

BERKELEY EMERITI TIMES

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Caroline Kane

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings all and welcome to late summer!

Although our first Saturday lunch of the new academic year will not be until November 8th, we have decided to send out an abbreviated issue of the Times to bring you all up to date on significant dates to remember and other news of general interest.

Over the summer, I have been involved with the Transforming Retirement Committee in helping develop a "Toolkit" for retirement that you will soon find online for your perusal. I also attended the biannual meeting of the Association of Retirement Organizations in Higher Education (AROHE), and that generated a lot of ideas for us that I will share with your Board and then with you as well. We all welcomed the new Director of the Retirement Center, Cary Sweeney, who has "settled in" while sprinting to keep the new Center space (in 101 University Hall) developing as well as working with staff on the priorities for this year. Patrick Cullinane, our outgoing Director, has assumed the Presidency of AROHE, so we will continue to hear from him about activities on behalf of retirees nationwide.

Elizabeth Colson, Anthropology Professor Emerita, is our 2014 Emerita of the Year, and she has

penned comments that will be presented at one of our Saturday lunches this Fall. She lives in Zambia and is unable to attend in person, and Gene Hammel will present her remarks. A truly remarkable woman with an amazing trailblazing record of accomplishment.

Some dates for your attention: The informal lunches on Thursdays will start again in the Faculty Club Great Room on Sept 25th. The Chancellor's Celebration for New Retirees will be held on Nov 13th from 1-4 pm at the Clark Kerr Campus. Our first fall Saturday lunch will be held on Nov 8th, in the Heyns Room in the Faculty Club (the next newsletter will have details).

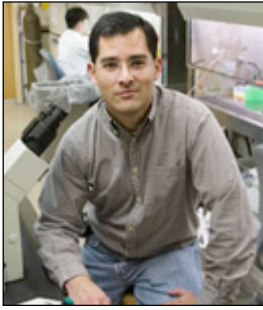
Also, we have been told that there will be no major changes to Health Insurance Options for retirees in this upcoming Open Enrollment period. We are paying close attention all the same.

If you have issues you would like your Association to address, please send them to me at kanecm@berkeley.edu, or send them to The Retirement Center, 101 University Hall, Berkeley CA 94720-1550.

Best wishes,

Caroline, President, UCBEA

SHORT TAKES: Emeriti Lunch Table, 2nd and 4th Thursdays monthly at noon in the northwest corner of The Great Hall in The Faculty Club. First lunch of the new academic year: September 25th. Pick up a salad or sandwich, and find the table – usually near the fireplace end of the Hall – with our reservation sign. All are welcome to join in our informal discussions!



**MAY LUNCH WITH
DAVID SCHAFFER –
TOWARDS UNDER-
STANDING AND
ENGINEERING STEM
CELLS TO TREAT
HUMAN DISEASE**

On May 3rd our group enjoyed an illuminating presentation from Professor David Schaffer, Professor of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, whose research includes a major interest in the potential of gene delivery in treating disease and inherited genetic disorders. Such gene therapy involves introducing potentially beneficial genetic material into the cells of an individual.

Many common diseases are currently incurable, including Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, heart diseases, and diabetes. The personal and economic costs of long-term treatment of these diseases are phenomenal, increasing both insurance costs and individual budgets. They are major contributors to the increase in the percentage of the U.S. gross domestic product going to health care expenditures – from 6% in the 1960s to 19% today!

Current therapies for disease fall into four categories. Two are well-known and widely used: antibiotics, small molecules introduced into our bodies to attack and destroy aggressive agents, and protein therapy, like the use of insulin by diabetics. Now being actively developed are two further categories: gene therapy and stem cell therapy that can effect permanent cures.

After some discussion of how these therapies work and are used, our speaker described particularly how such interventions already are being used not only to stop the development of Parkinson’s disease, but also to repair some of the damage already done . Human embryonic stem cells can turn into new neurons – a process that is already working. As early as 1993 rare stem cells were discovered that could moderate the ability to

remember and reason through the production of new neurons in the hippocampus. To attack Alzheimer’s – a much more complex condition – far more research is needed, but progress is being made.

Since such conditions are of particular concern to those who have spent their lives working with their brains, Professor Shaffer also outlined some of the side discoveries that have been made in the search for cures. A combination of more physical exercise and less stress helps our brains to grow the neurons that stimulate learning and memory. In addition, environmental enrichment helps. Even animals in a stimulating environment increase the number of new neurons they produce.

Maintaining our adult brains relies on our production of these new neurons that can even promote very complex spatial memory – like finding a car in a large parking lot. We can do things to improve our production of these neurons. Learning a new task, or voluntary exercise each helps, but forcing exercise is counter-productive because of the stress it introduces!

The effects of such efforts are limited, however. We now need to work in increasing the scale of manufacturing the cells that will effect these changes more efficiently in order to treat millions of patients as our life span increases. Technical work remains to be done to take advantage of the promising growth rates that technicians have produced in lab cultures.

- Phyllis Brooks Schafer

RETIREMENT CENTER UPDATE

Welcome to the New Retirement Center Director, Cary Sweeney!

Cary Sweeney joined the Retirement Center on August 4 of this year. Cary has her Master's in Gerontology, with a focus in Adult Education from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has 14+ years of experience in coordinating and managing programs in geriatrics and gerontology aimed at

improving the well-being of older adults. Cary will be attending several upcoming Retirement Center events and will be happy to meet you, there!

We Moved! New Retirement Center Location and Walk-In Hours

The UCB Retirement Center has moved to 101 University Hall. This convenient location is on the ground floor of the tall building located at the corner of University Avenue and Oxford Street. Drop-in hours are still Monday-Friday, 1pm-4pm. Looking forward to seeing you in our new space!

The Learning in Retirement (LIR) program is continuing its 14th year with free courses for Center constituents (retirees from UC Berkeley, UC Office of the President and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and their guests). Advance registration is required to attend LIR programs. Please call the Center at 510-642-5461 or email ucbrc@berkeley.edu to register; course location will be provided with your confirmation. Go to the LIR site for information about upcoming courses - <http://retirement.berkeley.edu/lir.shtml>.

EMERITI TIMES: Published before each meeting of the UC Berkeley Emeriti Association to give all our members information about meetings, Board actions, and pertinent campus news and policies, along with interviews and items of general interest. Editor-Writer: Phyllis Brooks Schafer.

UC BERKELEY EMERITI ASSOCIATION 2014-2015

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