

Judith L. Swain Appointed First Director Of UCSD's College Of Integrated Life Sciences

November 18, 2004

Leslie Franz

Judith L. Swain, M.D., a distinguished molecular cardiologist and chair of the department of medicine at the Stanford University School of Medicine, has been named the first Director of the College of Integrated Life Sciences (COILS) at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD).

The appointment was announced by UCSD Chancellor Marye Anne Fox, who said, "As the new Chancellor of this outstanding research university, I am especially proud to welcome Judy Swain to our faculty. She is an internationally recognized researcher and scholar and a true leader. She will be a tremendous addition to UCSD and will lead us forward in many important and innovative initiatives."

"Judy Swain has an impeccable record of academic, administrative, and research accomplishments," said David Miller, UCSD's Acting Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. "She brings the type of stature and leadership that will surely enhance our great University, and I am delighted that we have been able to attract her to join us."

Swain, a 1974 graduate of the UCSD School of Medicine, is both the Arthur L. Bloomfield and the George E. Becker Professor of Medicine at Stanford. Prior to her career at Stanford, she was the Herbert C. Rorer Professor of Medical Sciences, professor of genetics, and director of cardiovascular medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Her recruitment formally launches COILS, an innovative multidisciplinary program designed to facilitate the translation of biomedical research into new drugs and technologies, and the training of the next generation of physicians, pharmacists, and scientists who will bring discoveries from the laboratory into the clinical arena.

"I am excited about the opportunity to be a part of this bold new approach to bridging the gap between 'bench' research and patient care," said Swain. "My career has been dedicated to applying the tremendous resources of laboratory science to the diagnosis and treatment of disease. The novel approach of COILS, which emphasizes interdisciplinary collaboration across the continuum of discovery, development and patient care, will allow us to take full advantage of 21st century science to improve the health of patients, and of society at large."

This COILS initiative consists of four integrated components, with industry collaboration a key element of the translational process, providing the "product development" bridge between laboratory-based discovery and clinical trials:

The Institute for Molecular Medicine (IMM), directed by Kenneth Chien, M.D., Ph.D., professor of medicine. IMM is a multidisciplinary program emphasizing the application of modern biological techniques to understanding the disease process, with a focus on the development of pre-clinical models of human disease. This unit will be housed on the top floor of the Rebecca and John Moores UCSD Cancer Center when the new building opens in 2005. The initial focus of IMM will be regenerative medicine and stem cell research.

The Clinical Investigation Institute (CII) directed by Gary Firestein, M.D., professor of medicine. The CII's focus is on patient-oriented clinical research, bringing together a diverse group of investigators who will develop the new discipline of "experimental medicine," utilizing methodologies such as biomarkers and advanced imaging techniques to define the pathogenesis of disease and monitor drug reactions. The CII will lead the effort to conduct early-phase clinical trials of promising new therapies in humans, and in the development of the infrastructure to support the safe and efficient conduct of clinical trials. It will also train individuals in the conduct of clinical research. Plans are underway for a building to house the CII.

The Academy of Clinician Scholars (AOCS) under the leadership of Angela Scioscia, M.D., Clinical Professor of Reproductive Medicine and Medicine. The AOCS recognizes and supports UCSD's outstanding clinician scholars, individuals who are, first and foremost, outstanding practitioners, teachers and mentors, and/or clinical investigators. Membership is by election by faculty peers, with the charter members elected in 2003. Among its first activities, the AOCS is defining criteria for measuring clinical excellence, and has established a program of grant support for clinicians seeking to learn novel innovative techniques and approaches to delivery of patient care.

A multidisciplinary approach to medical education, focusing on joint degrees for UCSD's medical and pharmacy students. In addition to UCSD's successful Medical Scientist Training Program, which leads to a joint M.D./Ph.D. degree, master's and doctoral degree opportunities are now available to medical students in more than 20 fields, ranging from the natural and physical sciences to humanities, management, and health policy. The goal of COILS is that up to half of Health Sciences students will pursue a joint degree. In addition, a new program is under development for medical students who, after entering medical school, subsequently decide to pursue a doctoral degree in one of the sciences. This program is directed by Ajit Varki, M.D., professor of medicine and Associate Dean for Physician Scientist training. International training initiatives have also been developed in conjunction with the National University of Singapore, Christian Medical College in Vellore, India, and Peking University, which will permit involvement of students from these institutions in the joint-degree programs.

As director, Swain will be responsible for the implementation, oversight, and coordination of the COILS initiative. COILS is based within UCSD Health Sciences, which encompasses the School of Medicine, the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences and the UCSD Healthcare system.

Her responsibilities will include developing opportunities for collaboration across the UCSD campus and beyond the campus community, engaging other research institutions as well as the private sector; setting the programmatic direction of COILS, and fundraising. In the UCSD School of Medicine, Swain will also serve as professor of medicine and as Dean for Translational Medicine.

Swain is an accomplished physician-scientist who held continuous National Institutes of Health (NIH) funding for more than 20 years, including an NIH M.E.R.I.T. Award for her work in the developmental biology of the cardiovascular system.

She is Co-Director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) National Center for Space Biological Technologies, which focuses on biological measurements in outer space, and she is a member of the Defense Science Research Council of the Defense Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA). She is a Director of the American Board of Internal Medicine and the Burroughs Wellcome Fund. She has been elected to numerous honorary societies including the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, the Association of American Physicians, and the American Society for Clinical Investigation.

She has served in numerous national leadership roles, including the presidency of the American Society for Clinical Investigation and the directorship of the United States/Russia Cardiovascular Program at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). She has served on the NIH Director's Standing Committee on Clinical Research, the NIH National Advisory Research Resources Council, and National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute Councils. She also served on the National Research Council Commission to evaluate the organization of NIH.

Jack Dixon, UCSD Health Sciences Dean for Scientific Affairs, said "Judy Swain is a real catch for UCSD. She brings to our institution an international reputation for quality scientific research and leadership in medicine. I am personally delighted about her relocation, and I am looking forward to working with her."

"Dr. Swain is an academic physician scientist of the very highest caliber, who brings an enormous level of expertise and strength to UCSD. Throughout her distinguished career, she has promoted the values of the physician scientist, and she will have an enormously positive impact on our University environment," said Jerrold Olefsky, Associate Dean for Scientific Affairs.

UCSD Deputy Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences David Bailey, said "UCSD is extraordinarily fortunate to have attracted someone of Professor Swain's stature to lead such a unique interdisciplinary effort. I can think of no one better for this major position. On a more personal level, it is most gratifying to welcome Dr. Swain back to her alma mater."

Dr. Swain will complete her academic duties at Stanford during the current academic year and will assume her post at UCSD full time at the beginning of the 2005-06 academic year.

News Media Contact: Leslie Franz (619) 543-6163

