

Rob Strong



Lisa Schwartz, MD, MS



Michael L. Whitfield, PhD

photo courtesy of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center



Ilana Cass, MD



Sandra Wong, MD, MS

Mark Washburn

FACULTY NOTES

HONORING THE LEGACY OF PROFESSOR LISA SCHWARTZ

Lisa Schwartz, MD, MS, a professor of The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy & Clinical Practice and of community and family medicine at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth passed away on November 29 after a lengthy illness. Dr. Schwartz's innovative research in medicine in the media, the science of effective risk communication, overdiagnosis, prescription drugs, and the marketing of medicine—done in conjunction with her husband and research partner Professor Steven Woloshin, MD, MS—is internationally renowned. As the co-director, along with Dr. Woloshin, of the Center for Medicine and Media at The Dartmouth Institute, she worked tirelessly to improve the communication of medical evidence to clinicians, journalists, policymakers, and the public.

[Read The New York Times' obituary for Dr. Schwartz at \[dartgo.org/lis_nyt\]\(http://dartgo.org/lis_nyt\)](#)

WHITFIELD NAMED CHAIR OF BIOMEDICAL DATA SCIENCE

Michael L. Whitfield, PhD, has been named the chair of the Department of Biomedical Data Science at the Geisel School of Medicine.

Whitfield, a professor of biomedical data science and molecular and systems biology, has served as the department's interim chair since November 2017.

Since joining Dartmouth in 2003, Whitfield has built a successful interdisciplinary research program focused on the genomics, genetics, and mechanisms of systemic autoimmune disease and fibrosis. His lab has brought together experimental and computational scientists, as well as physician-scientists to develop diagnostics based on genome-wide gene expression, and to mine big data and genomic networks in systemic autoimmune disease to identify disease mechanisms and novel therapeutic targets. Much of this research has concentrated on understanding the heterogeneity in scleroderma and the interpretation of outcomes in clinical trials. Whitfield was the first to identify molecular gene expression subsets in scleroderma and to develop diagnostics to stratify these patients. His group has developed multi-tissue networks of fibrosis that suggest interactions between innate immune cells and the stroma are key drivers of pathogenesis. Whitfield has actively collaborated across academic disciplines and with biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies to move discoveries from his lab into implementation in the clinic, making precision medicine a real possibility for patients with scleroderma.

NEW CHAIR OF OB-GYN AT GEISEL AND D-H

Ilana Cass, MD, vice chair of obstetrics and gynecology (OB-GYN) at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles and professor of OB-GYN at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center and at the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA, has been appointed chair of OB-GYN at the Geisel School of Medicine and Dartmouth-Hitchcock (D-H).

As a leader at Cedars-Sinai, Dr. Cass has served on the board of directors of the medical center and was an elected representative to their medical executive committee, serving in the roles of secretary, treasurer, and vice chief of staff. As a widely respected gynecologic oncologist, Dr. Cass has served on several committees of the Society of Gynecologic Oncology.

Dr. Cass is also a noted researcher, focusing her work on molecular biology of hereditary gynecologic malignancies and examining cancers that result from hereditary genetic mutations, such as the BRCA and DNA mismatch repair genes.

SANDRA WONG NAMED PRESIDENT-ELECT OF SOCIETY OF UNIVERSITY SURGEONS

Sandra L. Wong, MD, MS, the William N. and Bessie Allyn Professor in Surgery at Dartmouth's Geisel School of Medicine, has been named president-elect of the Society of University Surgeons (SUS).

Founded in 1938, the mission of the SUS is

Jon Gilbert Fox

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Deborah Hogan, PhD

Steven D. Leach, MD

Ellen Meara, PhD

to support and advance leaders in academic surgery through membership, scholarship, and professional development. Today, SUS is dedicated to advancing the surgical sciences—by the research and clinical breakthroughs, education and training investments, and public policy leadership efforts made by its members.

Wong, who is currently completing a three-year term as treasurer of the organization, will serve as president-elect for one year, before assuming her term as president from 2020 to 2021.

DEBORAH HOGAN NAMED A 2019 FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF MICROBIOLOGY

Deborah Hogan, PhD, a professor of microbiology and immunology at the Geisel School of Medicine, has been named a 2019 Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology (AAM).

Fellows of the AAM, an honorific leadership group within the American Society for Microbiology, are elected annually through a highly selective, peer-review process—based on their records of scientific achievement and original contributions advancing the field of microbiology. Specific election qualifiers include: scientific excellence, originality, leadership, high ethical standards, and scholarly and creative achievement.

Hogan joined the Dartmouth faculty in 2004, focusing her research on revealing new metabolic pathways that control the biology of chronic bacterial and bacterial-fungal interactions and hold promise for treating airway infections in cystic fibrosis (CF). Through this work, she was able to secure substantial grant funding from the CF Foundation and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as an independent researcher. Today, the Hogan Lab is a recognized leader in studying microbial interactions in mixed species chronic infections. She has now published 80 research

papers and has received more than \$6 million in grant funding over the past 15 years.

NORRIS COTTON CANCER CENTER DIRECTOR NAMED FELLOW OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Steven D. Leach, MD, director of Dartmouth’s Norris Cotton Cancer Center and the Preston T. and Virginia R. Kelsey Distinguished Chair in Cancer at the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, has been named a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). Election as an AAAS Fellow is an honor bestowed upon AAAS members by their peers.

Leach, a nationally recognized leader in pancreatic cancer research, was elected as an AAAS Fellow for furthering understanding of cancer as a recapitulation of embryonic development, including identification of multiple genes and pathways currently being targeted in clinical trials.

“It is an honor to be recognized by the AAAS for my research in the initiation and progression of pancreatic cancer,” said Leach. “My research has run the gamut from very basic studies of pancreatic development using mouse and zebrafish, to our more recent studies of human pancreatic cancer and how pancreatic cancer mutations engage the host immune system. All of this work has been driven by my intrinsic love of biology and deep gratitude to all the tremendous teachers, colleagues, and students that I’ve encountered along the way. I greatly appreciate the acknowledgment by the AAAS for this ongoing work, which is ultimately aimed at improving survival for pancreatic cancer patients.”

ELLEN MEARA APPOINTED TO ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP

Ellen Meara, PhD, a professor of The Dartmouth Institute and an adjunct professor

of economics at Dartmouth College, has been named to the Peggy Y. Thomson Professorship in the Evaluative Clinical Sciences.

A health economist, Meara is known for her work focusing on the impact of public policies and regulations on populations insured by Medicare and Medicaid—particularly those with disabilities, including mental illness and substance use disorders—looking closely at the economic impact of changes to insurance coverage, payment strategies, and care delivery innovations. She has extensive experience tracking trends in medical spending over time.

She has also researched variation in opioid prescribing to disabled Medicare beneficiaries across the U.S., as well as state-level legal restrictions designed to reduce misuse of prescription opioids. Opioid overdose deaths among those with disabilities enrolled in Medicare contribute an outsized share of opioid-related deaths.

The Peggy Y. Thomson Professorship was established in 1993 by Dr. Andrew Thomson, Jr., D ’46, in honor of his wife. As the nation’s first endowed chair in the discipline of outcomes research, it was a visionary gift that helped to cement Dartmouth’s leadership in the field. The chair was first held by Dr. Jack Wennberg, a pioneer in the study of healthcare systems and variations in care and founder of what is now The Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy & Clinical Practice. Most recently the chair was held by Dr. James N. Weinstein, an internationally renowned spine surgeon and researcher, professor of orthopaedics, former director of The Dartmouth Institute, and former CEO and president of Dartmouth-Hitchcock.