Let me begin by thanking Chancellor Don Elliman for the opportunity to step into the very big shoes left behind by Richard (Dick) J. Traystman, Ph.D. previous Vice Chancellor for Research (VCR). As interim VCR, I am challenged by a steep learning curve that fortunately is embellished by so many talented and experienced people who serve UCD/AMC so well including Joy French, Alison Lakin, Jori Leszczynski, and Paula McGuigan among many others. Being interim and working 0.5 at VCR-related tasks, I view my responsibility as anything but a lame-duck experience but one that promotes and enhances the outstanding research environment that surrounds us. My laboratory in the basic science of lipid and lipoprotein metabolism in the brain, clinical research in cardiovascular disease risk related to obesity, clinical posture as an endocrinologist/preventive cardiologist and working with Jim Hill as Co-PI on our T32, ‘Obesity and Cardiovascular Disease’ all continue. How long this academic diversion will last is uncertain but the job description will be soon posted and I expect a zealous response internally and from the outside. I truly feel honored and privileged and hope to serve our institution well in the interim. Dick, we all miss you!

Office of Research Development & Education (ORDE)

ORDE’s Research Funding Opportunities for New Investigators e-Book has been completely updated. This e-Book contains information about funding sources specific to early career investigators in all disciplines across the University of Colorado Denver | Anschutz Medical Campuses – providing details on eligibility criteria, deadlines, award amounts and timeframes. Please visit our website at: http://www.ucdenver.edu/research/ORDE/Pages/NewInvestigator.aspx to download this e-Book.

NIH Funding Update

Early in February Congress and the President struck a deal on federal spending caps that are likely to pave the way for additional investment in NIH both this year and next. The agreement includes an expectation that Congress will appropriate at least an additional $1 billion for NIH in the current fiscal year, and at least $1 billion more in fiscal year 2019 as well. Biomedical research advocates continue to press Congressional appropriators to make that agreement a floor rather than a ceiling – by spending as much as $2 billion in new funds each year in FY 2018 and FY 2019 on NIH. The budget agreement also included $150 million per year in each of the next two years for NIH’s Special Diabetes Program – a research program we greatly value here at CU Anschutz.

For now, NIH operates under a continuing resolution (CR) – meaning that awards are only funded at 90%. However, we are hopeful that by the time the current CR expires on March 23rd, Congress will be able to come to agreement on a full year appropriation under their new spending caps that will include the new NIH funding.

This year the White House ultimately chose not to call for drastic cuts to NIH in the President FY 2019 Budget, released on Feb 12th. Instead President’s proposal calls for flat-funding the agency at the FY 2017 level. The White House also chose not to repeat its call to cap NIH facilities and administrative costs. However, the President’s Budget does propose some other structural changes to NIH that are likely to meet a skeptical review in Congress – including folding AHRQ, NIOSH and several other programs into the agency. Last year, Congress rejected the President’s proposal to move AHRQ into NIH.
NIH Receipt and Referral

Learn what happens once your application is received by NIH including how we determine which study section it will go to for peer review and how we assign it for funding consideration.

All grant applications submitted to the NIH go to the Division of Receipt and Referral (DRR) within the Center for Scientific Review (CSR). After receiving the application DRR:

- Checks the application for completeness
- Determines area of research and determines which specific NIH Institute or Center to assign it to for possible funding
- Assigns an application identification number
- Assigns application to a specific study section, also known as a Scientific Review Group (SRG) or review committee that has the expertise to evaluate the scientific and technical merit of the application.

- CSR coordinates the reviews for most R01s, fellowships, and small business applications, as well as some PAs, PARs, & RFA’s
- Institutes and Centers coordinate the review for applications that have Institute-specific features such as program project grants, training grants, career development awards, and responses to Requests for Applications.

For more information on the Receipt and Referral process, see CSR: Submission and Assignment Process (Link to External Site)

Have questions about the assignment of your application to a particular application to an Institute or Center? Contact the CSR referral office at 301-435-0715. Or if you have a question about the review assignment, you can contact the referral office or the specific Scientific Review Officer (SRO) assigned to that application (you can find the contact information may be found in your eRA Commons account).

RESEARCH CORNER

Dr. Vanessa Phelan started her independent position in the Spring of 2016 as the L.S. Skaggs Assistant Professor in the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Science on the Anschutz Medical Campus. She completed her PhD at Vanderbilt University in 2011 and then moved to the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) as a postdoctoral researcher. Before moving to Colorado, she was an NIH K01 funded project scientist at UCSD.

Microbiome communities harbor the genetic potential to produce a vast array of molecular cues, many of which are small molecules used in contact-independent interactions between members of the microbiota and between the microbiota and their hosts. These interactions may be parasitic, mutualistic, or commensal and typically involve the production and detection of signaling metabolites, small molecule virulence factors, and natural products. The goals of the Phelan lab are to characterize the small molecules produced by the microbiota and unravel the microbiota's chemical response to pharmaceutical treatment.

To study molecular cues produced by the microbiota, our lab applies modern mass spectrometry based tools in combination with traditional chemical, molecular, and biochemical approaches. The mass spectrometry tools include imaging mass spectrometry, which allows us to visualize the chemical distribution of molecular cues in a sample, and molecular networking, a computational method that organizes mass spectrometry data for facile visualization and analysis.

One of the current projects in the Phelan laboratory is the development and application of mass spectrometry based methods to investigate the effect of multi-drug treatment on pulmonary microbiome communities derived from cystic fibrosis (CF) patient samples cultivated in vitro. This project is a collaboration with Edith Zemanick, MD and J. Kirk Harris, PhD of the Department of Pediatrics, and Cathy Lozupone, PhD of the Department of Medicine, which is funded by a Therapeutic Innovation Award from the ALSAM Foundation.