Dear Friends and Colleagues,

On behalf of the faculty and staff at UC Irvine Health’s Department of Radiation Oncology, welcome to our first newsletter. I will take this opportunity to share with you the great work of our Department.

This year has been an exceptionally busy year for us. We installed and commissioned the first Varian Truebeam STX linear accelerator this year. Since then, we have been working closely with our colleagues in Department of Neurosurgery to perform stereotactic radiosurgery, and also with the Department of Urology to treat prostate cancer with the Calypso “GPS” beacon system. Additionally, we have started treating patients who are candidates for intraoperative radiation immediately following breast conservation surgery to reduce the risk of local recurrence following surgery. Lastly, we are treating superficial skin cancers using Xoft to treat non-melanoma skin cancers.

Our residency program is as strong as ever. We recently held our 1st UCI Alumni Reception at the ASTRO Annual Meeting in San Antonio. Many of our alumni and our first chairman of the Department, Dr. Martin Colman, attended the reception. Dr. Jeffrey Kuo and Dr. Hanako Farol are leading our clinical residency program and ensuring the success of our current residents. We welcome Dr. Jonathan Moayaad, PGY-2, who started with us in September.

Some of our faculty and residents were celebrated at a national level. Dr. Charles Limoli received $9 million in NASA funding to study the early and long-term effects of space radiation on the central nervous system. Our adjunct professor, Dr. Joel Cherlow, from Long Beach Memorial Medical Center, was inducted as a Fellow of the American Society of Radiation Oncology (ASTRO). Dr. Parima Daroui was selected to be the faculty moderator for a scientific session on Altered Fractionation in Breast Cancer at ASTRO, and our chief resident, Dr. Randy Wei, was the faculty moderator for the educational session on “Radiotherapy Utilization in the End of Life” at ASTRO. He was also chosen for an oral presentation at the upcoming Radiological Society of North America’s annual meeting where he will speak on the VA outcome data on use of paraffin bolus for cutaneous lesions of the nose.

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Recent Grants

Dr. Charles Limoli and his lab have recently been awarded 4 substantial grants for their ongoing research:

- Department of Defense—$59,752
  Elimination of the neurocognitive defects following whole brain irradiation for breast cancer metastases
- NASA—$8,999,971
  Mechanisms underlying charged particle-induced disruption of CNS function
- NIH/NINDS—$3,536,040
  Mechanisms underlying radiation- and chemotherapy-induced cognitive impairment
- NIH/NINDS—$2,139,744
  Translational strategies for protecting the brain against radio- and chemotherapy

Keep up the great work!

Leukemia & Lymphoma Society Walk

Dr. Matthew Al-Ghazi participated in the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society ‘Light The Night’ Walk on September 19. With help from department members, Dr. Al-Ghazi raised over $500, exceeding his fundraising goal by over 200%. Director of Chao Cancer Center, Dr. Richard Van Etten, was elected to chair next year’s drive. UC Irvine Health surpassed their goal of raising $50,000 overall.

Service Milestones

Congratulations to the following individuals who have reached recent milestones working with the Department of Radiation Oncology:

- Lidia Pinedo, Senior Radiation Therapist—32 years
- Gayle Bradford, RN—29 years
- Sue Dietrich, Senior Dosimetrist—14 years
- Annemarie Lynch, Senior Radiation Therapist—11 years
- Sunny Shen, Radiation Therapist—7 years

Thank you for your hard work and dedication!

Radiation Oncology Faculty

Munjal Acharya, PhD
Assistant Professor In-Residence

Matthew Al-Ghazi, PhD
Clinical Professor

Parima Daroui, MD PhD
Assistant Professor

Hanako Farol, DO
Assistant Professor

Jeffrey Kuo, MD
Clinical Professor

Charles Limoli, PhD
Professor

Nilam Ramsinghani, MD
Chair and Clinical Professor

Dante Roa, PhD
Clinical Professor

Varun Sehgal, PhD
Clinical Professor

Open House

Save the date!

Join us on Thursday, January 28th, 2016 from 6:00—8:30 PM for our first Radiation Oncology Open House.

We will be showcasing the latest in our treatment technology—primarily stereotactic treatments that are performed on TrueBeam and Trilogy and planned in Dosimetry. Our Acuity room and HDR suite will also be available for viewing, as well as our Ambient CT Scanner.

Our staff will be on-site to conduct tours and answer any questions you may have regarding the various rooms and machines that our department has to offer.

Referring physicians and medical staff are cordially invited. Please note that this is not a public open house.

More information will be announced as the date nears. For any questions, please contact Terry Pierce at terrencp@uci.edu or Sue Dietrich at sdietric@uci.edu. We look forward to your attendance!
Radiation Oncology Ranked 2nd in Patient Satisfaction

Radiation Oncology was ranked as the 2nd best department in overall patient satisfaction from July 2015 through September 2015 at UCI Medical Center, earning a score of 75 and surpassing UCIMC’s target goal of 54.6. Our department came in a very close second to Surgical Oncology, which received a score of 76. Great job everyone!

Grand Rounds

Radiation oncologist and fellow UCI resident alumni Dr. Kenneth Wong (CHLA, USC) hosted a Grand Rounds seminar on “Pediatric Radiation Oncology at CHLA: Process & Safety Through Technology Upgrades”, on Thursday, November 19th. Thank you for taking the time to share your knowledge and expertise with the faculty and residents!

Above photo: Dr. Kenneth Wong presents Grand Rounds. Top right (L to R): Dr. Varun Sehgal, Dr. Dante Roa, Dr. Jeffrey Kuo, Dr. Matthew Al-Ghazi, Dr. Venita Williams (alumni), Dr. Nilam Ramsingham, Dr. Kenneth Wong, Dr. Hanako Farol. Bottom right (L to R): Dr. Jonathan Mooyad, Dr. Ramsingham, Dr. Wong, & Dr. Kuo enjoy a dinner afterwards at Market Broiler.
1st Annual ASTRO Alumni Reception

Our first annual UCI Alumni Reception was a great success. The event was held at the Zinc Bar and Grill in San Antonio on October 19 during the ASTRO 2015 Annual Meeting. Thank you to our UCI Alumni Dr. Martin Colman, Dr. Tony Tran, Dr. Javier Torres-Roca, Dr. Michael Ingram, Dr. Niroo Talwar, and Dr. Jason Wong for coming to the reception. Additionally, we had Dr. Joel Cherlow, attending at Long Beach Memorial, Dr. Varun Sehgal (physics), Vann Pith (RT), Dr. Lesley Lawrenson (PGY-3), and Dr. Nevine Hanna (PGY-5). This was a joint collaboration with the UCI School of Medicine Alumni Office and the Department of Radiation Oncology. We look forward to another successful reception next year. See you at ASTRO 2016 in Boston!

Co-Chairs Ken Wong, MD and Randy Wei, MD PhD
UCI Radiation Oncology Alumni Association

Farewell Ed Orlowski

Best wishes to our former RT and Manager, Edward Orlowski, who retired with us in December 2014 after dedicating 26 years of service to our department. Congratulations on your retirement and thank you for your hard work and dedication!

Message from the Chair Continued from Page 1

We welcome our newest member to the team, Terry Pierce, RTT, who will serve as the Department Manager. Terry comes to us from California Pacific Medical Center where he served several years as their Department Manager. He brings to us a wealth of new ideas and leadership experience that will strengthen and build our team.

There are just a few of the highlights from our Department and I encourage you to read more in our newsletter. Thank you to the faculty, staff, and residents for their hard work and commitment to continually strive to improve the work we do in this department, which translates into world class care for our patients.

Sincerely,

Nilam S. Ramsinghani, MD
Chair and Clinical Professor
Department of Radiation Oncology
The medical physics residency program had very modest beginnings. In 1999, department resources consisted of two dated treatment machines, a fluoroscopic simulator, cesium sources for low dose rate brachytherapy, and a fledgling intensity modulated radiotherapy (IMRT) program that used the NOMOS system. CT was done in the radiology department and image guidance consisted of manually reviewing MR films to guide contouring.

Since that time, the above have been replaced with modern treatment planning and delivery devices. The department now has a TrueBeam-STx and Trilogy linear accelerators equipped with gated volumetrically modulated arc therapy (VMAT) that utilizes RapidArc software and onboard imaging (KV, CBCT & MV), wide aperture CT-simulator with 4D capabilities, high dose rate (HDR) brachytherapy suite with in-suite acuity simulator for imaging. Other technologies available are; several Eclipse treatment planning workstations, MIMVista software for multimodality image registration, Calypso and Vision-RT for motion management amongst many others. Stereotactic radiosurgery (SRS) and stereotactic body radiotherapy (SBRT) are amongst the techniques in clinical use, along with IGRT.

Recently, we acquired the Intrabeam system for intraoperative radiotherapy (IORT) and the Xoft system for electronic brachytherapy (eBx). The IORT program started in earnest collaboration with the department of surgery for early breast cancer and recurrent colorectal tumors. Electronic brachytherapy is being used for non-melanoma skin cancers in collaboration with our dermatology colleagues and is based on the main campus in Irvine.

This summarizes the technological advances that facilitated modernizing the practice of radiation oncology and medical physics in the department. While modern technology is an enabler, the program is about people; the patients who are the recipients of care and deserve, and expect, the best possible treatments in a caring and compassionate setting, and the residents who similarly deserve the best training possible.

The medical physics residency program has seen ongoing development over the past 16 years. It gained accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Physics Education Programs (CAMPEP) in 2007—the first program at the time to be accredited in Southern California, second to Stanford in the state and amongst the first 20 in the country. It was reaccredited in 2012. Both times, we received the full five years accreditation, the maximum awarded with no conditions attached. The program comes up for the normal re-accreditation cycle in 2017.

The number of applicants we receive has also steadily increased over the years. Now it stands at 90-100 applicants per recruitment cycle. Starting this past year, the recruitment process moved to a match system akin to the medical residency.

Our residents have moved on to successful medical physics careers. As of writing, half are in academic positions and half in hospital/private practice settings. They all passed their board examinations successfully and were able to obtain positions upon graduation. Three of our graduates are locally employed, while others are in various parts of the country.

Continued below

Remembering Dr. Liang

The story is not complete without mentioning that we lost one of our physics residents to the disease that we are all engaged in fighting. Dr. Liang Liang was our first Medical Physics resident, who graduated in 2009, after the program was accredited in 2007. He accepted a position at Wayne State University and two weeks after starting was diagnosed with a rare tumor. He fought courageously for five years before succumbing to the disease he was helping to fight in late 2014. I was able to see him a few months before his passing while attending a conference in Detroit. Although he was obviously not well, he was so cheerful and invited me to have dinner with his family at a select Chinese restaurant in the Detroit area. On the menu was Peking duck. I had this dish twice, once in Beijing in 1997 and the second time with the late Dr. Liang and his family. He was amongst the finest physicists, residents and human beings. Our thoughts are with his wife Liyuan, whom he had known for 35 of his 39 years, and his daughter Catharine. We celebrate the life and memory of the late Dr. Liang.
Randy Wei, MD, PhD
PGY-4 Chief Resident
Randy enjoys spending time with his wife and 4-month-old son. In his free time, he likes to work on improving palliative care education in radiation oncology. Randy earned his MD & PhD from UCI and also completed his PGY-1 in Internal Medicine at UCI.

Lesley Lawrenson, MD, PhD
PGY-3
A California native, Lesley likes to spend her free time running, surfing, or being at the beach. She also has an interest in interior design. Lesley earned her MD & PhD from Wayne State and completed her PGY-1 in Emergency Medicine in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Jonathan Moayyad, MD
PGY-2
Jonathan was born and raised in Houston, TX. He has always wanted to be a physician, having looked up to multiple physicians and hospital staff within his own family. Wanting to escape the Texas heat, he joined UCI in September 2015 and is elated to be here. In his free time, you can find him at the gym lifting weights or studying at Starbucks. Jonathan earned his MD at UT Houston and completed his PGY-1 in Internal Medicine at Yale.

Samir Laoui, PhD
Samir Laoui is originally from Morocco. He received his Ph.D. degree in Medical Physics from the University of Massachusetts, Lowell. His doctoral dissertation was conducted at Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School; it was about developing novel contrast agents for photoacoustic computed tomography. Samir joined the medical physics team at the University of California, Irvine, as a physics resident on July 1, 2015. Samir is married to Ghyzlene Laoui; they both have two beautiful children. When not working, Samir enjoys spending time with his family and loves to travel.

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Rupen Garg, MD
PGY-1 Internal Medicine at Lehigh Valley Hospital, PA
Rupen will be joining UCI in July 2016. Originally from Kansas, Rupen is a huge sports fan (he especially loves football) and also enjoys playing golf in his spare time. Rupen earned his MD from Temple University.

Daniel J “DJ” Bourgeois, III MD, MPH
PGY-4 Radiation Oncology at Roswell Park Cancer Institute, NY
Daniel will be transferring to UCI in January 2016 to complete the rest of his training. His wife is also a UCI resident physician. He has a strong background in clinical research and his personal interests include pediatrics, SRS/SBRT, and brachytherapy. Born and raised in Louisiana, he is a die-hard fan of the LSU Tigers and the New Orleans Saints. Daniel earned his MD & MPH from Tulane University and completed his PGY-1 in General Surgery at UCLA.

Lesley Lawrenson, MD, PhD
PGY-3
A California native, Lesley likes to spend her free time running, surfing, or being at the beach. She also has an interest in interior design. Lesley earned her MD & PhD from Wayne State and completed her PGY-1 in Emergency Medicine in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Congratulations to our Medical Physics Resident alumni,
Suhong Yu, PhD (2013-2015) on recently accepting a faculty position at the University of Rochester in New York! She is now an Assistant Professor of Medical Physics in the Department of Radiation Oncology at the University of Rochester Medical Center.
Recent notable works

**PUBLICATIONS**


**PRESENTATIONS**


Acharya MM, Baulch JE, Allen BD, Chmielewski NN, Baddour AAD, Parihar VK, Boison D, Limoli CL. Neuropeptrotic role of adenosine against radiation-induced cognitive dysfunction. International Congress of Radiation Research (ICRR), Kyoto Japan, 2015. *Received Excellent Poster Award*


Lawrenson, L, Yu, S. The Dosimetric Impact of Image Guided Radiotherapy by Intratumoral Fiducial Markers, American Society of Radiation Oncology, October 2015, San Antonio, TX.


Roa, D E. ASTRO Refresher Course for Latin America and Spain, Invited Faculty—“Radiation Therapy: From 2-D to 3-D with IMRT and VMAT”. October 2015, San Antonio, TX.

Roa, D E. ALTRO Conference, Invited Faculty—“Dosimetric Aspects of Treatment Planning using VMAT”. 2015, Rosario, Argentina .

Roa, D E. IAEA Course in Acceptance and Commissioning of a Treatment Planning Software, Invited Faculty. 2015, MD Anderson, Houston, TX.


**Staff Spotlight**

Meet Terry Pierce, RTT

Please give a warm welcome to our newest staff member!

Terry has come to UC Irvine to manage the Radiation Oncology department from a long and varied career in Radiation Oncology. Terry started out as a Staff Radiation Therapist at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula in Monterey, CA in the early 90s, and eventually moved into Locum Radiation Therapy work for a few years before joining Varian Medical Systems as an Application Specialist training staff in the operation of Linear Accelerators and Varian’s Record & Verify software. In 2005, Terry accepted a position with Sutter Health in Northern California to open and manage a new Cancer Center in Vallejo, CA. He then moved over to manage their Radiation Oncology department at their flagship hospital California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco. During his last few years with Sutter Health, he was the Subject Matter Expert and IT Project Manager for Sutter Health’s Western Region EPIC/ARIA EHR rollout.