitan Opera, knows something about vocal quality and the demands on a professional singer’s voice, mind and body. As she explained in a recent profile in Classical Singer magazine, “Communication is one of a singer’s biggest goals, so the body should work seamlessly and allow one to be free to communicate.”

“The opportunity to learn more about the delicate variances of the voice and present suitable noninvasive therapies in order to produce consistently strong and healthy tones during monthly hormonal changes is certainly one of our goals,” said Munzer. The expected long-term benefits of the study include establishing remedies for vocal challenges caused by menstruation and menopause, introducing vocal therapy exercises into the vocal arts studios, and fostering a closer relationship between the Keck School of Medicine and Thornton School of Music. “I am very excited about the groundbreaking work being done on the voice,” said Robert Cuttieta, dean of the USC Thornton School of Music. “The intricate marriage of physiology and artistry that every vocalist has to foster makes this type of research both practical and important. I hope this is the beginning of many partnerships between the Keck School of Medicine and USC Thornton School of Music.”

The research findings are expected to not only help female vocalists, but to establish teaching methods that vocal pedagogues can use in the classroom to further enhance performances. “I am pleased that Dr. Sinha is collaborating with colleagues at the USC Thornton School of Music,” said Keck School Dean Carmen A. Puliafito. He added, “This study could lead to solutions for problems that have long plagued female singers. It is another example of collaboration between schools at USC, collaboration across our campuses that will yield tremendous results. This partnership holds great promise for discovering new voice therapy methods that will improve the quality of the voices of female singers.”

Regional high school Brain Bee champion goes on to win international contest

A Carpinteria high school student who recently won the Los Angeles Brain Bee—a competition organized by Amy Sweetman, a professor at Los Angeles City College, and co-sponsored by the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute at USC and the Brain Research Institute at U.C.L.A.—has gone on to win the U.S. National and the International Brain Bee Championship in Italy.

Competing against individuals from 12 other nations, Thanh-Lien Huynh-Thran of Cate High School in Carpinteria won the international contest in Florence on July 16, beating a rival from Australia by a half point. His first-place showing won him an award of $3,000 and a summer research fellowship with an acclaimed neuroscientist. Huynh-Thran won the national competition on June 18 against 41 contestants in order to be invited to the international competition. The Brain Bee is a neuroscience competition for high school students designed to test their knowledge, wit and comprehension of brain facts and principles. Topics covered in the contest are generally commensurate with those studied by second-year medical students. The local Brain Bee where Huynh-Thran achieved his first major victory is hosted each year by Los Angeles City College. Pat Levitt, director of the Zilkha Neurogenetic Institute, said “The Brain Bee provides an opportunity for universities with strong neuroscience research programs to encourage the best young minds locally to experience the excitement of the brain sciences and to see a potential career path. With neuroscience being such a major focus of growth for USC and the Keck School of Medicine, it was only natural for the ZNI to help support students like Huynh-Thran in their quest. His international success brings great pride to our university and the neuroscience community.”
Calendar of Events
This Calendar of Events is also online at www.usc.edu/hsc/calendar for the Health Sciences Campus community

Wednesday, Aug. 17
8:30 a.m. “Sleep Fatigue and Physician Impairment.” Douglas Prisco, USC. IBD 732-734. Info: (323) 226-7923
Jorgensen, University of Utah. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-2144

Wednesday, Sept. 14

Sunday, Sept. 18
8:45 a.m. “Celiac’s Cancer! 5K Walk/Run,” to raise awareness for the early detection and prevention of ovarian and breast cancer. San Vicente Blvd., Brentwood. Join the USC Norris team: (323) 865-0668

Wednesday, Aug. 21 and Thursday, Sept. 22
7:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. USC Hospitals Annual Pain Management Symposium. Various speakers. NRT Aretsy Auditorium. Info: (323) 442-8660

Thursday, Sept. 22
8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. 15th Annual Max R. Gaspar Education Symposium. “All Aorta from the Valve to Bifurcation,” Jack Cronnernett, Dartmouth. Millennium Biltmore Hotel. Info and Registration: (323) 442-2555

Saturday, Sept. 24
7:45 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. KOM Continuing Medical Education Symposium. “Multimodality Treatment of Brain Cancer: Current Concepts and Recent Advances.” Various speakers. Tuition is $55 if received before noon 9/23/11; $75 after. Los Angeles Marriott Hotel. Info: (800) 872-1119

Thursday, Sept. 29
Ming Hsieh Institute for Research on Engineering-Medicine for Cancer Symposium. The symposium will address opportunities for translation research in nanomedicine, and include both industry and academic participants. President Sisian will deliver the welcoming address at the symposium. Suggestions for speakers are appreciated. Please send these to ypres@usc.edu. Details on how to RSVP will be provided in August. Joyce And.

ONLINE EXTRAS: Read more HSC news online

- Comprehensive Cancer Control Coalition hosts forum on community cancer burden http://tinyurl.com/3eo7e42
- USC oncologists present research at American Society of Clinical Oncology Conference http://tinyurl.com/3snanwu
- LAC-USC celebrates Breathmobile’s 15th anniversary http://tinyurl.com/3md6c9
- USC Epigenome Center participates in comprehensive ovarian cancer study http://tinyurl.com/3n1lde6
- Serotonin and autism: Red flag or red herring? http://tinyurl.com/3wrr6nm
- USC researchers discover possible link between stress and lung damage to children from traffic-related pollution http://tinyurl.com/3md6d4m
- Updating the Clean Air Act http://tinyurl.com/3ho7y69
- Successful transplant, sight restored http://tinyurl.com/3khjui9
- Keck undergrad is named a Thomas R. Pickering Fellow http://tinyurl.com/3jq78te

Notice: Deadline for calendar submission is 4 p.m. Monday to be considered for that week’s issue—although three weeks’ advance notice of events is recommended. Please note that timely submission does not guarantee an item will be printed. Send calendar items to The Weekly, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or email to eblaauw@usc.edu. Entries must include day, date, time, title of talk, first and last name of speaker, affiliation of speaker, location, and a phone number for information.

As part of USC President C. L. Max Nikias’ beautification initiative for the Health Sciences Campus, cardinal-and-gold banners have gone up on light poles surrounding the campus and in the nearby community. Left, a banner overlooking Zonal Avenue near Biggy Street highlights the university’s “innovative research.” Additional messaging promotes USC’s “compassionate care,” “state of the art teaching” and “achieving excellence.”