

Beacon

HUNTSMAN CANCER INSTITUTE FACULTY AND STAFF NEWSLETTER

CURRENT ISSUE

BEACON ARCHIVE

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Message from the Executive Director



Mary Beckerle, PhD
Executive Director

The Department of Biomedical Informatics and Huntsman Cancer Institute hosted the National Cancer Institute (NCI) caBIG Joint Architecture and Vocabularies and Common Data Elements Face-to-Face Meeting on January 28–30, 2008. The [cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid \(caBIG\)](#) is an initiative undertaken by NCI to speed the pace of research discoveries and improve patient outcomes by linking researchers, physicians, and patients throughout the cancer community. Involvement with caBIG will become increasingly crucial for integrating with NCI's goal of multidisciplinary, multi-institutional, collaboratively based cancer research. **Lewis Frey, PhD**, a member of the Cancer Control and Population Sciences Program in our cancer center and an active participant in the caBIG initiative, was instrumental in securing the bid to host the conference.

Nearly 150 people registered for the meeting, with the vast majority coming from out of state. This was a wonderful opportunity to interact with NCI and caBIG leadership and to highlight expertise and resources at the University of Utah and HCI. A number of the meeting registrants from a range of cancer centers across the United States, as well as NCI representatives, participated in a tour of HCI. In addition, a reception and a special Semantic MediaWiki hands-on session were held at HCI's Point Restaurant and auditorium.

Many individuals contributed to the success of the meeting. Lewis Frey and Barbara Frey, PhD, were local scientific leaders, **Natalie Angle** did an expert job with the meeting logistics, and a large number of HCI and Biomedical Informatics staff and student volunteers contributed. Thanks to all.

Best wishes,

Mary Beckerle, PhD
HCI Executive Director

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Up Close with Becky Grewe

CCSG Program News

- Cancer Control and Population Sciences

Welcome New Staff

Welcome New Staff

BMT Inpatient

Abby Staible
Physician Assistant

Communications and Public Affairs

Aarti Singh
Computer Professional -
Web Developer

Cyclotron Operations

Lori Kaumans
Administrative Officer

Rosana Rodrigues
Postdoctoral Fellow

Environmental Services

Julio Acabal
Custodian

Facilities and Engineering

Edgar Koeneman
Systems Operator

Fitzpatrick Lab

Ryan Barlow
Lab Aide

Food Service

Bryan Wold
Cook

Inpatient - 4

Alexandrea Shaffer
Nursing Student Intern I

Lisa Gehrke
Nursing Student Intern I

Tamra Glade
Health Care Assistant

Anthony Taylor
Health Care Assistant

Linn Tadge
Health Care Assistant



Becky Grewe is a registered nurse on Inpatient 5.

When Becky Grewe came to work at HCI, she discovered that what she had heard about oncology nursing is true: It's different, and in a good way.

"I can't really describe it," she says. "It's neat. It's really personal and touching." Grewe, a registered nurse, works on the fifth floor, where patients are recovering from surgery. Before coming here, she worked at Cache Valley Specialty Hospital.

She says patients recovering from cancer surgery are in a different state of mind from those recovering from, say, gallbladder surgery. They're facing a serious illness, and they're often very reflective. They're also motivated to take care of themselves.

During her 12-hour shifts, she monitors patients, gives them medication, helps with pain control, and explains what is happening to them and how they'll need to take care of themselves when they leave. But she says the most important part of her job is listening.

"People want to talk, and they want to express their feelings, and you just have to listen, to be a sounding board, be a support for them," she says. She's "a people person," so the job is a great fit for her. "I've met so many neat patients that I'll never forget," she says.

Here is more about Becky:

Hometown: Logan, Utah

Family: She's married to Patrick, better known as "Pitt."

Other fun jobs she's had: She once worked in a bridal shop and spent a summer in college working at Disney World.

Hobbies: Travel (Hong Kong is "awesome"), blogging, scrapbooking, Pilates, and hiking

Proudest accomplishment: Graduating first in her nursing school class; getting married and staying married

Recommended read: *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*

Sara Kimball
Clinical Nurse

Inpatient - 5

David Breisch
Health Care Assistant

Sharon Peterson
Travel Nurse

Medical Informatics

Aaron Nash
Systems Administrator/
Support - Radiation
Oncology

Multidisciplinary Support

Steven Garcia
Data Entry Specialist

Bradley Tanner
Data Entry Specialist

Nursing Administration

Kevin Iseman
Physician Assistant

Outpatient Clinic B

Tejal French
Clinical Nurse

Outpatient Clinic C & E

Nancy Garcia
Medical Assistant

Radiology

Shandie Pulsipher
Cath Lab Nurse

Research Administration

Amy Beecher
Grants/Contract Officer

The Point

Ashley Hansen
Nutrition Care Aide

Brendon Porter
Nutrition Care Aide

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Favorite TV show: *ER* (She may not have missed a show since eighth grade.)

Secret Dreams: To be on *The Price is Right* (although not so much now that Drew Carey is the host); also to work at Disney World for the rest of her life

What life has taught her: "Just be patient and take your time (with life). Don't be in a rush to get through the phase you're in. Just enjoy what you're doing."

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In the News

Beckerle on NIH panel: HCI Executive Director **Mary Beckerle, PhD**, has been selected by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to serve on its Advisory Committee to the Director. The committee advises the NIH director on policy and planning issues important to the NIH mission of conducting and supporting biomedical and behavioral research, research training, and translating research results for the public. Four other new committee members were also named.

For more information on the appointment and the other new committee members, visit <http://www.nih.gov/news/health/jan2008/od-31.htm>.

Huntsman generosity: HCI founder Jon M. Huntsman and his wife, Karen, were ranked number two in a recent *Chronicle of Philanthropy* list of "America's top donors" for 2007. (Number one was William Barron Hilton.)

The Huntsmans donated \$750 million in 2007, according to a January 24 article in the *Chronicle*. That includes \$700 million that they put into the Huntsman Foundation—a family foundation that earmarks 80% of its grant funds to in-state causes and at least 50% of that spending to cancer research or treatment.

According to the *Chronicle*, the Huntsmans estimate that they have given away more than \$1.2 billion over the past decade, including their \$225 million contribution to HCI.



HCI staff met with representatives of the University of California, San Francisco, to discuss a major grant application. They included, from left, Jill Shea, Courtney Scaife, Sean Mulvihill, Matt Firpo, Charles Murtaugh, Wendy Kohlmann, Kim Jones, HCI Executive Director Mary Beckerle, Margaret Tempero (UCSF), Dustin Hawkins, Rachael Hajnal (UCSF), Brad Bott, Curt Hagedorn, Qiang Dai, Frank Fitzpatrick, Liza Hazard, and Martin McMahon (UCSF).

Planning a collaboration: Leaders of HCI's Pancreas Cancer Research Program met this month with their counterparts at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), to discuss a SPORE—Specialized Program of Research Excellence—grant application.

SPOREs are National Cancer Institute-funded projects aimed at promoting interdisciplinary research and moving basic research findings from the laboratory to the clinic. The grants, of up to \$2.5 million, fund projects that involve both cancer

Mark your calendar

February 26

*Science Lite Series
 Deb Neklason, PhD
 Huntsman Cancer Institute
How pilgrims brought colon cancer to the new world: A story of genealogy, genetics, and cancer

February 27

*Seminar Series
 Mary Beckerle, PhD
 Huntsman Cancer Institute
The state of Huntsman Cancer Institute

March 5

*Seminar Series
 Kun-Liang Guan, PhD
 University of Michigan
The TSC-mTOR pathway in cell growth regulation

March 12

*Seminar Series
 Yixian Zheng, PhD
 Carnegie Institution of Washington
Mitotic spindle morphogenesis—beyond the microtubule cytoskeleton

March 26

*Seminar Series
 Webster Cavenue, PhD
 Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research, University of California at San Diego
Defective receptor signaling in human cancer: Mechanisms and therapeutic implications

April 9

*Seminar Series
 Sumana Datta, PhD
 Texas A&M University
Prostate cancer in flies and men

April 16

*Seminar Series
 Electra Paskett, PhD
 Ohio State University
Lymphedema prevalence and prevention

April 23

*Seminar Series
 Brent Stockwell, PhD
 Columbia University
Probing cell death with small molecules

patients and populations at risk for cancer.

UCSF representatives Margaret Tempero, MD; Martin McMahon, PhD; and Rachael Hajnal, RN, met with a large group from HCI, including Executive Director **Mary Beckerle, PhD**, and **Sean Mulvihill, MD**, senior director of clinical affairs. Tempero is deputy director at UCSF Helen Diller Family Comprehensive Cancer Center, McMahon is co-leader of the Pancreas Cancer Research Group and Liver Cancer Program at Helen Diller, and Hajnal is manager of the pancreas cancer program.

Read all about it: Every month, newsworthy information about the latest research and happenings at HCI appears in print, on television, and on the Internet, making a name for HCI in our community, our nation, and across the world. View the latest [media coverage](#).

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Promotions and Appointments



Lori Kaumans

Lori Kaumans, a 17-year University of Utah employee, has joined HCI as administrative officer for **John Hoffman, MD**, director of HCI's Molecular Imaging Program. Hoffman is also a professor of radiology and neurology and director of nuclear medicine in the Department of Radiology at the University.

Kaumans will work on grant management, accounting, and scheduling for Hoffman. She previously worked 13 years for Kenneth Ward, MD, in his genetics lab in the University's Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and worked four years for Ivor Benjamin, MD, chief of the University's Division of Cardiology.

Kaumans left the university early last year to take a job at a small biotech company but returned for the opportunity to work with Hoffman at HCI.

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Awards and Grants



Scott Kuwada, MD

Scott Kuwada, MD, a member of HCI's Familial Colorectal Cancer Clinic, has been awarded a Virtual Incubator Project grant from the University of Utah Technology Commercialization Office for his work on novel inhibitors of metastasis. Kuwada is an associate professor in the Department of Internal Medicine at the university and program director of the Division of Gastroenterology.

Kuwada's lab has discovered that a cellular protein transcription factor called NF-κB is activated in colon cancer cells when they attach to a surface, and that if colon cancer cells are exposed to soluble NF-κB inhibitors while they are attaching, they undergo apoptosis, or programmed cell death. This new knowledge could be applied to preventing cancer seeding and potentially metastasis.

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April 30***Seminar Series**

Dan Gottschling, PhD
 Fred Hutchinson Cancer
 Research Center
*Nuclear incontinence: The
 effects of old age on the
 genome*

***Seminar Series and Science
 Lite presentations held in the
 HCI sixth floor Eccles
 Auditorium**

Presentations

Kimberly Jones, MD

Kimberly Jones, MD, a hematology/oncology fellow at HCI and the University of Utah, presented a poster at the general session of the 2008 Gastrointestinal Cancers Symposium held January 25–27 in Orlando, Florida. The abstract, *Association of Serum Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor-C (VEGF-C) with Lymph Node Metastasis and Prognosis in Pancreatic Adenocarcinoma*, also received a merit award.



Sancy Leachman, MD, PhD

Sancy Leachman, MD, PhD, gave presentations on “Nails and Pachyonychia Congenita” and “Cutaneous Cancer Syndromes” at the American Academy of Dermatology Annual Meeting held February 1–5 in San Antonio, Texas. Leachman is director of the Melanoma and Cutaneous Oncology Program at HCI and an associate professor in the Department of Dermatology at the University of Utah School of Medicine.

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Helping HCI

Above, Utah Jazz player Andrei Kirilenko signs a Jazz cap for Kim Reed, a nursing student intern on Inpatient 4. Below, Kirilenko and his wife, Masha, far left, with Huntsman Cancer Foundation President Janet Bingham, PhD, and HCI Executive Director Mary Beckerle, PhD, far right. The Kirilenkos presented a check for the Huntsman Cancer Foundation and visited about 25 patients during their trip to

HCI in January. They visit HCI patients about once every six months.



Tommy Johnson, of the K-Bull 93 morning team Johnson and Johnson, gets his head shaved. Johnson had promised to shave his head when the K-BULL 93 Huntsman Cancer Foundation Radio-A-Thon met the goal of \$100,000.

Record-Breaking Radio-A-Thon: The K-BULL 93 Huntsman Cancer Foundation Radio-A-Thon broke records this year, raising a total of \$620,000 for cancer research. Radio-A-Thon listeners donated more than \$140,000 in just two days, February 1–2, and community partners donated the remainder through events and initiatives throughout the year.

Talk show host Glenn Beck served as the event's honorary chair and broadcast an interview with HCI benefactor Jon M. Huntsman during Beck's nationally syndicated radio show. K-Bull's on-air personalities Johnson and Johnson, Shotgun Jackson, The Outlaw Pat Garrett, and Coyote McCoy hosted the 36 hours of programming and shaved their heads as promised when they met the goal of \$100,000.

This year's largest single donation came from Nucor Steel. Other givers included Tough Enough to Wear Pink; Glenn Beck's wife, Tania; Community Health Charities; South Towne Center's Giving Tree; Swing for Life; Daybreak Communities; and SYSCO Intermountain Foods.



Huntsman Cancer Foundation volunteers take donations over the phones during the K-BULL 93 Huntsman Cancer Foundation Radio-A-Thon.

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News You Can Use



Pilgrim's Legacy: HCI investigator **Deb Neklason, PhD**, will speak on "How Pilgrims Brought Colon Cancer to the New World: A Story of Genealogy, Genetics, and Cancer" at the first "Science Lite" seminar at 4 p. m. Tuesday, February 26. The seminar will be in the George S. & Delores Doré Eccles Auditorium on the sixth floor.

The new seminar series is aimed at making scientific topics "more understandable and less mystifying" for nonscientist HCI employees. Neklason will talk about her recently published study identifying a family with a colon cancer predisposition gene who came to the United States in the early 17th century. More than 7,000 living descendants have been identified.

Get Answers: Need to know how to check your e-mail from home or get into your voicemail while traveling? Check out HCI's "[How Do I?](#)" webpage for detailed instructions on all sorts of work-related tasks: shredding documents, sending packages via Federal Express, adding a printer to your computer, and more.

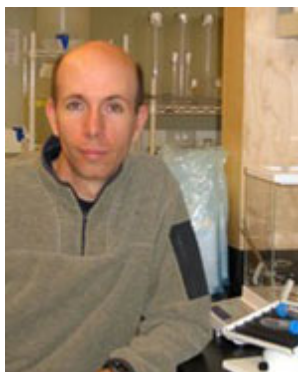
Another great page for finding help is HCI's [Directory of Services](#). Here you'll find phone numbers and e-mail addresses for employees who can help you with everything from parking permits to patient education materials.



Get centered: Read the latest information in the [February issue](#) of the Cancer Learning Center newsletter from HCI's Patient and Public Education Department.

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CCSG Program News



Dean Tantin, PhD

This month's feature highlights the work of **Dean Tantin, PhD**, an assistant professor in the Department of Pathology at the University of Utah School of Medicine and a member of the Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG) **Nuclear Control of Cell Growth and Differentiation Program**.

The regulation of gene expression underlies many important cellular processes. Diseases such as cancer and immune abnormalities can occur if gene expression goes awry. One class of proteins, called octamer binding proteins (including Oct-1), regulates genes involved in embryonic stem cell, immune cell, and cancer development. The Tantin lab has found that these proteins sense and respond to cellular stress; in making this finding, the lab has defined a new stress-response pathway. This pathway is critical for cell survival. Cells lacking Oct-1 cannot tolerate stresses such as DNA damage or oxidative damage, and they die. These findings suggest that cancer could be treated by blocking Oct-1 function. Indeed, in lab-based cancer models, loss of Oct-1 prevents tumors from forming. The ultimate goal of the Tantin lab is to understand the details of this new signaling pathway, and of Oct protein function in cancer development.

Tantin obtained his PhD in molecular biology from the University of California, Los Angeles, training under Michael Carey. He conducted his postdoctoral research with 1993 Nobel Prize laureate Phillip Sharp at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Tantin recently received two prestigious grants to support his research. The first, an American Cancer Society Research Scholar Grant, supports his work studying the Oct-1 stress-response pathway. The second, a March of Dimes/Basil O'Connor Starter Scholar Award, supports his studies on a related protein, Oct-4, and its role in stress response and stem cell and cancer development. Additionally, Tantin collaborates with Nuclear Control Program member **Don Ayer, PhD**, to study cross-talk between transcription factors and cellular metabolism in cancer.

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