

USC installs Carmen Puliafito as Keck School of Medicine dean

A lively jazz trio, delicious hors d'oeuvres and a beautiful Southern California afternoon set the celebratory tone for some 400 faculty, staff and students who gathered on Dec. 4 to mark the installation of Carmen A. Puliafito as dean of the Keck School of Medicine.

In an academic ceremony on the Harry and Celesta Pappas Quad at the USC Health Sciences Campus, Puliafito was officially introduced by USC President Steven B. Sample.

"Today is a milestone for the doctors, researchers, students, staff and friends of this school who have devoted themselves to practicing medicine, pursuing scientific discovery and supporting the healing arts," said Sample. "We needed someone who could bring new energy and vitality to every area of the Keck School ... someone who could take a great school and make it even better. We found that person in Dr. Carmen Puliafito."

An ophthalmologist who earned his medical degree at Harvard University and M.B.A. from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Puliafito most recently served as director of the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute and chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology of the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

He is the 22nd dean to oversee the school of medicine since it opened in 1885.

Puliafito succeeds Brian Henderson, an internationally recognized cancer epidemiologist, who remains on the Keck School of Medicine faculty, returning fulltime to his research endeavors.

Henderson and former Keck School deans Stephen J. Ryan, Robert E. Tranquada, Joseph Van Der Meulen and Allen Mathies all attended the installation ceremony.

"This school is now poised for a revolutionary transformation, both in its aspirations and its structure," said Puliafito. "The next months and years will be exciting ones for the entire USC healthcare community."

Puliafito, who said his first few weeks at USC were the most inspiring weeks of his 30-year medical career, highlighted his priorities for the coming years. He stressed the creation of a clinical environment that fosters collaborative research and patient access to important medical advances. He also called for increased recruitment of translational researchers, in addition to building support for current investigators.

"We have challenges—and those challenges offer tremendous opportunities for all of us," Puliafito said. "We



USC President Steven Sample (left) unveils the May S. and John Hooval Dean's Chair in Medicine during the Dec. 4 installation of Carmen Puliafito as the 22nd dean of the Keck School of Medicine.

will be energetic, enthusiastic and committed to excellence as we work together to advance the Keck School of Medicine of USC."

Donald Feinstein, professor in the Department of Medicine at the Keck School and emeritus chief of medicine

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Schools of Dentistry, Pharmacy, Medicine host 'Microbicide Interactive' on HIV/AIDS

By Veronica Jauriqui

The USC schools of dentistry, medicine and pharmacy tackled the topic of HIV/AIDS and prevention for women in a special discussion held Nov. 27 at the Davidson Conference Center on USC's University Park Campus.

The event, "Microbicide Interactive," invited scholars and researchers in health science, anthropology, media and gender studies to explore the disturbingly high incidence of women infected with HIV in developing countries. The focus was on the potential effectiveness of microbicides—gels, creams, suppositories and other compounds that are self-inserted into the vagina prior to sex to prevent transmission of STDs.

"The face of HIV/AIDS is a woman's face now," said Andrea Kovacs, professor of pediatrics and pathology at the Keck School of Medicine, and director

of the school's Maternal Child and Adolescent Program for Infectious Diseases and Virology (MCA). The

MCA clinic is the county's only designated perinatal HIV clinic and the only clinic to provide a full spectrum of

health services to HIV-positive pregnant women and their families regardless of their ability to pay.

The United Nations estimates that 33 million people are living with HIV worldwide. Young women ages 15 to 24 represent the fastest growing demographic of new HIV infections. In some developing countries, including those in sub-Saharan African, 61 percent of adults living with HIV in 2007 were women.

"We are seeing the feminization of this epidemic, a term coined by Kofi Annan," Kovacs explained, "Young women are the most affected group in the world. We need a new strategy obviously."

As there is no cure for the disease, microbicides hold great promise for prevention of HIV transmission in women. In countries where gender discrimina-

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Appearing from left are event organizers: Roseann Mulligan, professor and associate dean for community health programs at the School of Dentistry; Kathleen Johnson, William A. Heeres Endowed Chair in Community Pharmacy; and Andrea Kovacs, professor of pediatrics at the Keck School of Medicine.

PULIAFITO: New dean described as 'rare leader' with outstanding medical credentials

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at USC University Hospital and USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center and Hospital, said he really enjoyed the installation ceremony and thought Puliafito's remarks were terrific.

"I thought his speech was a morale builder for everyone here," he said.

Kavita Munjal, director of foundation relations for the Keck School, echoed Einstein's sentiments.

"Puliafito's spirit and vision are really poised to take the Keck School forward," she said.

The purpose of the dean's installation ceremony is to consecrate the person and the purpose.

It is an opportunity to recognize the moment in history, to formally introduce and welcome the incumbent, and to hear from the dean of his vision and mission for the school.

In addition to the deanship at USC, Puliafito now also serves as Professor of Ophthalmology and Health Management and the holder of the May S. and John Hooval Dean's Chair in Medicine. The appointment is for a five-year-and-eight-month term, which began Nov. 1. He reports directly to Max Nikias, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs.

"We believe this heralds a moment of transformation for the Keck School," said Nikias when he announced Puliafito's appointment in August. "The school is poised for extraordinary growth, thanks to the efforts of a stellar group of faculty, staff, alumni, friends and the guidance and support of the W.M. Keck Foundation. Puliafito will now take charge as a researcher, teacher,

'We will recruit a new generation of research scientists, clinical leaders, and most importantly clinician-scientists—that rare breed of physician who can travel back and forth from the laboratory to the clinic. In this way we will leverage the resources of both places to advance the medical enterprise. Recruitment of this new generation is important to ensure that we build upon the success of our current faculty.'

—Keck School Dean Carmen Puliafito, from his installation speech

clinician, inventor, administrator and fundraiser of singular quality—able to advance the school to the front ranks of American medical schools in terms of research, teaching and patient care."

His colleagues have described Puliafito as a rare leader whose achievements in organizational leadership, research, teaching and patient care rest on a foundation of outstanding medical scholarship and clinical practice. His research interests include vitreoretinal diagnostics, laser technologies, ophthalmic education and ophthalmology practice management.

A native of Buffalo, New York, Puliafito is married to Janet Pine, a former classmate at Harvard Medical School. They have three children: Amy, 23, a graduate of Northwestern University; Ben, 17; and Sam, 14. The family now resides in Pasadena.

Puliafito is an award-winning philatelist (collector and student of postage stamps), an expert on the early history of the U.S. postal service, and a runner who has completed the Boston Marathon and numerous half-marathons.



USC President Steven Sample (center) and five former Keck School of Medicine deans assembled on Dec. 4 to welcome Carmen Puliafito as the 22nd dean of the Keck School. Appearing from left are: Stephen Ryan, Robert Tranquada, Joseph Van der Meulen, Sample, Puliafito, Allen Mathies and Brian Henderson.

©Steve Cohn

AIDS: Interdisciplinary collaboration focuses on diverse facets of AIDS epidemic

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sation prevents women from actively engaging in safe-sex practices, microbicides could be especially advantageous given that they can be administered discreetly.

The event was organized by Kovacs, Roseann Mulligan, professor and associate dean of the USC School of Dentistry's office of Community Health Programs and director of the Dental Education Component of the Pacific AIDS Education and Training Center; and Kathleen Johnson, the William A. and Josephine A. Heeres Chair in Community Pharmacy and Chair of the Titus Family Department of Clinical Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Economics and Policy at the USC School of Pharmacy.

The partnership was a recent recipient of a \$10,000 James H. Zumberge Research and Innovation Award

from the University. The prizes are awarded to collaborative efforts among faculty from different schools and disciplines that lead to sustained research programs and projects.

"We have a unique opportunity at USC given our expertise and patient populations to make a difference in solving unanswered questions related to HIV prevention and treatment, especially in adolescents and women," said Johnson. "This work will impact domestic as well as international populations."

The School of Dentistry has had a unique affiliation with the MCA clinic for several years, and provides dental services to its patient populations. The study of dentistry, Mulligan said, understands that health and disease in the oral cavity are influenced by "good" versus "bad" organisms. She said that what we

have learned about the complex relationships of organisms of the mouth may have applications to the reproductive tract.

"What has been learned in dentistry may help us understand other compartments of the body harboring complex flora that colonize mucosal surfaces," she said.

The microbicide event was the first in a series of discussions to be organized through this interdisciplinary collaboration. A February 2008 event will address the pathogenesis and transmission of the disease both in women and men. In March of 2008, a town hall meeting scheduled in conjunction with National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day will explore the epidemic from a female perspective. The town hall event is open to the public.



RAISING AWARENESS, FIGHTING AIDS—Commemorating World AIDS Day a day early, campus groups set up information booths on the first floor of the Keith Administration Building on Nov. 30. The annual event is dedicated to raising awareness of the AIDS pandemic caused by the spread of HIV infection.

Keck School co-hosts M.D./Ph.D. event aimed at career development, mentoring

By Sandra Mosteller

The Keck School of Medicine and Caltech co-hosted the American Physician Scientists Association's (APSA) inaugural West Coast Regional M.D./Ph.D. Conference at Caltech's Beckman Institute on Nov. 17.

About 100 people attended the event, which offered networking opportunities for California and West Coast physician scientist trainees and career development for trainees and undergraduate students.

Students from the USC-Caltech M.D./Ph.D. Program organized the conference. They included Kenneth Yu, who led the organizing committee, Alana Dixon, Thomas Ng, Beth Pineles, and Nitzan Roth. Vickie Pon, a pre-health undergraduate student at Caltech was also a member of the organizing committee.

The three keynote speakers were: James Economou, director of the UCLA Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center; Allen Yang, hematologist-oncologist and assistant professor of medicine at the Keck School of Medicine; and C. Glenn Begley, vice president and global head of hematology and oncology research at Amgen Corporation.

Carmen A. Puliafito, dean of the

Keck School of Medicine, gave introductory remarks.

Following the early afternoon speaker sessions, there were two panelist breakout sessions, covering topics ranging from research based residencies and the practice of academic medicine, to what life is like as an M.D./Ph.D. student and highlights of California M.D./Ph.D. programs. Attendees could choose to participate in either session. Panel members were comprised of current M.D./Ph.D. students, administrators, medical residents and fellows and residency directors.

Kenneth Yu said that "the event was a lot of work but well worth the effort." All members of the organizing committee believed the event was a success and the post-conference surveys returned by the participants indicated that the event addressed the needs of the attendees and suggested ideas for future events. The day was an opportunity for scientific interaction, career development, mentoring and networking.

Other co-sponsors of the event included UCSF School of Medicine, UC Irvine School of Medicine, Loma Linda University School of Medicine, Caltech Pre-Med Association, Caltech Y and the Caltech Career Development Center & Bookstore.

USC School of Pharmacy professor helps create online drug-monitoring course

By Kukla Vera

Professor Gilbert J. Burckart, Hygeia Centennial Chair in Clinical Pharmacy, joined FDA staff in coordinating "The Future of Medicine—Pharmacogenomics," a course offered by the FDA and the American College of Clinical Pharmacology (ACCP).

The online class focused on this emergent area of medicine was launched on both the ACCP and the FDA Web sites in an effort to provide a basic overview and a dozen in-depth modules targeting current medical and pharmacy students as well as post-doctoral fellows.



Gilbert J. Burckart

The USC School of Pharmacy played a pivotal role in developing the course. Burckart organized the course along with FDA staff members, Felix Frueh, associate director of genomics, and Federico Goodsaid, senior staff scientist, Office of Translational Science.

According to Burckart, "Pharmacogenomics is therapeutic drug monitoring. It's the way we'll determine what drugs to use and how to better monitor them. This course provides a way for current practitioners and the next generation of clinicians and researchers to become familiar with the topic and its applications."

Burckart, who worked on this project during a recent sabbatical at the FDA, involved many colleagues at the USC School of Pharmacy in the project modules. While the entire course provides a thorough handling of the topic, each module also works as a stand-alone chapter.

While the course just launched earlier this month, Burckart reports that "initial reaction has been very positive,

with colleagues around the globe already accessing the information". The field of pharmacogenomics presents a new way of diagnosing and treating patients by looking at each patient's genetic make up to determine the best course of treatment.

The course is structured in a way that allows experts to look at pharmacogenetics as it relates to specific categories of drugs. School of Pharmacy faculty featured include Susie Park, assistant professor, discussing the central nervous system drugs; Tien Ng, assistant professor, on cardiovascular

agents; Stan Louie, associate professor, looking into anti-infective drugs; and Paul Beringer, associate professor, reviewing the impact of pharmacogenomics on pulmonary drugs.

Ian Hutchinson, professor at both the School of Pharmacy and the Keck School of Medicine, presents an overview of the pharmacogenetics of drug targets with a focus on the immune and inflammatory system. Also in the program from the Keck School of Medicine is Richard Watanabe, associate professor, discussing biostatistical approaches and Web resources for analysis of pharmacogenomic information.

Burckart, along with FDA colleague Lawrence Lesko, presents the introductory module to the course. In addition, Burckart presents a module on pharmacogenomics and organ transplantation.

The course is free and accessible at <http://www.accp1.org/~user/index.html>. Support for the course was provided by GlaxoSmithKline and Third Wave Technologies.

ETCETERA

The USC Student Chapter of the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) has won the Dargavel Chapter of the Year award for the third year in a row.

The award was presented at the 109th Annual Convention of the NCPA on October 14 in Anaheim. Accepting the award was **Leah Movsessian** and **Hadi Ale-Ali**, both level four Pharm.D. students and co-presidents of the group during the 2006-07 academic year, the period that was considered for the honor. Movsessian is also the NCPA National Student President.

The honor acknowledges the group's community outreach activities, focusing

on screening and education events at clinics, independent pharmacy locations and health fairs. Members screened and educated thousands of Southern Californians last year on topics including hypertension, diabetes, body fat analysis, osteoporosis and nutrition.

In addition to outreach events, the group encourages students to consider a career in community pharmacy, exposing them to this career option through site visits and their ongoing speaker series, "Recipe to Developing and Owning Your Own Pharmacy." This program introduces students to a wide range of community pharmacy topics, including compounding, diabetes care, women's health issues and homeopathy.

Keck Faculty Invited to Assembly Meeting

Keck School of Medicine faculty are invited to the next regular meeting of the Medical Faculty Assembly, which is set for Tuesday, Dec. 11, at 4 p.m. The meeting, led by President Peter Conti, will take place in Keith

Administration Building Room 505. "The Medical Faculty Assembly is an important way for faculty to have input on issues affecting the governance of this medical school," Conti said. "All faculty are welcome."

Calendar of Events

The HSC Calendar is online at www.usc.edu/hsc/calendar

Saturday, Dec. 8

9 A.M.–9:35 A.M. “Update on Carotid Artery Disease,” Ray Matthews, USC. Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 442-2555

9:35 A.M.–10:10 A.M. “Hormone Replacement and Coronary Disease,” Tracy Lawrence, USC. Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 442-2555

10:10 A.M.–10:45 A.M. “Aortic Aneurysm: Clinical Update,” Leonardo Clavijo, USC. Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 442-2555

11 A.M.–11:35 A.M. “Alternative Approaches to Treating CAD: Fish Oil, Flaxseed Oil, Wine, Etc.,” Tracy Lawrence, USC. Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 442-2555

11:35 A.M.–12:15 A.M. “Peripheral Artery Disease: Clinical Implications, Diagnostic Tools and New Treatment Modalities,” Leonardo Clavijo, USC. Mayer Aud. Info: (323) 442-2555

Monday, Dec. 10

NOON. “Hypo/Hypernatremia,” Saeid M. Nosrati, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rm. A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

4 P.M. “Kidney and Liver Transplant,” Rick Selby, USC. UH Salerni Rm. Info: (323) 442-9093

Tuesday, Dec. 11

8 A.M. Pathology and Laboratory Medicine Grand Rounds. “Polyps of the Gut With No Names or Which Have Obscure Names,” Henry Appelman, Univ. Hospital, Ann Arbor, MI. NOR 7409. Info: (323) 442-2978

9 A.M. Neurology Grand Rounds. “Migraine,” Alan Rapport, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 442-7686

11:30 A.M. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “All Bets Are On: Inside the Brain of

Pathological Gamblers,” Timothy W. Fong, UCLA. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 226-5572

Wednesday, Dec. 12

NOON. Renal Grand Rounds Conference. “Renal Pathology,” Arthur H. Cohen, UCLA. GNH 6441. Info: (323) 226-7307

Thursday, Dec. 13

NOON. USC Research Ctr. for Liver Diseases. “Biological Consequences of Adipocytokine Signaling in the Liver,” Frank A. Anania, Emory Univ. HMR 100. Info: (323) 442-1283

Monday, Dec. 17

NOON. Fellows’ Didactic Teaching Conference. “Mid-year Evaluation,” Mirosław J. Smogorzewski, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rm. A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

4 P.M. “Research in Progress,” Roopinder Poonia, USC. GNH 10-340. Info: (323) 226-7307

Tuesday, Dec. 18

11:30 A.M. Psychiatry Grand Rounds. “Alcohol, Pharmacology and Medical Complications: Treatment of Alcohol Withdrawal and Maintenance,” Akikur R. Mohammad and Graham Mitchell, USC. ZNI 112. Info: (323) 226-5572

Wednesday, Dec. 19

NOON. Renal Grand Rounds Conference. “Renal Ultrasound, Emphasis on Doppler,” Philip W. Ralls, USC. GNH 6441. Info: (323) 226-7307

Monday, Dec. 31

NOON. Fellows’ Didactic Teaching Conference. “Epidemiology of Kidney Disease,” Jeanie Park, USC. GNH Drs. Dining Rm A & B. Info: (323) 226-7307

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 HSC Weekly, KAM 400 or fax to (323) 442-2832, or e-mail 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.



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USC/NORRIS NEWS—Members of the USC/Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center Advisory Board had an opportunity to meet the new dean of the Keck School of Medicine over lunch on Nov. 26 at the Jonathan Club. Posing together above are Cancer Center director Peter Jones, Board chair David Brubaker and Keck School Dean Carmen Puliafito. Also in attendance at left are board member Linda Maudlin (left) and USC Trustee Lorna Reed.



Liver disease grants of up to \$50,000 offered

The USC Research Center for Liver Diseases is offering awards of \$10,000–50,000 to support pilot studies in the field of liver and digestive tract function and disease.

Funds are available to support studies for one year beginning April 1, 2008. Awards are potentially renewable for two to three years, contingent on progress. Collaborative projects among different laboratories are encouraged and especially meritorious projects that appear likely to be successful in leading to R01 funding will be given preference. Eligible applicants include new investigators without peer-reviewed support, established investigators in another field who are interested in redirecting work and expertise to digestive disease and established investigators in digestive disease who wish to make a major shift in emphasis.

Hard copies of letters of intent, biographical sketches and other support must be received by Dec 12 by Laurie DeLeve, Mail Code: HMR 603, HSC. For more information, contact DeLeve at (323) 442-3248 or deleve@usc.edu.

HSC NEWSMAKERS

Complete listing at: www.usc.edu/uscnews/usc_in_the_news/

A Dec. 3 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted fertility expert **Richard Paulson** about the risks of pregnancy in older women.

A Dec. 3 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted plastic surgeon **Brian Kinney** about a controversial injection procedure used to reduce fat.

A Dec. 3 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted anesthesia expert **Jeffrey Lee** about the possibility of an anesthetized patient remaining conscious during surgery.

On Nov. 29, CNN’s “Anderson Cooper 360” interviewed psychiatrist **Drew Pinsky** about teens posting personal details online.

A Nov. 27 *San Fernando Valley Business Journal* article quoted neurosurgeon **Mark Liker** about a new type of disc that can replace upper spinal vertebrae.

A Nov. 26 *Los Angeles Times* article quoted cardiothoracic surgeon **Vaughn Starnes** about a new study that reported that lung transplants as a treatment for cystic fibrosis are rarely beneficial to children with the condition. The *Boston Globe* ran a similar story.

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