Scientific Sessions Shines Light on Precision Medicine

It is my honor to take leadership as Chair of this dynamic Council with Vice Chair Thomas J. Wang, MD, FAHA. We take the reins from two great leaders, Chair Jennifer Hall, PhD, and Vice Chair Caroline Fox, MD, who did a tremendous job leading our Council as we developed new programs around genomic and precision medicine.

We are thrilled that Dr. Hall is the new director of the AHA’s Institute for Precision Cardiovascular Medicine, and we look forward to partnering on efforts around precision medicine.

Over the past year, our Council has been successful in initiating new educational programs in functional genomics and genomics education, a new series in Circulation: Cardiovascular Genetics of clinical genetic testing cases, and important scientific statements around metabolomics, nutrigenomics, functional genomics and genetics education. We extend a hearty congratulations to two FGTB Council members: Emelia Benjamin, MD, and Kiran Musunuru, MD, PhD, MPH, who were recently awarded the AHA Gold Heart Award and the AHA Meritorious Achievement Award, respectively. Dr. Benjamin is a key reason we are a Council, as she has been a passionate scientist, leader, educator and mentor in functional genomics. She was awarded the highest AHA honor of the Gold Heart Award for this passion that extends across a diversity of scientific disciplines. So many of us have benefitted from Dr. Benjamin’s generosity in time and mentorship. Dr. Musunuru is a respected investigator who also is dedicated to education and translation of basic studies into clinical care. He has developed and led innovative programs around functional genomics and genomic medicine, including genomic boot camps that were well-attended and successful at Scientific Sessions 2015. We are honored to have these two FGTB Council members recognized with these respected awards from the AHA.

For Scientific Sessions 2016, our Council has expanded our efforts around precision and genomic medicine, including an innovative new Summit on Precision Medicine, developed and led by Thomas Cappola, MD, Carolyn Ho, MD, and Dr. Musunuru, as well a second year of genomics boot camps led by Dr. Musunuru. We are deeply appreciative of the efforts, enthusiasm and expertise that Drs. Cappola, Ho and Musunuru have brought to these exciting programs at Scientific Sessions.

As a Council, we look forward to another year of development and implementation of exciting and innovative programs, including a new set of scientific statements we are developing focused on the molecular determinants of specific diseases. Don’t forget about the Request for Applications offered through the AHA Institute for Precision Cardiovascular Medicine. Find more information on the Institute’s pages within the Research Programs tab at professional.heart.org.

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Svati Shah, MD, MS, MHS, FAHA

Early Career Day at Sessions

The Early Career Committee for the FGTB Council is busy preparing for Early Career Day at Scientific Sessions 2016.

This year, our programming includes session EC.FGTB.01, a next-generation sequencing classroom session from 3 to 5 p.m., including Svati Shah, MD, MHS, Jennifer Hall, PhD, Thomas Wang, MD, Vasan Ramachandran, MD, DM, FAHA, Seema Mital, MD, FAHA, and Carolyn Ho, MD, who will tackle early career development queries from the audience.

This summer marks our biennial leadership transition, so I want to take this opportunity to thank our previous Chair, Pankaj Arora, MD, for passing along the reins of a vibrant, motivated committee. Heartfelt thanks go to outgoing members Emilia Benjamin, MD, faculty adviser; Almudena Martinez Fernandez, PhD, immediate past Chair; and Connie Wu, PhD, ECC member for numerous contributions. Our immediate past Chair was replaced by a new position, Vice Chair, assumed by ECC member Nabila Bouatia-Naji, PhD, and Dr. Arora is now serving as a faculty adviser. Finally, welcome to our four new ECC members: Andrew Landstrom, MD, PhD, Patrick Lawler, MD, MPH, Konstantinos Stellos, MD, FAHA, and Quinn Wells, MD, PharmD.

With more ECC applicants than positions available each year, we introduced a rigorous process of selecting committee members, and we hope to engage our other recent applicants in future ECC efforts. We now are updating our early career page to reflect these many changes.
Boot Camp Times Two

The FGTB Council organized two next-generation technology Boot Camps at ATVB | PVD Scientific Sessions 2016, May 5-7 in Nashville, Tennessee. Having originally launched the Boot Camp series at last year’s ATVB | PVD Scientific Sessions with a workshop on genome editing, we were excited to have the opportunity to double our portfolio this year. In addition to reprising the genome editing Boot Camp, we added a Boot Camp on RNA sequencing. Both Boot Camps were well attended and garnered positive feedback from participants. Learn more about these Boot Camps by visiting youtube.com/watch?v=AfHHzUcXU6s.

We are planning another two Boot Camps at Scientific Sessions 2016, Nov. 12-16 in New Orleans. On Early Career Day, our Early Career Committee will host a Boot Camp aimed at scientists on next-generation sequencing. In anticipation of the Precision Medicine Summit on Monday, Nov. 14, the Council will organize a special morning Clinical Genomics Boot Camp, which is geared toward clinical practitioners, including physicians, nurses and pharmacists. Come learn the basics of genetics and genomics on Sunday, Nov. 13, and then learn about the cutting-edge developments on Monday, Nov. 14, at the Summit.

Keep an eye out for information about both Boot Camps when you register online for Scientific Sessions. Space is limited, so be sure to sign up early.

Kiran Musunuru, MD, PhD, MPH

Participants in one of the Boot Camps at ATVB | PVD 2016 engage in small-group discussions over online exercises.

FGTB Offers Precision Medicine Summit

The Council on Functional Genomics and Translational Biology is organizing a special Precision Medicine Summit at Scientific Sessions 2016 in New Orleans. With precision medicine much in the news, as well as the recent establishment of the AHA’s Institute for Precision Cardiovascular Medicine, the time was right to host a daylong series of sessions focused on this important and cutting-edge topic.

On Monday, Nov. 14, the summit will open with a keynote session taking a broad overview of precision medicine, with speakers representing the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, patient advocates, surgery, population science and the technology sector. This will be followed by “It’s Not All the Same: Emerging Concepts to Improve Clinical Management,” which will focus on the incorporation of the lessons of big data into the clinic. Next will be a session on “Changing Genetic Destiny: New Approaches to Therapy,” which will focus on technologies that allow for modulation and modification of the genome, as well as the ethical implications. Finally, in recognition of the fact that precision medicine ultimately will touch upon all aspects of cardiovascular medicine and science, the summit will close with a session “Viewpoints Across the AHA and Beyond,” in which representatives of several different AHA Councils will present their perspectives.

We are excited to be part of what we expect will be an exciting look into the near future.