UC Irvine 趙 Chao Family
Comprehensive Cancer Center

2026 Scientific Retreat

The Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel
Huntington Beach, CA



PLANNING COMMITTEE

Chairs

Richard Van Etten, MD, PhD, FRCP
Director
UC Irvine Chao Family
Comprehensive Cancer Center

Miguel A. Villalona, MD
Deputy Director
UC Irvine Chao Family
Comprehensive Cancer Center

Research Programs

Angela Fleischman, MD, PhD
Co-Leader
Systems, Pathways & Targets

Brian Paegel, PhD
Co-Leader
Biotechnology, Imaging & Drug Development

Anand Ganesan, MD, PhD
Co-Leader
Biotechnology, Imaging & Drug Development

Gelareh Sadigh, MD
Assistant Program Leader
Cancer Control

Sunmin Lee, ScD, MPH
Co-Leader
Cancer Control

Xiaoyu Shi, PhD
Assistant Program Leader
Biotechnology, Imaging & Drug Development

John Lowengrub, PhD
Co-Leader
Systems, Pathways & Targets

Roberto Tinoco, PhD
Assistant Program Leader
Systems, Pathways & Targets

Joel Milam, PhD
Co-Leader
Cancer Control

Administration

Melanie Funes, PhD
Chief Administrative Officer
AD, Administration & Finance

April Bagaporo, MBA
Director
Administrative Programs

CONTENTS

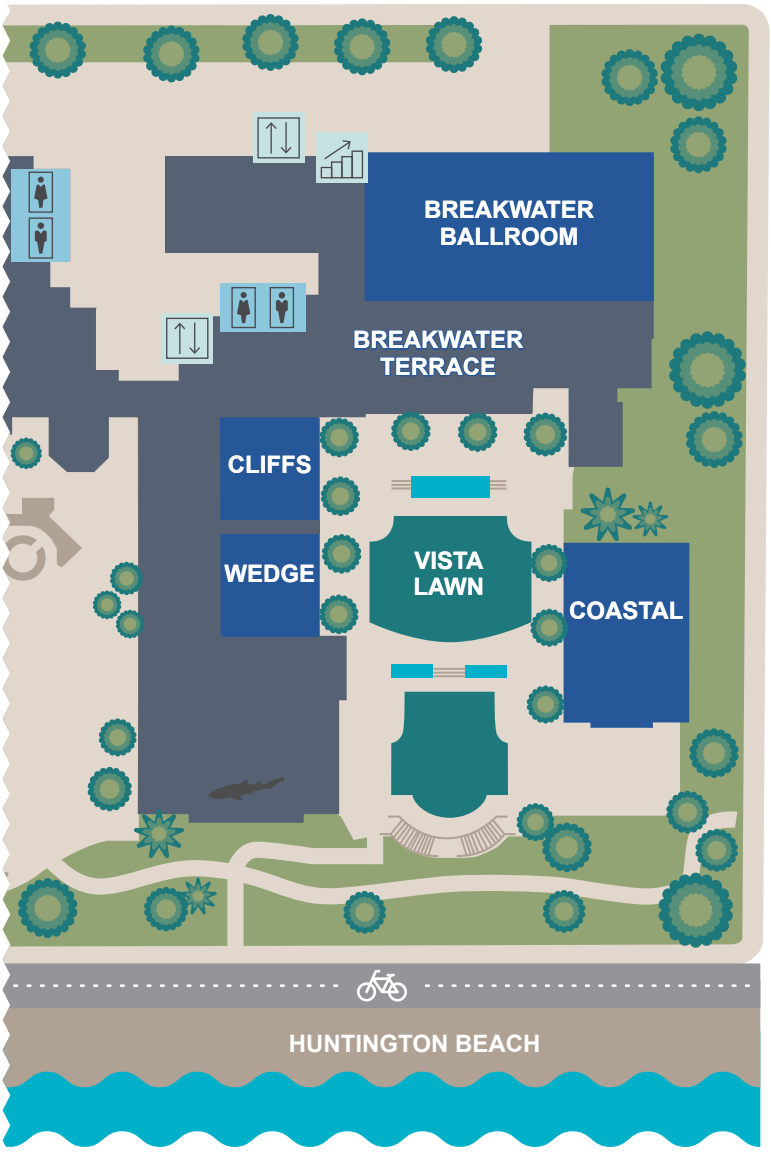
Location 4
Morning Agenda 5
Lunch 6
Collaboration Sessions 7
Afternoon Agenda 8
Posters 10
Notes & Ideas 19



SSID: Hilton Meetings
Password: Scientific2026

LOCATION

The Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel
Twin Dolphin Tower



MORNING AGENDA

8:00am	Vista Lawn	Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:35am	Breakwater Ballroom	Welcome & State of the Cancer Center **Richard Van Etten, MD, PhD, FRCP**
9:30am	Breakwater Ballroom	**Basic Science** **Miguel A. Villalona, MD**  BIDD Advancing Doxorubicin/DNA Nanocomplexes from Bench to Bedside: Progress Since 2022 **Young Jik Kwon, PhD**  SPT Unmasking the many faces of Menin: translating basic discovery to clinical insights **Suzann Duan, PhD**  CC Use of Generative AI Chatbot to Aid Online Quit-Smoking Support Groups **Connie Pechmann, PhD, MBA**
10:15am		Coffee Break
10:30am	Breakwater Ballroom	**Clinical Science & Translation** **Farshid Dayyani, MD, PhD**  BIDD Multiphoton Microscopy Imaging as a Tool to Monitor Immune Activation Induced by Checkpoint Inhibitors **Mihaela Balu, PhD**  SPT Drug Development Technologies Targeting the Proteasome **Darci Trader, PhD**  CC Lung Cancer Screening: From Evidence to Implementation **Gelareh Sadigh, MD**

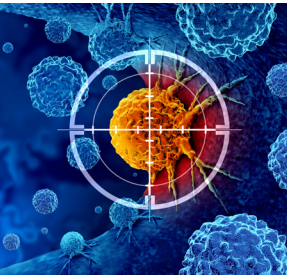
11:15am	Breakwater Ballroom	**2024 Flash Talk Updates** A Phase 1 Study of the Combination of Pitavastatin (Pita) with Gemcitabine and nab-paclitaxel in patients with Unresectable Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma (uPDAC) **Jennifer Valerin, MD, PhD** Feasibility Study on the Effect of a Methionine-Reduced Diet on Serum Levels in Patients with Solid Tumors **Ann Arter, MD**
11:25am	Breakwater Ballroom	Community Outreach & Engagement **Richard Van Etten, MD, PhD, FRCP**
11:40am	Breakwater Ballroom	Integrative Oncology Research **Gary Deng, MD, PhD**
11:55am	Breakwater Ballroom	Collaboration Session Introduction **Melanie Funes, PhD**

LUNCH

12:05pm	Vista Lawn	**Lunch, Networking & Poster Session**

COLLABORATION SESSIONS

1:15pm Concurrent Collaboration Sessions

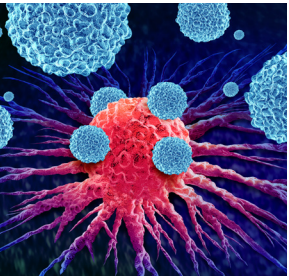


Targets to Therapy

Cliffs Room

This session will explore how molecular target identification and validation connect with drug discovery, medicinal chemistry, and pharmacokinetic and toxicity testing. Discussions will focus on advancing promising compounds through cellular and animal models toward human studies. The goal is to connect investigators across this pipeline and strengthen the collaborations essential to translating discoveries into treatments.

BIDD	SPT	CC
TOPIC LEAD **Brian Paegel, PhD**	**John Lowengrub, PhD**	**Gelareh Sadigh, MD**



Tumor Microenvironment

Breakwater Ballroom

This session will bring together investigators to explore how cancer cells interact with immune, stromal, and metabolic environments to influence tumor progression and treatment response. Participants will identify unanswered questions that benefit from shared expertise across cancer types and research programs. The goal is to develop collaborative projects that advance therapeutic strategies and build teams for R01s and multi-investigator grants.

BIDD	SPT	CC
Anand Ganesan, MD, PhD	TOPIC LEAD **Roberto Tinoco, PhD**	**Wendy Cozen, DO, MPH**



Lifestyle Interventions

Wedge Room

This session will explore lifestyle/behavioral interventions, with an emphasis on nutrition. Discussions will include assessments (e.g., novel technologies, gut microbiome) and interventions related to biological, behavioral, and clinical outcomes (for both cancer prevention and survivorship).

BIDD	SPT	CC
Munjal Acharya, PhD	**Angela Fleischman, MD, PhD**	TOPIC LEAD **Joel Milam, PhD**

AFTERNOON AGENDA

2:45pm Coffee Break

3:00pm Collaboration Session Report Out
Miguel A. Villalona, MD

3:15pm Breakwater Ballroom **Shared Resources Showcase**



Transgenic Mouse Facility (TMF)
Shimako Kawauchi, PhD
Making, breeding, genotyping, importing and preserving genetically-modified mice and embryonic stem cells



Optical Biology Core (OBC)
Rahul Warrior, PhD
Four cores: Self-use facility; Lab of fluorescence dynamics; Non-linear optical microscopy; & Flow cytometry facility



Genomics Research & Tech Hub (GRT Hub)
Rui Chen, PhD
Emerging and state-of-the-art genomics technologies and training



Mass Spectrometry (MS)
Felix Grun, PhD
Three cores: High-end MS; Nutrient metabolism & disease lab; Chemistry MS



In Vivo Functional Onco-Imaging (IVFOI)
Gultekin Gulsen, PhD
Expertise and training in cutting-edge imaging instrumentation and analysis



Experimental Tissue Resource (ETR)
Wendy Cozen, DO, MPH
Supplies tissues/fluids, offers histology, immunohistochemistry, pathology services, and more



Biostatistics Shared Resource (BSR)
Wen-Pin Chen, MS
Biostatistical expertise for experimental design and analysis of all phases of cancer research



Biobehavioral Shared Resource (BBSR)
Michael Hoyt, PhD
Expertise and services in planning, conducting and disseminating translational behavioral research

4:00pm Breakwater Ballroom **Flash Talks**

- Protein Antigen Microarray Profiling to Investigate Infection-Related Immune Signatures Underlying Racial/Ethnic Disparities in MGUS
  Mallory Bernstein, MSc, STAFF SCIENTIST
  PI: Wendy Cozen, DO, MPH

- Pan-Cancer Analysis Identifies Adhesome Silencing and CSRP1-Associated Plasticity in Lung Cancer
  Nolan Origer, GRADUATE STUDENT
  PI: Timothy Downing, PhD

- Physical Activity Levels and Gastric Cancer Incidence in Post-menopausal Women
  Wendy Lazouras, GRADUATE STUDENT
  PI: Andrew Odegaard, MD

- Evaluating a Novel Anti-Mitotic Combinational Therapy for Targeting Colorectal Cancer Cells
  Amrutha Kizhedathu, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW
  PI: Pablo Lara-Gonzalez, PhD

- UHRF1 as an Epigenetic Driver of Tumorigenicity and Immune Evasion in Triple Negative Breast Cancer
  Marina Suarez Pizarro, GRADUATE STUDENT
  PI: Claudia Benavente, PhD

- Parallel Actions of Sphingosine Mimetic SH-BC-893 Overcome and Avoid Drug Resistance Across Cancer Classes
  Cameron Geller, MS, GRADUATE STUDENT
  PI: Aimee Edinger, VMD, PhD

4:30pm **Poster Session, Reception & Awards**

Coastal Ballroom — Poster Session & Judging

Vista Lawn — Reception & Awards

6:00pm **Adjourn**

POSTERS

01 Physical Activity Levels and Gastric Cancer Incidence in Postmenopausal Women

Wendy Lazouras, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Andrew Odegaard, MD

02 Treatment- and Sociodemographic Differences in Penile Implant Utilization After Prostate Cancer Therapy: An NIH All of Us Database Analysis

Muhammed A. Moukhtar Hammad, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PIs: Thomas Ahlering, MD, and Faysal Yafi, MD

03 Baseline Serum Cortisol Level as a Predictor of Progression-Free Survival in Patients with Advanced Melanoma Receiving Immune Checkpoint Inhibitor Therapy

Heekyung Kim, VISITING ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, PI: Poorva Vaidya, MD

04 Noninvasive Imaging Biomarkers of the Pancreatic Tumor Microenvironment: Parallel Discovery in Mouse MRI and Human CT with Foundation Models

Guangbo Yu, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Zhuoli Zhang, MD, PhD

05 A Machine Learning Model Integrating Patient-Reported Outcomes to Predict Acute Care Utilization in Cancer Patients

Fan-Ying Chan, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Alexandre Chan, PharmD, PhD, MPH

06 UHRF1 as an Epigenetic Driver of Tumorigenicity and Immune Evasion in Triple Negative Breast Cancer

Marina Suarez Pizarro, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Claudia Benavente, PhD

07 Defining the Architecture and Signaling Networks of the Human STRIPAK Complex

Jessica Lin, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Wenqi Wang, PhD

Poster corresponds to a flash talk, see page 9

08 CDCP1 Promotes TNBC Progression Through Mitochondrial Src-Dependent Oxidative Metabolism

Yuchen Zhao, STAFF SCIENTIST, PI: Olga Razorenova, PhD

09 Home vs. Clinic: A Cross-Sectional Study of Cervical Cancer Screening Modality Preferences Among U.S. Women

Christine Nguyen, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Sora Park Tanjasiri, MPH, DrPH

10 Targeting Neuroinflammatory Complement Signaling to Alleviate Chemotherapy-Induced Cognitive Impairment

Asrita Prathigudupu, STAFF SCIENTIST, PI: Munjal Acharya, PhD

11 Digital PCR Reveals Subclinical JAK2 V617F Clones in One in Five Unaffected Relatives of Myeloproliferative Neoplasms Patients

Eli Soyfer, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Angela Fleischman, MD, PhD

12 Targeting Myeloid Metabolism to Remodel the Pancreatic Tumor Immune Microenvironment

Austin Silva, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Christopher Halbrook, PhD

13 Differential Impact of Diurnal Versus Nocturnal Cabozantinib Dosing

Kylie Lim, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Jennifer Valerin, MD, PhD

14 Second-Site Rescue Mutants as Tools to Uncover Reactivation Mechanisms of p53 Cancer Mutants

Fiona Law, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Peter Kaiser, PhD

15 CPSF3 Inhibition Reverses MAPKAP1 3′UTR Shortening in Enzalutamide-Resistant Prostate Cancer

Binghao Zou, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Xiaolin Zi, PhD, MSc

16 Integrating Structural Genomic Features for Ovarian Cancer Risk Prediction in Diverse Populations

Sarvenaz Fatapour, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Jim Brody, PhD

17 Hypoxia Selectively Enhances Breast Cancer Metastasis to the Brain

Hannah Savage, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Devon Lawson, PhD

18 AI-Driven Multiparametric MRI as an Early Pharmacodynamic Biomarker in Pancreatic Cancer Immunotherapy

Aydin Eresen, ASSISTANT RESEARCHER, PI: Zhuoli Zhang, MD, PhD

19 Spatial Transcriptomics Reveals Racial Differences in Prostate Cancer Stroma

Victor Wu, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Farahnaz Rahmatpanah, PhD

20 Household Material Hardship and Family Health-Related Outcomes During Pediatric Cancer Treatment

Cherish Wylie, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Michelle Fortier, PhD

21 Prostate Cancer–Related Functioning and Cancer-Related Masculine Threat Across 12 Months Following Treatment

Zixia Wang, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Michael Hoyt, PhD

22 Comparing the Gotland Male Depression Scale and CES-D Among Prostate Cancer Survivors: Differential Detection and Longitudinal Correlation with Distress

Lingling Li, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Michael Hoyt, PhD

23 Treg-Associated ICOS as a Possible Biomarker for PD-1 Therapy Resistance in Melanoma Patients

Shannon Geels, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Francesco Marangoni, PhD

24 Investigation of the Immune Microenvironment of Breast Cancer Brain Metastasis Using Single-Cell Spatial Genomics

Eva Zhao, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Devon Lawson, PhD

25 Evaluating a Novel Anti-Mitotic Combinational Therapy for Targeting Colorectal Cancer Cells

Amrutha Kizhedathu, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Pablo Lara-Gonzalez, PhD

26 Defining Healthy and Breast Tumor-Associated Neutrophils at a Whole-Organism, Single-Cell Resolution

Alex Hsu, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Kai Kessenbrock, PhD

27 Targeting Heterogeneity in Pancreatic Cancer via Ref-1 Redox and Mitochondrial Inhibition

Taryn Morningstar, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Christopher Halbrook, PhD

28 Regulatory T Cells Control Anti-Tumor Microglia Function in Breast Cancer Brain Metastasis

Isam Adam, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Devon Lawson, PhD

29 The Impact of Cancer-Associated Adipocytes on Ferroptosis Resistance in Breast Cancer

Isaac Hur, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Kai Kessenbrock, PhD

30 Transcriptional Regulation of Cell Cycle and Metabolic Pathways in Chemotherapeutic Resistant Glioblastoma

Vi Dang, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Lisa Flanagan, PhD

31 Papillary Thyroid Carcinoma, Struma Ovarii, RAD51D, and Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma: A Case Report

Julia Reitkopp, RESEARCHER, PI: Jennifer Valerin, MD, PhD

32 Irreversible Electroporation Remodels the PDAC Microenvironment: Immune and Imaging Evidence

Zigeng Zhang, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Zhuoli Zhang, MD, PhD

33 Development of Proteasome Substrate Labeling Assays (SLAys)

Duno Dantis, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Darci Trader, PhD

34 A Multilevel Intervention to Improve Lung Cancer Screening Among Hispanic Patients: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial

Alan Yang, JUNIOR RESEARCH SPECIALIST, PI: Gelareh Sadigh, MD

35 Type 2 Innate Lymphoid Cells Play a Diverse Role in Breast Cancer Development and Progression

Pascal Naef, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Kai Kessenbrock, PhD

36 Lung Cancer Screening Eligibility and Completion Among Adults Diagnosed with Lung Cancer: Retrospective Analysis of 2024 National Health Interview Survey

Frances Morales, STAFF SCIENTIST, PI: Gelareh Sadigh, MD

37 Creating DNA-Based Genetic Circuits to Detect Cancer

Jason Xie, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Barbara Jusiak, PhD

38 Resolving the Tumor-Stromal Milieu of PanNETs Using Single Cell Spatial Transcriptomics

Juliette Moore, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Suzann Duan, PhD

39 Protein Antigen Microarray Profiling to Investigate Infection-Related Immune Signatures Underlying Racial/Ethnic Disparities in MGUS

Mallory Bernstein, MSc, STAFF SCIENTIST, PI: Wendy Cozen, DO, MPH

40 Evaluating Asian-Specific Obesity Definition and Guideline-Concordant Uterine Cancer Care Among Asian American Women

Connie Huang, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Sora Park Tanjasiri, MPH, DrPH

41 Effectiveness of Financial Education and Navigation Interventions on Health Insurance Literacy Among Patients with Newly Diagnosed Cancer: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial

Bao Ngoc (Gemma) Le, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Gelareh Sadigh, MD

42 Analysis of Lung Cancer Screening Eligibility Among Patients Diagnosed with Lung Cancer: A Retrospective Cohort Study

Alvin Tran, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Gelareh Sadigh, MD

43 Pan-Cancer Analysis Identifies Adhesome Silencing and CSRP1-Associated Plasticity in Lung Cancer

Nolan Origer, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Timothy Downing, PhD

44 Two Mechanisms One Molecule: Developing a 'Truly' Bifunctional Degrader Targeting Rpn13 and CRBN

Shawn Vinogradsky, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Darci Trader, PhD

45 Ovarian Cancer Drives Persistent Sensory Hypersensitivity and Cognitive Deficits and Alters the Neuroimmune Response to Cisplatin in the ID8 Mouse Model

Naomi Lomeli, STAFF SCIENTIST, PI: Daniela Bota, MD, PhD

46 Extracellular Vesicles: From Biomarkers to Therapeutics in Cancer-Related Cognitive Impairment (CRCI)

Laura Miranda Estevez, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Munjal Acharya, PhD

47 Exploring Translational Control Through mRNA 5′ Cap Methylation in Methionine Dependency of Cancer

Lucas Dantas de Paula, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Peter Kaiser, PhD

48 RGS2 Suppresses Gαq/11 Driven Uveal Melanoma Cell Growth

Yadhira Garcia, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Benita Sjogren, MS, PhD

49 Exosomal microRNA Profiling Implicates Key Pathways Associated with Cognitive Impairment in Breast Cancer Patients: A Longitudinal Study

Julia Trudeau, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Alexandre Chan, PharmD, PhD, MPH

50 Evaluating Folate Receptor Beta (FRβ) Expression in Prostate Cancer Using Dual Immunohistochemistry and Digital Pathology

Linye Zhou, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Farahnaz Rahmatpanah, PhD

51 Neural Stem Cell-Derived Extracellular Vesicles and Their microRNA Cargo Ameliorate Breast Cancer Chemobrain

Casey Hudson, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Munjal Acharya, PhD

52 Dose-Dependent Tumor Control and Delayed Progression Following Cranial Irradiation in Pediatric Glioma

Allison Cartee, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Charles Limoli, PhD

53 Matching Simulated Attachment and Detachment Kinetics to Experiment Using Transition-State Spring Constant

Elliot Makhani, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Jered Haun, PhD

54 Microglia-Selective Conditional Deletion of Complement C1q Prevents Glioblastoma Chemoradiation-Induced Cognitive Decline

Robert Krattli, STAFF SCIENTIST, PI: Munjal Acharya, PhD

55 Loss of Nuclear Menin Alters Lipid Homeostasis in Pancreatic Neuroendocrine Tumor Cells

Rebeca Gentry, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Suzann Duan, PhD

56 Circadian Regulation of Astrocytic Adenosine Kinase After Cranial Radiation Therapy

Tracy Nguyen, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Munjal Acharya, PhD

57 Current Knowledge Gap in Immune Checkpoint Inhibition-Related Adverse Events (irAEs) in the Brain

Durgesh Meena, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Munjal Acharya, PhD

58 Financial Education and Navigation Intervention for Patients with Cancer and Financial or Social Needs: CAN-ASSIST Pilot Randomized Controlled Trial

Omar Gutierrez, JUNIOR RESEARCH SPECIALIST, PI: Gelareh Sadigh, MD

59 The Skin Effects of Feeding and Fasting at the Single Cell Level

Satya Karri, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Bogi Andersen, MD

60 Parallel Actions of Sphingosine Mimetic SH-BC-893 Overcome and Avoid Drug Resistance Across Cancer Classes

Cameron Geller, MS, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Aimee Edinger, VMD, PhD

61 LonP1-Driven Mitochondrial Metabolic Rewiring Creates Actionable Vulnerabilities in Therapy-Resistant Glioblastoma

Shashi Jain, STAFF SCIENTIST, PI: Daniela Bota, MD, PhD

62 Distinct Profiles of Young Adult Cancer Survivorship Experiences: Preliminary Findings from a Latent Class Analysis

Peter “Viet” Dinh, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Joel Milam, PhD

63 Single-Cell Dissection of Cancer Cell Heterogeneity and Chemoresistance Programs in Murine PDAC

Cavina Lee, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Christopher Halbrook, PhD

64 A Phase 1 Study of the Combination of Pitavastatin (Pita) with Gemcitabine and nab-paclitaxel in Patients with Unresectable Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma (uPDAC)

Tanvi Chichili, UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Jennifer Valerin, MD, PhD

65 Seeing Beyond the Visible Tumor: Optical Coherence Tomography-Guided Mapping and Controlled Hyperthermia for Basal Cell Carcinoma

Felicia Tejawinata, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Christopher Zachary, MD, MBBS, FRCP

66 BDNF Augmentation Reverses Cranial Irradiation-Induced Cognitive Decline in Murine Glioma Models

Krishnadev Lakshminarayanan, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Munjal Acharya, PhD

67 Inhibition of Mitochondrial Protein MAGMAS Increases Sensitivity to Standard of Care Treatment

Javier Lepe, PhD, POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, PI: Daniela Bota, MD, PhD

68 CD112-Directed CAR-NK Cells Reduce Leukemia Burden in a Preclinical Model of Acute Myeloid Leukemia

Sultan Alsuhaibani, GRADUATE STUDENT, PI: Jianhua Yu, PhD

NOTES & IDEAS

Please take our survey to help us improve for the next retreat!

UC Irvine 趙 Chao Family
Comprehensive Cancer Center

cfcccadmin@hs.uci.edu

cancer.uci.edu

200 South Manchester Ave., Suite 400, Orange, CA 92868

