

PATHWAYS TO EXCELLENCE

URMC DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE

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CHAIR'S COLUMN: NEW FACES, NEW DIRECTIONS FOR LEADERSHIP



Dr. Bruce Smoller

Happy New Year! The Department of Pathology is looking forward to another terrific year based upon auspicious beginnings!

We are very happy to welcome Dr. Luis De Las Casas, who begins this month as the new Director of Cytopathology. He joins us from the University of Toledo Medical Center. Also new to our departmental faculty is Dr. Aaron Huber, who began work as part of Team GI in November. Aaron was a fellow here and left for just over a year for Tennessee, but was lured back by his colleagues in the GI group (and perhaps the weather!).



Dr. Luis De Las Casas



Dr. Aaron Huber

The Department is also excited to welcome back Dr. Hiroshi Miyamoto, who left our faculty for a short stint at Johns Hopkins University. He will return to our ranks July 1 as the Director of Genitourinary Pathology. Recruiting efforts continue in earnest to add another gastrointestinal pathologist, a molecular pathologist, a pathologist with interest in autopsies, and another member of our Affiliated Hospital Pathologists division, as we continue to grow relationships with regional hospitals.

The departmental faculty and administrative leadership recently took part in an all-day retreat at the new Hilton Garden Inn adjacent to campus. Following my introductory remarks, each of four discussion leaders provided an overarching set of goals for discussion topics. Drs. Neil Blumberg, Brendan Boyce and Linda Schiffhauer and Mr. David Strong, our Vice Chair for Administration, spoke briefly before the faculty split up into four working groups charged with the following agendas: Growing the Clinical Mission, Augmenting the Research Mission, Perfecting the Educational Mission, and Creating the Workplace of Choice.

Lively discussions ensued and preliminary ideas were brought forth for a plenary discussion in the afternoon. Our retreat ended with a dinner for faculty and significant others and entertainment provided by the a cappella vocal group, "The Yellow Jackets" from the University's River Campus. Each discussion leader was asked to create a spreadsheet with goals to be pursued during the next year. The departmental Cabinet was then charged with developing action plans for pursuing and implementing these specific goals, and has already begun work on this process.



WELCOMING OPINIONS

Recently, we reconfigured our departmental leadership group into a newly created Cabinet, in order to expand and diversify the range of opinions that help to advise and inform me in the departmental decision-making and planning process. The group now consists of the following faculty members: Brendan Boyce (Vice Chair, Anatomic Pathology), Neil Blumberg (Vice Chair, Clinical Pathology), Scott Kirkley (Vice Chair, Education), David Strong (Vice Chair, Administration), David Hicks (Director, Surgical Pathology), Christa Whitney-Miller (Associate Director, Surgical Pathology), Victoria Zhang (Associate Director, Clinical Pathology), Majed Refaai (Associate Director, Clinical Pathology), Linda Schiffhauer (Associate Director, Residency Training Program), and Tamera Paczos (Director, Affiliated Hospital Pathology Division). A vacant position in the Cabinet will be filled by a Vice Chair, Experimental Pathology who is yet to be named.

I am excited about the inclusion of some younger, energetic members of our faculty in this leadership group.

A reminder: our upcoming reception takes place March 14 at the USCAP annual meeting in Seattle, WA. Details appear in the invitation [below](#). Please add this event to your calendars, and I'll look forward to seeing you.

-Bruce Smoller, M.D.

FOCUS ON FACULTY: DR. PHILIP KATZMAN



Growing up in Newton, MA, Philip J. Katzman, M.D. knew he wanted to work in medicine. But pathology wasn't part of the picture until sometime later.

"I grew up with asthma, and that helped put me in the mindset for a career in medicine," said Dr. Katzman, Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. He earned his B.A. in Biochemistry (cum laude) at Brandeis University in Waltham, MA. But, during medical school at the University of Vermont's College of Medicine, he discovered his early interest in pediatrics had waned.

"After my pediatrics rotation, I was wavering for a while," Dr. Katzman said. "Then, a mentor at the University of Vermont suggested I apply for a year-out fellowship in Pathology," he said, "and I was able to use an interest in research to earn the student pathology fellowship at Vermont in 1991."

During the fellowship, he worked in autopsy, surgical pathology, and cancer research, and discovered his satisfaction with both the discipline and his colleagues. The fellowship also rekindled his interest in pediatrics. From Vermont, he came to Strong Memorial Hospital at URM for his pediatrics residency, switched to Pathology in 1995, and then received a fellowship in the Department of Pathology at Children's Hospital in Boston. He returned to URM as an Assistant Professor of Pathology in 2000, and was promoted to Associate Professor in 2007 (continued inside on page 5.)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

We have been fortunate to receive philanthropic support from many individuals, which allows the Department of Pathology to maintain and accelerate vital clinical, educational, and research initiatives. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible gift today, or as part of your estate plans, please visit urmc.rochester.edu/urmc-labs/pathology.aspx and look for the "Make a Gift" button, or contact Jon Sussman, Associate Director of Advancement at 585-276-4976 or jon.sussman@rochester.edu. Thank you!

CLINICAL LAB AT STRONG WEST: FROM A "BIG, EMPTY ROOM" TO A HIGH-VOLUME CLINICAL LAB



From left: Sue Baker, Angela Schroeder at Strong West lab

When URM acquired the former Lakeside Hospital in Brockport, NY in 2013, most attention focused on providing urgent care and related health care services. A less-heralded aspect, however, was the creation of new Clinical Lab operations at the former community hospital.

The lab, operated by the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, today has exceeded its test volume expectations three-fold in just its first year of operation, said Liz Peterdy, laboratory manager. "The lab supports the emergency room services at Strong West, and doctors' offices including Interlakes Oncology and Hematology. Today, we're averaging about 1,000 tests per week at the Strong West clinical lab."

That's a big achievement for a lab that didn't exist when the facility changed hands, three years ago.

"When we began, there was just a big, empty room, and we had to create a lab," said Barbara Meiklejohn, chief supervisor, Hematology & Chemistry (Automated) Laboratory. While the New York State Department of Health was supportive of

the initiative, there were no blueprints to follow. "The Patient Service Center (collection station) was here, and so was the imaging center. But we were working with a new model that everyone was trying to learn."

Once physical renovations were completed, a team was formed that included Meiklejohn, Peterdy, Melissa Allen, Pre Analytical Operations Manager; Susan Baker, technology supervisor; Vicki VanDeWalle, Process Improvement and Projects manager; Nathan Loria, director of operations; Fran Gersonia, Director of Quality Assurance and Regulatory Affairs; Robert Miller, chief supervisor, Hematology; and others.

The goal was to create an accountable care network that supported the diverse needs of the organization. "It really was a team effort," Meiklejohn said.

Different areas of the pathology department pitched in. Staff and supervisors at our Ridgeland Road and Strong Memorial Hospital operations wrote standard operating procedures for the new facility; Ridgeland Road supplied administrative documents and helped with a validation plan.



Bob Gregory, Med Tech, Strong West lab

"Autolab helped write and revise technical SOPs, forms, job aids, training, validation work-ups, gathering samples, and much more," Baker said. "There were two evening-shift technologists, including one in particular -- Danielle Hewitt -- from the Autolab that spent many late nights, early mornings, sometimes until 3 a.m., with me at Strong West, getting things in order and writing SOPs" (continued on page 3.)

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CLINICAL LAB AT STRONG WEST (CONTINUED FROM PG. 1)



Becky Phelps, Med Tech, Strong West lab

The autolab covered the bench work while newly hired medical technicians were trained. VanDeWalle even washed windows in the lab. All activities consumed extra hours so the lab could begin initial processing in January 2014, to determine which tests and instruments to include for a state regulatory inspection by June. The lab went live in August, 2014, and underwent an inspection for College of American Pathologists (CAP) accreditation in the fall of 2015. A staff of eight covers shifts on a 24/7 schedule at the Brockport lab, while Dr. James P. Corsetti, M.D., Ph.D. serves as its director.

Today, the Strong West clinical lab serves as a model for a satellite clinical lab, and added services in the facility – including orthopedics, cardiology, and ambulatory surgery – mean more tests for the lab to handle. Other regional hospitals have sent managers to look at what the Strong West team has accomplished.

But some of the most rewarding responses come from local neighbors, who struggled with the loss of Lakeside hospital's services, three years ago.

"The community responded well," Baker said. "We hear it all the time: 'we're so happy you're here.'"

DEAR FRIENDS OF URM C'S DEPARTMENT OF PATHOLOGY AND LABORATORY MEDICINE:



Let's get together in Seattle in March!

Our community of alumni, friends, and families continues to grow, and now it's time for a get-together! During USCAP's annual meeting in Seattle, WA in March, our Department will host a cocktail reception for current trainees and faculty, and alumni of the URM C Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. We'll meet on Monday night, March 14 at 5:30 p.m. at the Sheraton Seattle Hotel. If you're attending the USCAP annual meeting, I hope you'll stop by to introduce yourself and enjoy drinks and refreshments. And feel free to bring friends and colleagues.

FOR URM C EMPLOYEES:

IT TIPS – YOU ARE YOUR OWN SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR

With our increased reliance on digital data in many forms – and meeting HIPAA requirements for data privacy – computer users have a responsibility to maintain, update, and manage their computers and data. Our Information Technology group offers three essential recommendations:

- Understand what data you cannot afford to lose! Don't rely on Windows Backups to safeguard your important files. Backing up your Documents folder is important, but in your Documents folder, find and back up your Email file and your PST file. These will be critical in rebuilding your system in the event of a drive failure.
- All URM C users have an "H" drive on our network. This can be set to back up automatically, and prevent corruption of data. It's a safer alternative than using your computer's "C" drive.
- Your "H" drive has limited capacity. So, for large media files, such as photos and videos, contact the Department's IT team for back up options.

SMS' EVER BETTER BOARD FOCUSES ON WORKPLACE WINS



Specimen Management Services (SMS) recently celebrated the two-year anniversary of its LEAN idea-generation system, the "Ever Better Board" – a graphical representation of the unit's emphasis on process improvement.

Borrowing from the UR motto *Meliora* ("ever better,") the unit created a program to solicit process-improvement ideas from its staff. Starting in September 2013, some 42 employees contributed ideas to improve efficiencies or workplace processes. Ideas ranged from conducting time studies to determine if rack/register/log workflow was the most efficient, to replacing worn-out chairs or installing hooks for clipboards. In the first year, SMS racked up 100 suggestions, and put in place more than half of the recommendations, while 11 others were forwarded to other teams.

"The Ever Better Board uses a metaphor of the SMS workflow to track the progress of each idea through the review process and implementation," explained Holly Harrington Smock, supervisor, Specimen Management. "We used illustrations of our bins to indicate when an idea was a success, or was forwarded, or was unsuitable for the unit's needs."

For year two, the new Ever Better Board attracted 126 suggestions by October. To celebrate, the team held a week of celebrations in November, including cake, a candy and jeans day, and a Thanksgiving-style feast. Employees proudly wore their new T-shirts proclaiming, "200 in 2" – recognizing the total 226 ever-better ideas gathered over two years.

BAILEY ROAD UPDATE

Our planning process to relocate many functions of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine to a renovated facility on Bailey Road in Henrietta, NY continues. In recent months, we were compelled to modify designs for the building to reflect changes that accommodate both workflow and budget considerations. As a result, departmental moves originally planned for this quarter will be delayed until late 2016 or early 2017. As those moves unfold, renovations for some Pathology facilities at Strong Memorial Hospital will be updated and announced.

As we fine-tune updated drawings and plans, we'll share them in future issues of *Pathways to Excellence*.

ACHIEVERS ACROSS OUR DEPARTMENT KUSHNER SERVES AS CAREER AMBASSADOR



Lee Ann Kushner, Pathologist's Assistant, was invited by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) to participate in a high school program called NEXTPO, an interactive event that brings students from across the nation together with educators, industry partners and ASCP members at ASCP's annual conference.

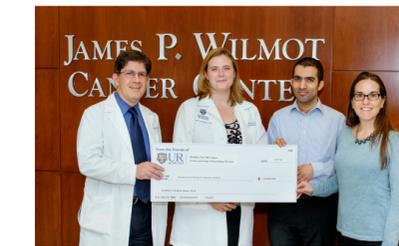
"I am part of the ASCP career ambassador program, and as an ambassador I speak to local high school students about careers in lab medicine and develop different interactive activities to help them gain an appreciation for what we do. The program at this year's conference (in Long Beach, CA) was a two-day event involving eight local high schools and some 200 students. It's definitely a great opportunity for the kids and gives me a chance to represent our URM C and ASCP. It was certainly an honor to be invited as only five out of the 25 ambassadors were chosen."

COPPAGE NAMED PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF ASHI LAB ACCREDITATION



Myra Coppage, Ph.D. was named Program Director for Laboratory Accreditation by the American Society for Histocompatibility and Immunogenetics (ASHI) in October. She previously served as a laboratory commissioner and then co-chair of the program for three years. ASHI accredits about 250 labs world-wide, including most U.S. and Canadian transplant labs, as well as labs in Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Taiwan and China. "Our organization provides an inspector pool that is also used by other accrediting agencies, including CAP," she noted. "In conjunction with our correlate committee for standards, we set minimum criteria for clinical H and I testing. Current projects include validation requirements for NGS-HLA and the use of "virtual" cross-matching in solid organ transplantation." Dr. Coppage is director of the HLA/Tissue Typing laboratory at URM C.

GI RESEARCH FUNDED BY "STROLLIN' FOR THE COLON"



The 2015 annual "Strollin' for the Colon" run/walk resulted in a \$10,000 contribution to the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine that will help support Dr. Jennifer Findeis-Hosey's study on Lynch Syndrome screening in advanced colorectal adenoma. Strollin' for the Colon is sponsored by URM C's Division of Gastroenterology & Hepatology. Pictured (left to right): Arthur DeCross, Associate Professor, Department of Medicine, Gastroenterology/Hepatology; Dr. Findeis-Hosey; Sohaib Abu-Faraskh, MD, pathology resident and researcher with Dr. Findeis-Hosey; and Danielle Marino, MD, Assistant Professor - Department of Medicine, Gastroenterology/Hepatology.

DR. SMOLLER NAMED TO THE PATHOLOGIST'S "TOP 100 POWER LIST" FOR 2015

Dr. Bruce Smoller, Professor and Chair of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, was recently named to The Pathologist's "Power List" of the 100 Most Influential Professionals in Laboratory Medicine. The list resulted from a two-month poll of readers and review by a panel of judges. See the full list at: <https://thepathologist.com/the-power-list-2015/>.

FOCUS ON FACULTY: DR. PHILIP KATZMAN (CONTINUED FROM PG. 6)

Along the way – after his 1985 undergraduate and 1995 pediatric residency – he served as a civilian aide on an Israeli military base as a member of Volunteers for Israel. "Those were great experiences, and I felt like I was making a difference."

Today, Dr. Katzman's clinical interests are in pediatric developmental and oncological diseases, and placental pathology. He serves as director of the Pediatric Pathology clinical subspecialty and as coordinator for the Antenatal and Postnatal Pediatric Pathology residency rotations.

"The most rewarding part of my work is making an accurate diagnosis on the clinical side," he said. "Some pediatric tumors are pretty tough to diagnose. And, knowing that I have the knowledge that people can use, that the clinicians can use to make the right treatment plans, and that I can pass on to the residents or other faculty, are the most rewarding."

In addition to mentoring residents in both Anatomic Pathology and Clinical Pathology, Dr. Katzman manages the pediatric pathology website at <https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/urmc-labs/pathology/work-learning-resources/pediatric-pathology.aspx>. This website spells out the in-depth details of the URM C Pediatric Pathology rotations and disciplines and houses a series of interesting pediatric pathology cases compiled by residents and student fellows over the years.

"Much of my time is spent with perinatal pathology (study of the placenta and fetal development) and I have undertaken placental pathology research into the chronic inflammatory lesions of the placenta," he explained. In 2015, he was invited to speak at two international conferences, one of the Society for Pediatric Pathology and Paediatric Pathology Society Joint Meeting in England and of the International Federation of Placenta Associations in France, and will present at IFPA's 2016 conference in Portland, OR.

Away from the laboratory, Katzman's family life is his focus. He and his wife Joanne – a teacher and tutor – have two boys: Leo, age 12 and Seth, age 9. Time away is spent visiting their extended families across the northeastern U.S. To relax, Dr. Katzman took up squash five years ago, and chooses to bike to work "five to six months during the year, whenever the weather allows."