



FELLOWS MATCH 2021

- COMPLEX FAMILY PLANNING
- FEMALE PELVIC SURGERY &
 RECONSTRUCTIVE MEDICINE
- GYNECOLOGIC ONCOLOGY
- MATERNAL-FETAL MEDICINE
- REPRODUCTIVE ENDCRINOLOGY
 & INFERTILITY

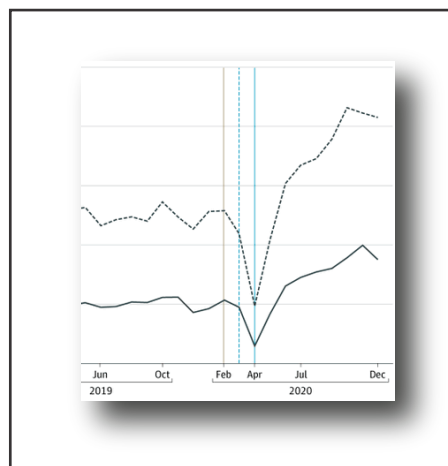
In this Issue:

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR	1
NEWSBYTES (MATCH RESULTS)	2
CALL THE MIDWIFE	3
NEW FACULTY	4
MEET THE PROJECT SCIENTIST	6
FACULTY RETREAT	7
WRHR FELLOW SLOT	8

FELLOWS MATCH DAY RESULTS: PAGE 2

- [Homepage](#)
- [Faculty](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Research](#)

Pandemic Birthrates: Department handling more births, concomittant with a trend towards increased infertility care during the pandemic.



*The WRHR program at UCSD is seeking new Scholars
 Details on Page 8*

*UC President's Postdoctoral Fellow Program
 Gets 15 Million from Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
 Details on Page 6*

Letter from the Chair

Time to Strategize

As I settle in to my role at UC San Diego, I am often asked about my vision. I first presented my vision to the department over a year ago in the summer of 2020, as I was learning about UCSD during the interview process. My interactions were mainly with leadership both inside and outside of the department selected for me during the interview process. I presented a summary of that vision during our first faculty meeting, which occurred soon after my arrival. Getting to know our department and all of its members, its culture, and its needs is a process that will not be completed overnight, but it is one in which I am immersing fully. Ultimately, all of these interactions will influence my prior impressions, and inform our collective departmental vision.



Our department will spend the rest of the academic year developing a strategic plan, similar to planning occurring in the Dean's office and around the School of Medicine. This plan will be our vision for the next 5 years and will inform our path forward. The process for strategic planning will start at the division level and conclude after a faculty-wide retreat in late winter. I have to thank our outstanding executive team for organizing this effort. A crucial part of our strategic plan will be a re-evaluation of how we demonstrate our commitment to our tripartite mission: excellence in research, clinical care, and education. We have an outstanding world-class faculty training the next generation of leaders in our field. Through my interviews with faculty, I've come to know the pride felt by all of the faculty in the research and education missions, as well as the world-class clinical care. To that end, we have created a Tripartite Working Group, which will make recommendations about equating the importance of these academic missions in our department. Developing our plan moving forward will highlight all of these areas equally.

We've also made a few changes that I'd like to highlight. After some conversations with our team, the desire to provide ongoing learning opportunities for faculty became clear. This month we will introduce the pilot of our Master Surgeon Program. Interested faculty with upcoming challenging surgical cases can schedule these

CLICK: UC SAN DIEGO OBSTETRICS, GYNECOLOGY & REPRODUCTIVE SCIENCES DEPT. CURRICULUM VITAE

with experts from various divisions in our department. Additionally, a common theme thus far is of our potential to improve marketing. We have developed a close relationship with the marketing office and have developed a Media and Marketing Committee within our department. Our goal is to increase the visibility of the excellent work done here, while we continue to be leaders in our region and worldwide.

Finally, in this edition of *Fimbria*, we highlight several faculty accomplishments. Congratulations to all those who were successful in obtaining new research funding. Please see the details in the **Funding News** on page 2. Congratulations to Dr. Maureen Ries for accepting the role of the new Associate Residency Program Director, and thank you, Dr. Ramez Eskander for your contributions while serving in this role.

Thank you!

CYNTHIA GYAMFI-BANNERMAN, MD
Professor and Chair
 Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology
 & Reproductive Sciences

VICE CHAIRS

Basic Research	PAMELA MELLON, PHD
Clinical	CHRISTINE MILLER, MD
Education	YVETTE LACOURSIERE, MD
Translational Research	LOUISE LAURENT, MD, PHD

DIVISION DIRECTORS

Complex Family Planning	SHEILA MODY, MD	Gynecologic Oncology	MICHAEL MCHALE, MD
Hospitalist	GINA FRUGONI, MD	Maternal-Fetal Medicine	THOMAS KELLY, MD
Urogynecology	EMILY LUKACZ, MD	Obstetrics & Gynecology	PAMELA DEAK, MD
Reproductive Endocrinology & Infertility	ANTONI DULEBA, MD		

BUSINESS OFFICE

Administrative Vice Chair	MICHAEL MORALES
Communications	CYNTHIA PENA
Editor	DWAYNE STUPACK

Contact us at: FIMBRIA@UCSD.EDU

Newsbytes



Follow us
@UCSD_ObGyn

Fellows Match

Ghansh Yadavbeen, MD
Baylor University
Female Pelvic Medicine
& Reconstructive Surgery



Dana Canfield, MD
University of Utah
Maternal-Fetal Medicine

Danielle Vachon, MD
University of
Illinois at Chicago
Complex Family Planning



Mayowa Dayo, MD
Kaiser Permanente,
Oakland
Reproductive
Endocrinology &
Infertility

Breana Hill, MD
Colorado University at
Anschutz
Gynecologic Oncology



Congratulations to

Sheila Mody, MD
Who was awarded the
Great Catch/Speak Up Award
by the UC San Diego Patient
Safety Committee

Priya Pantham, PhD
of the Center for Perinatal Discovery
is one of only two recipients of
**Preeclampsia Foundation Canada's
2021 Vision Grant**
awarded for her project,
*"Integrated Analysis of Placental and Extracellular RNA in
Preeclampsia with HELLP"*.

Funding News

Richard Bryan McCosh, PhD brings in a new K99
award: *Investigation of brainstem neurons in the
regulation of gonadotropin secretion* 1K99HD104994

Priya Pantham, PhD successfully converted her K99
award to R00 status *"Extracellular Vesicles as a Link
Between Placental and Renal Dysfunction in
Preeclampsia"* R00HD096125

Kelly Breen Church, PhD celebrates a new R01
grant entitled *Regulation of gonadotropin secretion
during undernutrition by a brainstem-hypothalamic
neural pathway* R01 HD103725

Marianna Alperin, MD was awarded a new R01,
*Pathways underlying recovery of injured urethral
sphincter and a novel regenerative biomaterial
intervention* R01DK128639

Cynthia Gyamfi-Bannerman, MD was also award-
ed a new R01, *Stress Phenotypes and Preterm Birth:
Immune and Energetic Cellular Dysregulation and
the Preventive Effect of Social Support* R01MD016278

Call the Midwife...

In this case, we are talking about the UC San Diego midwife program, and not the public broadcasting series that chronicles 10 years of midwife service! But the tradition of excellent care presented in that series reflects the professionalism of our program. Last year, the UC San Diego Health Nurse-Midwives celebrated 20 years of providing midwifery care. Nearly 18,000 babies have been born to families in the care of our certified nurse-midwives (CNMs). Currently, 15 CNMs provide prenatal care at 6 locations around San Diego. This includes UC San Diego Health locations- La Jolla, Kearny Mesa, Hillcrest, Rancho Bernardo, and Encinitas. We also provide midwifery care at MidCity Community Clinic in City Heights. This site serves a diverse population, including a significant number of refugees from Haiti.

This year we are excited about implementing **Centering Pregnancy**. This evidence-based, group prenatal care model has been shown to improve outcomes, including lower preterm birth rates, as well as high patient and provider satisfaction. This model has started at the Kearny Mesa office with our first group due to give birth in January of 2022.

At Jacobs Medical Center (JMC) in La Jolla, there is 24 hour coverage for the Nurse-Midwifery service. Nurse-midwives attend births in Labor & Delivery as well as our in-hospital birth center. Our birth center is unique as one of only a handful located in academic medical centers. It has been the site of over 6,000 births since it opened in Hillcrest in 1999 (see photo at right).

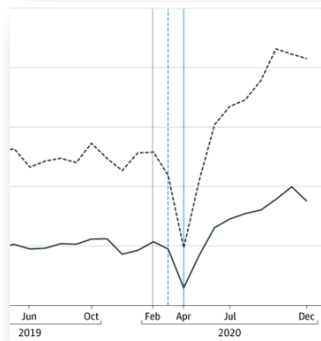
The Birth Center offers a less medicalized environment for families with low-risk pregnancies, and has tubs for hydrotherapy in labor as well as queen-sized beds. Families stay in the same room for labor, birth and their postpartum stay. Because it is located down the hall from Labor and Delivery, we have the safety net of OB physicians, anesthesia, and the NICU. In addition to coverage of our own service, there are nurse-midwives working in collaborative roles to support the department. Nurse-midwives work with the Hillcrest OB Group as additional OB provider support. At Jacobs Medical Center, nurse-midwives provide coverage in Labor and Delivery triage.

We are committed to educating future health care providers, including medical students, nurse-midwifery students, and residents in OB/GYN and Family Medicine. In addition to participating in CNM births, each OB/GYN intern has a one-month rotation with the Nurse-Midwifery service. This is an opportunity for learning clinical skills and interdisciplinary collaboration.



The 6000th baby in the birthing center

Pandemic Increases Births



UCSD had 418 births last month, hitting an all-time department mark. Part of this is due to a national trend that was published recently by our department:

Increased Infertility Care during the pandemic.

Read More here:

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2784774>

Mentor Lauded



Congratulations to **Pratima Gupta MD MPH** who just received the Society of Family Planning Mentorship Award.

New Faculty

Fimbria Quarterly (FQ) is happy to introduce several newly appointed members of our faculty.



Kathleen Fisch, PhD

is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences, in the Division of Maternal-Fetal Medicine. She holds a B.A. in Integrative Biology from UC

Berkeley and a Ph.D. in Ecology with a focus on population genetics from UC Davis. Dr. Fisch completed postdoctoral fellowships at the San Diego Zoo Institute for Conservation Research and The Scripps Research Institute in population genetics and computational genomics.

She serves as the Faculty Director of the UC San Diego Center for Computational Biology & Bioinformatics (CCBB) and as the Co-Director of the ACTRI Center for Excellence in Translational Immunogenomics (CETI). Dr. Fisch spearheads the development of a vibrant, leading edge vision for computational genomics, bioinformatics support and infrastructure at UCSD Health Sciences.

Dr. Fisch has a strong record of collaborative research in translational genomics as a consortium multi-PI for the Omics Data Generation Center (ODGC) for the NIH Common Fund Acute to Chronic Pain Signatures Program (U54DA049115), leading the data management and analysis within the ODGC and as the Project Lead for the Data Analysis Core of the NIH Common Fund Human BioMolecular Atlas Program (HuBMAP) Female Reproductive Tissue Mapping Center (U54HD104393). Dr. Fisch continues to work to advance her field through active, ongoing research focused on understanding the molecular mechanisms underlying pregnancy disorders and exposures to improve maternal and child health throughout their lifespans.

Audra R. Meadows, MD, MPH



is a birth optimizer and health equity champion. She cares for women before, during and after pregnancy to ensure positive pregnancy and birth experiences. As an Obstetrician/Gynecologist and maternal health advocate, Dr. Meadows actively investigates strategies to optimize infant and maternal outcomes and to eliminate racial inequities associated with birth. For more than 15 years, she has been passionate about achieving health equity and creating value in clinical practice.

Dr. Meadows completed her medical education at the University of Texas at San Antonio, her OB/GYN residency training at The Brigham & Women's Hospital at Harvard Medical School and the Commonwealth Fund Fellowship in Health Equity Leadership at the Harvard School of Public Health. She previously served as Medical Director of the BWH Ambulatory Obstetrics Practice and the City of Boston's maternal child health programs. This fall she joined the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at UC San Diego, where she will devote time to prenatal care practice innovation, advocacy, and medical student and resident education. She is the founding director of the Maternal Innovation Collaborative that seeks to innovate and optimize care and experiences of pregnancy. This novel center will seek to innovate clinical strategies to prevent preterm birth and better serve those pregnant and parenting.

Abroad, she co-directs the Perinatal Neonatal Quality Improvement Network of Massachusetts (PNQIN), the state PQC for MA, and serves as faculty and board member for the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's Better Maternal Outcomes project and the Institute for Perinatal Quality Improvement. In this work, she leads quality improvement projects to promote "teaming" and tools that improve obstetric safety and equity.

She is currently a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Interdisciplinary Leaders Research Scholar and NIH-funded researcher investigating strategies to prevent maternal morbidity and achieve equity with a particular emphasis on including the voices of those pregnant and parenting in identifying these strategies.



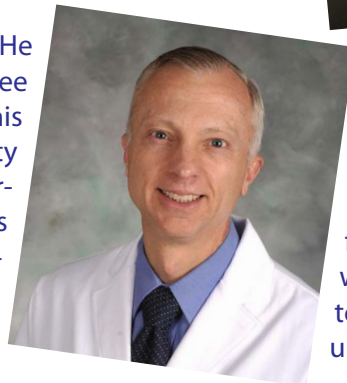
Priya Pantham, PhD

completed her PhD in Obstetrics and Gynecology at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. She undertook her postdoctoral training at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and was an Institute for Genomic Biology Fellow at the University of Illinois at

Urbana-Champaign. Dr. Pantham's research background is in applying high throughout multi-omics approaches to investigate placental function in obstetric disorders such as preeclampsia, preterm birth, and intra-uterine growth restriction. In her currently funded K99/R00 project (NIH/NICHD), she is investigating extracellular vesicles (EVs) as a link between placental and renal dysfunction in preeclampsia. She uses a combination of molecular techniques including Next Generation Sequencing and computational and bioinformatic methods to conduct her research.

Jason O. Heaton, MD

is a native of Shelbyville Indiana. He completed his undergraduate degree at DePauw University followed by his medical degree at Indiana University School of Medicine on a Navy scholarship. He finished twenty-three years of military service as a Navy obstetrician and gynecologist on 1 October 2021. His Naval career began with his OBGYN residency at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, VA. He was then assigned to the National Capital Consortium in Bethesda, MD where he served as faculty at the Uniformed Services University and on-site medical student clerkship director.

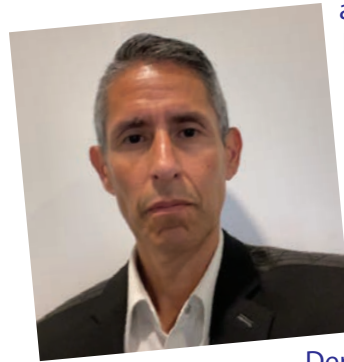


After a few years in private practice in Valparaiso IN, he returned to the Navy to pursue academic medicine and was stationed at the Naval Medical Center San Diego. While there he served as the on-site medical student clinical clerkship director, Transitional Year Program Director, Gynecology Division Head, Assistant Department Head of OBGYN, Chair of OBGYN residency Clinical Competency Committee, and Chair of the Medical Staff. He spent the last year opening a birthing center for the 12,000 Marines and their families stationed in Iwakuni Japan near Hiroshima.

Dr. Heaton's clinical interests include medical education, simulation training, operative vaginal delivery, and patient safety/quality. He has enjoyed being an ACOG section officer and currently serves on the ACOG OB Clinical Practice Guidelines Committee. Outside of medicine, he enjoys spending time with his family, running (completed Boston 2013), hiking in our beautiful national parks, and cheering for the Hoosiers.

Michael E. Cardenas, MD

is a clinical instructor who provides comprehensive prenatal care, labor and delivery care, and postpartum care. He also has a special interest in helping couples who are experiencing issues with infertility. He is part of the hospitalist and generalist team that cares for patients at UC San Diego Health's Hillcrest and Jacobs Medical Center locations.



As a clinical instructor in the Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences, Dr. Cardenas enjoys helping to shape the future of his speciality through educating medical students and residents at UC San Diego School of Medicine. Prior to joining UC San Diego Health, Dr. Cardenas served in the US Navy for nearly 30 years with assignments throughout the world. His deployments have allowed him the privilege to provide obstetrical and gynecologic care to medically underserved countries throughout the pacific region.

Dr. Cardenas completed his residency training in obstetrics and gynecology at the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in 2000, serving as administrative chief resident in his fourth year. He earned his medical degree from the Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine.

Dr. Cardenas is board certified in obstetrics and gynecology and is a fellow of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology (FACOG). Outside of his work, Dr. Cardenas enjoys spending time with his wife and children. He stays active through playing tennis, running and has completed several marathons.



Meet the Project Scientist

SALLY ROMERO, PHD, MPH completed her PhD in Public Health from the joint doctoral program here at UC San Diego and San Diego State University and then did her postdoctoral fellowships at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer center, focusing on Integrative Oncology, and at UC San Diego, focusing on Oncofertility.

She is currently a participant in the 2021 National Cancer Institute's Training Institute for Dissemination and Implementation Research in Cancer Facilitated Course to gain expertise in implementation science to supplement her background in public health, integrative oncology, and oncofertility. As health behavior scientist, her research interests are primarily focused on examining and improving symptoms related to cancer survivorship late effects and health behavior outcomes among cancer survivors.

Currently, Dr. Romero works closely with Dr. Irene Su to study oncofertility care delivery for reproductive-aged cancer survivors in a variety of clinical oncology settings, from comprehensive cancer centers to freestanding children's hospitals to rural oncology clinics. With funding from the California Breast Cancer Research Program, they are collaborating with our community-based partner, the Cancer Resource Center of the Desert in El Centro, to conduct a hybrid type 1 effectiveness study to evaluate the effectiveness of a multi-component intervention to improve engagement in goal-concordant oncofertility care among reproductive-aged Latina breast cancer survivors living in El Centro, concurrently with observing and gathering information on how the intervention is implemented. This project has high potential for significant clinical impact on the reproductive health and quality of life of rural, Latina breast cancer survivors.

15 Million Dollar Grant from Mellon to support UC diversity

The **University of California President's Postdoctoral Faculty Program** recently celebrated a major 15 million dollar award from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the largest supporter of arts & humanities in the United States. The program was established almost 40 years ago to foster both gender equality and diversity among UC faculty across the state. Notably, the program is directed by our own **Professor Mark Lawson, PhD**.

The foundation's impactful gift will create the PFP/Mellon Foundation UC-HSI Initiative for Humanities and help facilitate UC's comprehensive efforts to assist young scholars whose research, teaching and service will contribute to diversity and equal opportunity at UC. The initiative will offer promising postdoctoral fellows and early career faculty startup funding, mentorship and career training in their fields of study. The program will also ensure UC-HSI campuses have the resources to effectively recruit fellows in the supported disciplines. Professor Lawson will be the principle investigator for this project. "The UC system's long-term commitment to its innovative and impactful President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program has long served as a model across higher education, demonstrating the requirement of recruiting and retaining outstanding diverse and inclusive faculty to the creation of a healthy academic ecosystem," said Mellon Foundation Senior Program Officer Dianne Harris.

Many researchers might be unfamiliar with the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It was established through the merger of two foundations in 1969: The Avalon Foundation and The Old Dominion Foundation. Those foundations were established by the children of Andrew W. Mellon, Ailsa and Paul, respectively. The foundations continued a tradition of giving established by Mellon during his lifetime, including the original endowment that established the National Gallery of Art. The initial combined endowment in 1969 was more than 270 million dollars. By 2020, good management had allowed it to grow to \$8.2 billion, despite distributing more than \$17.5 billion in funding during that time.

Obstetrics, Gynecology & Reproductive Sciences Research Retreat

For the eleventh year in a row, our department held our research retreat on September 8.

The symposium was organized by Pamela Mellon, PhD, Vice-Chair for Research, with assistance from Louise Laurent MD, PhD, Vice-Chair for Translational Research, and Linda Brubaker, MD, Interim Chair. This tour-de-force of research strength in Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences presented ten department faculty speakers giving impressive talks about their research programs.

The retreat featured a nice balance of presentations of basic, translational, and clinical research. For the second year, the retreat was held on Zoom to conform to the pandemic restrictions. Overall, the format worked very well. Numerous questions followed each talk, and substantial interest was apparent from our department's faculty, staff, and trainees. More than 80 attended and provided robust discussion and interaction. However, we missed our traditional opportunity to network and socialize in person during the coffee breaks and the post-retreat wine and cheese.

The speakers included four new faculty, giving each of them the opportunity to introduce their research programs to the department. The first of these was Cynthia Gyamfi-Bannerman, MD, our new department chair, who presented her ongoing studies of late preterm antenatal corticosteroids. Our new associate professor, Audra Meadows MD, MPH, presented her work on programs for equity in obstetric treatment and community engagement. These important programs aim to ameliorate the inequities in birth outcomes for women of color. Each of the newly appointed Assistant Professors who joined the Center for Perinatal Discovery, Priya Pantham, PhD and Katie Fisch, PhD, presented impressive big data projects focused on establishing urinary markers for pre-eclampsia, and developing a molecular atlas of the human placenta, respectively. Find out more about the latter three researchers included in the **New Faculty** article in this issue of **Fimbria**.

In addition, three of our outstanding basic science researchers, Sasha Kauffman, PhD, Mark Lawson, PhD, and Dwayne Stupack, PhD, presented projects from their exciting research programs. Dr. Kauffman presented work addressing the role of androgens in the neuroendocrine system. Drs. Lawson and Stupack presented work focused on energy sensing in the pituitary gland, and ovarian tumor genomics, respectively.

The basic research was complemented by two more clinical speakers, Steve Plaxe, MD, and Jerry Ballas, MD, who presented their respective clinical research projects on uncommon tumors and placenta accreta spectrum disorders. The work presented this year emphasized not only the quality, but also the amazing breadth of research that is ongoing in the department.

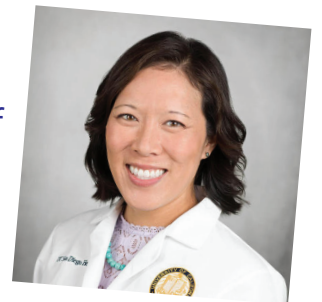
From an education perspective, Dr. Alice Sutton provided insight into the approaches for teaching medical students about pregnancy and racial justice. All-in-all, it was a very exciting day of faculty talks and fruitful interaction. We look forward to next year and a whole new set of speakers!

* * *

Residency Program News

The residency program is rotating its associate director.

Congratulations to
Maureen Ries, MD
for accepting the role of
Associate Director
Residency Program



Thank you to
Ramez Eskander, MD
for his past outstanding
service to the Residency
Program as Associate
Director

UC San Diego
School of Medicine

**Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology,
& Reproductive Sciences**

Women's Reproductive Health Research Career Development Program (WRHR) Faculty Positions

The Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) (<http://obgyn.ucsd.edu>) has two Faculty Career Development Positions available at the Assistant Professor level for MDs in MFM, REI, Gyn/Onc, Family Planning, Female Pelvic Medicine & Reconstructive Surgery, or General Ob/Gyn and is committed to academic excellence and diversity within the faculty, staff and student body.

Initial 2-5 years are supported by a Women's Reproductive Health Research Career Development Center grant from the NICHD. The objective of the career development program is to provide advanced training for outstanding physicians in basic, translational, and bedside research and thereby foster independent physician scientists in the field of Ob/Gyn.

The academic environment at UCSD is outstanding and includes well-funded programs in clinical, translational and basic research with studies at the cellular, molecular, and systems levels. The positions require 75% time for mentored and independent research, with 10-20% clinical and 5-10% teaching effort anticipated. Start dates are 7/1/2022 and 7/1/2023.

Appointments will be at the Assistant Professor level in the Adjunct series. A link to full descriptions of each series is provided for your review:

Adjunct Professor – see: http://ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/apm/apm-280.pdf

Salary is commensurate with qualifications and based on University of California pay scales. Candidates must have a MD and must be board eligible or board certified in OB/GYN, and be eligible for a California medical license or equivalent certification/permit as determined by the Medical Board of California. Review of applications will begin on October 17, 2021 and continue until the positions are filled. Applications must be submitted through the University of California San Diego's Academic Personnel RECRUIT system at: <https://apol-recruit.ucsd.edu/apply/JPF02873>

Salary is commensurate with qualifications and based on the University of California pay scales. Appointments may require candidates to be self-funded. As a member of the Health Sciences Compensation Plan, the appointee should be aware that there are limitations on outside professional activities and clinical moonlighting is expressly prohibited. Additional information can be found here: https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/_files/apm/apm-671.pdf

The University of California, San Diego is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer advancing inclusive excellence. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, covered veteran status, or other protected categories covered by the UC nondiscrimination policy.

Ob/Gyn Faculty Register now for the upcoming FMTP training!

Training is required for all T32 Mentors

November 12, 15, 17, 2021

12pm - 1:30pm

via Zoom

hsfacaffairs@ucsd.edu to register.

FMTP
Faculty Mentor Training Program