Berkeley Emeriti Times

March 2013 Volume 22, Number 4

Emeriti Luncheon Speaker Series

Randy Schekman, Ph.D.

Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology, Howard Hughes Investigator

The 21st-Century Revolution in Scientific Publication

Saturday, March 16, 2013

The Faculty Club

The speaker for our March luncheon is Professor of Cell and Developmental Biology Randy W. Schekman. A highly regarded cell biologist, Schekman has served in UC Berkeley's Departments of Biochemistry and Molecular and Cell Biology for 37 years. A native of Minnesota, he moved to California when he was ten and has remained a Californian ever since. He attended UCLA as an undergraduate, earned his doctorate from Stanford, and completed a postdoc at UC San Diego before joining the Berkeley faculty in 1976. Since 1991, he has been a Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator, and in 2005 he became the founding director of UC Berkeley's Stem Cell Center. A few selections from his biography reflect his stature in his field: Schekman is an elected member of the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the American Philosophical Society, and has received honorary degrees from the University of Geneva, Switzerland, and the University of Regensburg, Germany.

Schekman's research has focused on how proteins are transported within cells and exported through secretion. Using baker's yeast as a model, he has used genetic and biochemistry techniques to dissect the stages of protein processing and membrane assembly. Because fundamental cellular processes are evolutionarily conserved, probing the mechanisms in a simpler organism such as yeast yields insights that can then be applied to the study of more complex organisms. Schekman is now turning his attention to the study of mammalian cells. His research has given rise to studies of genetic diseases of protein transport: genes he has discovered contribute, when mutated, to a wide range of diseases, including Alzheimers, Craniofacial disorder, and Spina Bifida.

Over the course of the past twenty years, Schekman has also become progressively more involved in scientific journalism. He has served on the editorial boards of five journals, and from 2006 to 2011 was Editor-in-Chief of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (*PNAS*). His editorial work has led him to become increasingly interested in the opportunities afforded by electronic publication. The print and subscription model limits the number of articles and pages that can be published. The three top journals in his field, *Nature*, *Science*, and *Cell*, are victims of their own success, in that only a small fraction of submissions can be accepted for publication, and even those are subject to strict word-count limits. Authors are forced to cut out even essential details, and the resulting articles are rendered difficult to understand.

Schekman left *PNAS* in 2011 to spearhead a new venture: a joint enterprise by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Wellcome Trust of Great Britain, and the Max Planck Society of Germany to launch a new electronic publication, *eLife*. Funding agencies do not usually have their own journals, but these three organizations have recognized that disseminating research results as widely and effectively as possible maximizes the value of their investments. The journal was launched in December 2012, and Schekman is committed to its goal of promoting open access peer-reviewed electronic publication of outstanding work. Along with allowing more extensive articles, the electronic medium will provide opportunities to include images that can be manipulated on screen, or real-time movies of movement in cells. The digital age has arrived and will have dramatic effects on the communication of scientific discoveries.

Of course, with any significant change also comes opposition. Schekman will discuss both the opportunities afforded by electronic publication and the challenges posed. Publication remains a key concern of faculty, so his topic will be of broad interest. We hope you will join us to hear Schekman's expert view into developments in this arena.

Mark your calendars for our final luncheon of the 2012-13 year: Matías Tarnopolsky, Director of Cal Performances, will speak on "The Cal in Cal Performances," Saturday, May 4, 2013. Social hour begins at 11:00 am, luncheon is at noon, and the speaker's presentation is at 1:00 pm.

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Published before each meeting of the UC Berkeley Emeriti Association to provide closer networking for members with meeting announcements, meeting reviews, executive committee actions, pertinent campus news, and to reach out to members who cannot attend the meetings.

President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

Occasionally I am asked what the UCB Emeriti Association does in addition to sponsoring our most visible activities, which include:

- Hosting five luncheons annually with distinguished speakers.
- Publishing five issues of the *Emeriti Times* with content directed to the interests and needs of emeriti.
- Holding bi-weekly Emeriti Tables during term times on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month.
- Conducting mentoring programs both for undergraduates who are the first in their families to attend college, and for faculty members who are new to the campus.
- Recognizing the Distinguished Emerita or Emeritus Professor of the Year.

Our less visible but equally important endeavors include:

- Representing the UCB Emeriti community on the Council of University of California Emeriti Associations (CUCEA), which addresses issues of system-wide importance, such as retirement benefits.
- Serving on the UCB Retirement Center Policy Board. This affords emeriti a voice regarding the Center's policies and practices, which affect all UCB retirees. As part of this collaboration with the Retirement Center, we participate on two task forces established by Associate Vice Provost for the Faculty Angelica Stacy, dealing with:
    - The development of senior housing and programmatic space on the San Pablo Avenue side of Albany Village.
    - The creation of a campus-wide nexus to focus on "Transforming Retirement."
- Collaborating with the Senate's University Emeriti Relations Committee to advocate for emeriti interests in response to the decision by the Committee on Research to reduce enabling grants to Emeriti from $1500 to $750.
- Passing a resolution urging the University Office of the President to continue funding campus-based Health Care Facilitators, and Berkeley administrators to continue locating the HCF. The former has been accomplished and the latter is in process.
- Monitoring UC health care contribution practices affecting emeriti faculty and other retirees.

These activities require the active involvement of the entire Executive Committee and are deserving of thanks from the UCBEA membership.

Which brings me to my final point. Our Association can only be as active as the engaged participation by the members in its various endeavors permits. The time for volunteering or suggesting new members for the Executive Committee is now. Just as organisms require the creation of new cells to survive, so too do organizations need continuous stimulus from their constituents to remain healthy. Please contact Professor Roger Glassey, chair of the nominating committee, with your recommendations for Executive Committee membership at glassey@ieor.berkeley.edu.

> *The time for volunteering or suggesting new members for the Executive Committee is now.*

I look forward to seeing you Saturday, March 16, when Professor Randy Schekman will be our speaker.

Most Cordially,
Edwin M. Epstein,
UCBEA President

Emeriti Table

Gatherings of the bi-weekly Emeriti lunch table continue on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month, from noon to 2:00 pm, in the northwest corner of the Great Hall of the Faculty Club. A table is set aside exclusively for emeriti faculty to gather for congenial collegial conversation and repast. Come join us on March 14 and 28.

Interview with George Goldman

John Swartzberg and Sam Davis

George Goldman is a regional economist specializing in California's natural resources and how policies and legislation impact rural California. He is a retired Cooperative Extension Specialist in the College of Natural Resources. Since he is an economist and a retiree, it would seem obvious that George would become interested in the health of our retirement system, yet it was his service as Treasurer on the Board of the UC Berkeley Emeriti Association that motivated his attention to this issue. Once he began looking into the pension, however, his discipline, curiosity, and concern all took hold. He has attended several sessions of the pension's advisory board and has studied the materials presented at the meetings. These have not comforted him. The future of University of California Retirement Plan (UCRP) concerns those emeriti and future retirees who are not taking the "lump sum," so we felt that George's insights and comments would be of interest to many readers – especially as in three of the last five years, investment returns were less favorable than UCRP's assumed 7.5% earnings rate. George's answers express his views, which are not necessarily those of the UCB Emeriti Association.

Q: What are your thoughts about the way the University estimates the future health of the UCRP, using a 7.5% projected fixed rate of return on investments?

A: The problem is not the number picked for the rate of return, but rather that the University should examine multiple scenarios for the future – good and bad. Those managing the fund do not seem interested in examining other scenarios, and it's not clear why. For example, another scenario might be a sustained downturn in the financial markets. Multiple scenarios might get people to think about what might happen to the pension system in the future. UCRP has gone from being 154% funded in 2000 to being underfunded in a relatively short amount of time. We should have learned from these results that evaluating just one scenario is not a good way of planning for the future.

There was recently an article in the *New York Times* asserting that the mortality assumptions used by the Social Security Administration seriously underestimate the present value of its liabilities. There may be all kinds of "Black Swans" awaiting us in the future. I would think future retirees would like to know the outcomes of pessimistic and optimistic scenarios in making plans for the future.

Q: Employee contributions to UCRP were suspended in 1990 and restarted in May of 2010. The resumption of employee contributions became necessary because UCRP is underfunded. What other means are being employed to ensure the funds regain a balance between contributions and liabilities?

A: With the current set of assumptions, the total contributions from employees and employer should be 17% of payroll to break even. It has not been at that figure until recently.* One solution that will take effect for new employees this July is to create a "two-tiered" system, reducing the retirement benefits of new employees. There are obvious organizational disadvantages to resorting to this measure, such as detriments to employee morale.

*Effective July 1, 2012, contribution rates rose to 5% from employees and 10% from UC, for a total of 15%; on July 1, 2013, the contribution rates will increase to 6.5% from employees and 12% from UC, for a total of 18.5%.

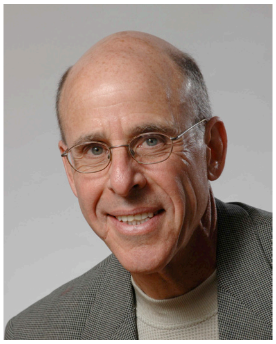
Q: If things go terribly wrong, and you have implied that this is a possibility, we are told that our current pensions are "likely legally" protected. Should this be of some comfort?

A: If the assets of UCRP do poorly over the next 10-20 years, it is reasonable to assume that we will not be alone. Other retirement programs will be equally impacted. Should that occur there could be a national calamity that would require broad and universal solutions, perhaps some sort of bankruptcy procedure for pensions or a mandatory fund such as now exists for non-governmental pensions. This very well could result in cutting the benefits of all public pension systems.

Q: If the system is vulnerable, wouldn't this motivate more people to take the lump sum payout?

A: If there is a future cut in benefits, it would affect the lump sum payments as well. Employees making the decision before anything bad happens need to consider that retirees can only retain UC medical insurance if they select the defined benefit plan (monthly payments). Once you take the lump sum, you sever all ties to UC medical insurance. However, retirees should realize that for most people, Medicare covers the majority of the costs of health insurance. UC covers a minority of the costs, and even that coverage will be going down in the next few years.

Ask the Expert



A health and wellness column from UCBEA Board Member and Chair of the UCB Wellness Letter Editorial Board, John Swartzberg, MD

Q: I'm 69 and have been taking a multivitamin for years. Recently, I've read that that may not be such a good idea. What do you think?

A: Multivitamins/minerals are the most commonly used supplements in the United States. While they can make up for nutritional shortfalls, many people expect too much from them. Over the years observational studies suggested that people who take a multivitamin have a lower risk of a variety of diseases. But, many clinical trials have been less encouraging. A few years ago, a panel of advisors at the National Institutes of Health concluded that the evidence concerning the effectiveness and safety of multivitamins is limited and inconclusive. Conversely, last year a well-designed clinical trial from Harvard found that physicians taking a basic multivitamin were 8% less likely to develop cancer over 11 years compared to those taking a placebo.

I don't think this question is going to be settled any time soon. Multivitamins vary greatly in their composition. So even if there are benefits, it would be very hard to know which components are responsible, or at what dose.

Let's get to your question. I think people over 60 are good candidates for taking a multivitamin. Many older people don't get the nutrients they need and often don't absorb them from food as well as they did when they were younger. This is especially true for certain B vitamins.

Other candidates for multivitamins are women of childbearing age, pregnant or breast-feeding women, strict vegetarians (it's difficult to get adequate vitamin B12), people on weight loss diets, and heavy smokers or drinkers.

When buying a multivitamin, consider the following:

- Store-brand and generics are fine. There's nothing special about brand-name pills. A good multivitamin need not cost more than a few cents a day.
- Look for 100 percent of the Daily Value of D, thiamin (B1), riboflavin (B2), niacin (B3), B12 and folic acid. The multivitamin should also contain at least 20 micrograms of vitamin K.
- Avoid very high doses of folic acid.
- Unless advised by your doctor, get a multivitamin that does not contain iron.
- Look for lower levels of vitamin A (no more than 3,000 IU). Too much can weaken your bones.
- Never think that if a little bit is good, more ingredients must be better.
- Avoid multivitamins that have the following hype on the bottle: "high-potency," "senior formula," "stress formula," "starch-free," or "slow-release." Ingredients such as enzymes, hormones, herbs, and amino acids serve no purpose and add to the price.

Finally, keep this in mind: Multivitamins cannot substitute for a healthy diet. Foods – particularly fruits, vegetables, and whole grains – provide fiber as well as many potentially beneficial compounds not found in any pill.

Please submit your Ask the Expert questions to jes@ berkeley.edu. Professor Swartzberg will not be able to respond to all inquiries or provide personal medical advice.

Historian Tom Brady on Crossing Borders

At our January luncheon, Emeritus Professsor of the Year Tom Brady took attendees on a wide-ranging journey into lands and times past as he spoke on "A Borderer's Life with German Histories." Traversing both temporal and geographic borders, he traced his own history as a historian, and, in doing so, provided a broad-ranging overview of historical thought on German history from the 1960s to the present.

His own history entails the crossing of a series of borders, beginning with his antecedents, who crossed from Scotland to Ireland and later to the United States, and moving on to his own crossings as he travelled from the South to the North to attend college, and later when he switched from studying the Italian Renaissance to studying the German lands of the Holy Roman Empire. The border crossing at the heart of his travels, though, has been between past and present. The historian takes an outbound journey to talk to the dead, but must then return to the present in order to understand the past in light of our own times.

One challenge to this journey from past to present is the rupture in the narrative of German history caused by World War II. Historians have been reluctant to draw causal relations between the past and twentieth century history, preferring to engage in "therapeutic forgetting," or to set the start of modern German history in 1945, with the inception of the constitution and democracy of the Federal Republic. Within this context, studies of the Holy Roman Empire have often been "mystified" in order to meet contemporary needs.

Studying in Germany during the mid-1970s, Brady encountered two trains of thought that shaped his future studies. The first was Heiko Oberman's intellectual recasting of the Reformation as "the harvest of medieval theology," suggesting that both Catholicism and Protestantism stemmed from the same "ecclesiastical civilization" and remained closely linked in their goals and prospects. Contemporary historical studies continue to integrate Protestant

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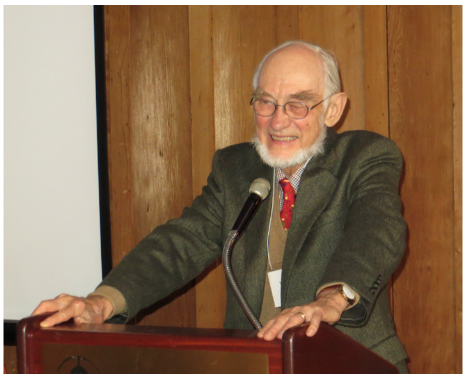
Tom Brady (continued from page 4)

and Catholic religious history into a single narrative.

The second trend was a focus on social history that delved into a "bewildering quarry" of Central European historical geography. It is through these detailed studies, Brady suggests, that one can more fully answer the question of how the Holy Roman Empire survived for over two centuries, maintaining its borders and administrative institutions, and controlling internal conflicts arising from religious reformations. The powerful decentralization of governmental structures prevented the German lands from developing into a highly centralized and "aggressively expansionist" state on the model of France or Britain. Instead, a culture of "consultation, negotiation, and compromise" resulted in the German people being the only ones in Europe to have two national religions.



Starting in 1555, with the Religious Peace of Augsburg, the Empire's principalities and cities developed a practice of regulating religious activities rather than doctrine. This approach reinforced toleration between different religious groups. The development of religious confessions – "the legally recognized, supra-local and supra-territorial religious bodies, into which local and territorial churches were integrated" – played an important role. The confessions allowed for the regulation of churches under local princes and magistrates, ensuring that people from differing faiths abided by local rules to protect religious toleration.

Although persecution and discrimination remained, the Holy Roman Empire averted the potential for "unrelenting bloodshed" by emphasizing practical compromises regarding religious practice. By seeking toleration rather than tolerance, it found a means of dealing with the inherent violence that can arise from human differences – a lesson Brady suggests we could benefit from in our own times.

Above: Richard Herr introduces Tom Brady, giving historiographical background to his book, German Histories in the Age of Reformations, 1400-1650. *Below: Tom receives his Emeritus of the Year award from UCBEA President Ed Epstein.*

Update on Faculty Mentoring

With the support and input from the UCBEA, the Vice Chancellor for Equity and Inclusion, Gibor Basri, and the office of the Associate Vice Provost for the Faculty, Angelica Stacy, have created a new position, *Special Assistant for Faculty Mentoring.*

The Special Assistant will expand and improve campus efforts to ensure that faculty at all career stages have access to mentoring that can help them fulfill their potential at Berkeley. Because mentoring is tailored to the traditions and values of individual departments and the needs of affinity groups, broad disciplines, and professional networks, the Special Assistant will contribute support and innovation across a fascinating array of mentoring activities and programs.

The likely activities and responsibilities to be undertaken by the Special Assistant at the outset of his/her term include policy development; programs to identify and match mentors (including emeriti) with those who would like to be mentored; research to identify effective methods of mentoring; and communication strategies to share best practices. The range of mentoring might cover such topics as career development for junior faculty, time management, balancing family and work life, grant writing, publishing, professional networking, and late-career transitions.

A call for nominations for the position went out in January and the VC and Associate Vice Provost are currently considering several potential candidates. It is anticipated that the appointment will begin in the Spring semester.

– Sheldon Zedeck, Second Vice President

News from the UCB Retirement Center

We hope 2013 is off to a healthy, happy and productive year for you. Below are highlights of our spring programming; learn more in our newsletter: http://thecenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/CPSp13.pdf.

Live Well, Live Long

Promote a healthy 2013. Use the University's StayWell program at https://uclivingwell.online.staywell.com. Also check out the information on the Center's website http://thecenter.berkeley.edu/wellness.shtml.

Upcoming Learning in Retirement Series

Freud in 21st Century America

Tuesdays at 2:00 pm, February 26, March 5, 12, and 19
The series will address the question of what has happened to psychoanalysis during the past sixty years and what its status is in America today.

Reading and Writing and Berkeley Students

Wednesdays at 2:00 pm, April 3, 10, and 17
Is it really true that students write less well today than they than they did in the past? Is the rise of the internet and

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Retirement Center News (continued from page 5)

social media the source? In this series we will try to answer these questions, separating the reality from our perceptions.

Advance registration is required for all LIR series. Please call the Center at 510/642-5461 or email ucbrc@berkeley.edu to register.

Your Life, Your Future: Later Life Planning

Participate in a free series on Later Life Planning over four consecutive Thursday afternoons. The series addresses concerns of retirees seeking to plan for themselves and others wisely and well. Workshop topics are as follows: Caregiving 101: Take Care of Yourself/Take Care of Others, May, 2; End of Life Issues, May 9; Estate Planning, May 16; Living Arrangements, May 23.

Advance registration is required; contact the Center at 510/642-5461 or ucbrc@berkeley.edu to register. Location will be provided with registration confirmation.

Caregiver Support Group – Spring Series for Caregivers

Caregivers need not be alone in their journeys. To register for the Center's retiree caregiver support group contact 510/642-5461 or ucbrc@berkeley.edu; for Tang Center workshops by the UCB Elder Care Program, contact Care Services at 510/643-7754 and identify yourself as a retiree.

Fidelity's New Guidance Consultant Service

Check out Fidelity's new Guidance Consultants service. Consultants can meet with you at your convenience. Arrangements have also been made for confidential meetings at the Center. To schedule a one-on-one consultation at the Center, call 510/642-5461; for another location call 800/558-9182 or go online to http://ucfocusonyourfuture.com.

Berkeley Art Museum Tour and Tea: Silence

Friday, April 12, 2:00-4:00 pm

Inspired by John Cage's ground breaking musical composition 4'33", Silence considers the absence of sound as both subject and medium in modern and contemporary art and film. A tea and open discussion follows this free, docent-led tour. Advance registration is required to attend. Contact ucbrc@berkeley.edu or 510/642-5461 to register.

You are always welcome in our offices. We are conveniently located at 1925 Walnut in Berkeley. Be well!

– Patrick Cullinane, Director
UCB Retirement Center