August 26, 2002

Dr. Daniel Bikle, Chair
Academic Senate

Dear Dan:

I am forwarding this request from the School of Medicine to establish the UCSF Center for the Neurobiology of Digestive Diseases. The proposed Center will be a non-ORU Center. The next step of the process is consultation with the UCSF Academic Senate. I hope that this review will be given immediate attention and hope that the response will be within 3 months.

Sincerely,

Dorothy F. Bainton, M.D.
Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs

Enclosures
August 13, 2002

Nigel Bunnett, Ph.D.
Professor of Surgery and Physiology
Box 0660

Dear Nigel,

I have reviewed your proposal to develop a UCSF Center for the Neurobiology of Digestive Diseases. I support the proposal enthusiastically. It accomplishes several goals:

1) Fills a void that has existed at UCSF in gastrointestinal physiology and pathophysiology which, until this proposal, was almost entirely focused on the liver and hepatology;
2) Brings together several basic science and clinical departments, thereby creating a multidisciplinary center of BMS quality;
3) The brain-gut axis and the neurobiology of the GI tract are now recognized to play an important role not only in the motor and secretory functions of the GI tract but also in obesity and immune response of the gut.

I am forwarding a copy of your communications to me to Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Dorothy Bainton. By copy of this letter I am also asking Dr. Bainton for her permission to proceed with the creation of this Center.

Yours sincerely,

Haile T. Debas, M.D.
Dean

cc: Dorothy F. Bainton, M.D.
    Jaclyne W. Boyden
    Neal H. Cohen, M.D.
    Keith R. Yamamoto, Ph.D.
7th August, 2002

Dr. Haile T. Debas,
Dean of the School of Medicine,
University of California, San Francisco

cc Drs. Nancy Ascher and Michael Stryker

Dear Dr. Debas,

I am writing to formally request the establishment of a new Center at the University of California, San Francisco, to be named the "UCSF Center for the Neurobiology of Digestive Diseases." I enclose a detailed proposal that outlines the mission of the Center in research, education, and patient care, and particulars of its administrative organization. This letter briefly summarizes the proposal and our progress to date.

Despite the prevalence of diseases of the gastrointestinal tract and the importance of the nervous system in controlling digestion in health and disease states, there is no focus at UCSF or nationally in neurobiology of the gastrointestinal tract. Therefore, the Center fulfills an unmet need both locally and nationally.

The overall mission of the Center will be to acquire new knowledge about the contribution of the nervous system to the control of digestion and to translate this basic knowledge into the diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal diseases. The Center will have several specific missions.

To provide a focus of basic and clinical research in the neurobiology of digestion at UCSF and nationally.
To provide a focus for education of residents, clinical fellows, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students, and medical students in gastrointestinal neurobiology.
To provide a multidisciplinary and interdepartmental environment that fosters interactions between basic and clinical scientists and promotes the translation of basic knowledge into patient care.
To provide a focus of clinical expertise in the role of the nervous system in digestive diseases.

Thus, the Center will capitalize on existing strengths at UCSF in neuroscience and digestive diseases and will provide a focus for recruitment of new faculty in basic and clinical sciences.
During the past six months, the following has been accomplished.

I have consulted widely with the Deans, the Chairs of basic and clinical departments, and with numerous faculty. Without exception, I have received overwhelming support for the Center. In particular, the Departments of Surgery and Physiology have provided resources for recruitment, laboratory space and funding for a seminar program. I enclose letters of support from UCSF faculty.

An Advisory Board comprised of faculty from basic and clinical departments has been established. The Board includes the Dean, Chairs of five Departments, and faculty from Physiology, Anatomy, Surgery, Pathology and Medicine. It also includes faculty from UC Berkeley and Davis. In total there are twenty nine faculty on the Board. The Board meets monthly and has focussed the research and educational program.

We are actively recruiting three new faculty to the Center with support from PIBS (Neuroscience) and BMS.

We have applied to the Basbaum/Hauser committee for laboratory space for the Center at UCSF. The proposal was very well received.

We have established a seminar program.

The Center is developing an elective course for fourth year medical students.

We are negotiating funding from the NIH and from industry.

Thank you for considering this request to establish the Center for the Neurobiology of Digestive Diseases. I believe that the Center will make an important contribution to research, education and patient care at UCSF.

Yours sincerely,

Nigel Bunnett, Ph.D.
Professor of Surgery and Physiology,
Vice Chair of Surgery
TO:      Jon Levine, Chair – Committee on Research
         Arnold Kahn, Chair – Academic Planning and Budget
         Burt Feuerstein, Chair – Graduate Council

FROM:    Tamara Maimon, Director

SUBJECT: Creation of Task Force – Review of Proposal Non-ORU Center for the Neurobiology of Digestive Diseases

DATE:    October 24, 2002

Attached, please find a communication from Vice Chancellor Bainton requesting that the Academic Senate review the request from the School of Medicine to establish the UCSF Center for the Neurobiology of Digestive Diseases.

On behalf of Chair Bikle, a Task Force has been created to review and comment on this proposal. The Task Force will consist of two members from each of your committees, with the Committee on Research as the Chair. Kindly identify two members to participate on this Task Force and transmit a formal report with your findings and recommendations no later than November 8, 2002. Elizabeth Langdon-Gray, Senate Analyst for the Committee on Research will provide any necessary assistance.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

cc:      Elizabeth Langdon-Gray
         Gretchen Gende
         Judy Dang
         Karen Nelson
         Len Zegans
UCSF CENTER FOR THE NEUROBIOLOGY OF DIGESTIVE DISEASES

NEED FOR THE CENTER

Diseases of the digestive system are common and debilitating. Functional bowel disorders (irritable bowel syndrome, secretory and motor disorders, reflux diseases), inflammatory diseases (inflammatory bowel disease, gastritis, pancreatitis), disorders of the intrinsic and extrinsic nervous systems (Hirschsprung's disease, visceral pain), and defects in the control of food intake (obesity) have a major impact on health, are poorly understood, and current therapies are sub-optimal. Abnormalities in the nervous system of the digestive tract are likely to underlie these disorders.

The digestive tract is the most richly innervated organ system. Nerves within the gastrointestinal tract or from the central nervous system regulate all aspects of digestion (secretion, motility, mucosal defense) and play a critical role in disease. An understanding of the role of the nervous system of the gastrointestinal tract in health and disease states will advance our understanding of the process of digestion and facilitate the development of new treatments for debilitating diseases.

There is no major research focus on the regulation of the gastrointestinal tract at the University of California, San Francisco. Moreover, there is no Digestive Disease Center in the USA that examines the role of the nervous system in disease. The establishment of a Center for the Neurobiology of Digestive Diseases (CNDD) at UCSF will fulfill unmet needs both locally and nationally.

MISSION OF THE CENTER

The overall mission of the CNDD will be to acquire new knowledge about the contribution of the nervous system to the control of digestion and to translate this basic knowledge into the diagnosis and treatment of gastrointestinal diseases.

The Center will have several specific missions:

To provide a focus of basic and clinical research in the neurobiology of digestion at UCSF and nationally.
To provide a focus for education of residents, clinical fellows, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and medical students in gastrointestinal neurobiology.
To provide a multidisciplinary and interdepartmental environment that fosters interactions between basic and clinical scientists and promotes the translation of basic knowledge into patient care.
To provide a focus of clinical expertise in the role of the nervous system in digestive diseases.
SCIENTIFIC DIRECTION OF THE CENTER: FUSION OF BASIC AND CLINICAL RESEARCH

The CNDD will provide a multidisciplinary and interdepartmental environment – both intellectual and physical – that fosters interactions between basic scientists, clinical scientists, clinicians and students who are interested in neurobiology of the gastrointestinal tract. It will thereby promote the translation of basic knowledge into patient care.

Basic areas of research will include the enteric nervous system and its development, gut hormones, interactions between the brain and the gut, including mechanisms of visceral pain and stress-related disorders, neuro-immune interactions, and regulation of food intake. There is expertise in some of these areas at UCSF, and the Center will thus provide a focus for interaction between existing faculty. Other areas will be the focus for the recruitment of new faculty.

Clinical research will focus on diseases where there is an established and important neural component, including functional bowel disorders (irritable bowel syndrome, reflux diseases, motor disturbances), inflammatory diseases (inflammatory bowel disease, gastritis, pancreatitis), visceral pain, and disorders of motility and secretion. Clinical studies will also capitalize on interdisciplinary collaborations in the basic and clinical sciences. Activities will include translational studies, basic physiology studies in humans, observational and controlled clinical trials, and health services research. A major focus of the clinical research will be to apply discoveries in the basic sciences to investigation of human physiology. Studies of normal and abnormal gastrointestinal function - such as motility, secretion and pain perception - will take advantage of existing facilities in the Center for the Study of Motility and Secretion, the General Clinical Research Center, the Endoscopy Unit, the Radiology Department, and the Inflammatory Bowel Disease Center. Clinical studies will range from retrospective studies to prospective studies of diagnostic interventions, novel medical treatments and promising endoscopic or surgical therapies. Collaboration will be fostered with members of the Epidemiology and Biostatistics faculty to complement the basic and clinical studies pursued in the Center with population-based studies and health services research focused on gastrointestinal disorders.

EDUCATIONAL DIRECTION OF THE CENTER

The CNDD will promote the education of residents, clinical fellows, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students and medical students in neurobiology of the digestive system in health and disease states. Members will be expected to participate in graduate programs at UCSF and to be effective mentors of junior faculty, residents, fellows and students. Activities will include:

Training clinical fellows and residents. The Center will be a focus for training grants in surgery and gastroenterology for clinical fellows and residents. The center already runs a training grant in Gastrointestinal Surgery. The Center will also pursue funding to allow trainees to complete formal training in Biostatistics and Epidemiology.
Post-doctoral fellows and junior faculty. The Center will provide "seed money" for junior investigators' research programs.

Medical student education. The Center will sponsor an elective program for fourth year medical students entitled: "The Physiological Basis of Medicine". The intent of the elective will be to emphasize to students how modern research in physiology and pharmacology has had a profound influence on the diagnosis and treatment of human disease. The elective will expose students to a multidisciplinary environment where there are meaningful interactions between scientists and clinicians. It will thus provide a valuable adjunct to the formal courses of the first two years of the new medical curriculum.

Seminar program. A seminar program, which is already funded for three years by the Department of Physiology, will raise the awareness of the Center at UCSF. Seminars will be co-sponsored by the Center and the BMS and Neuroscience programs.

ORGANIZATION OF THE CENTER

The Center will have the following components:

- **Director.** The Director (Nigel W. Bunnett, Ph.D.) will be responsible for the scientific, educational and administrative missions of the Center. The Director will also serve as Principal Investigator on a National Institutes of Health Center Grant.
- **Clinical Director.** The Clinical Director will be responsible for the clinical, patient-based mission of the Center, for translational research, and for the education of clinical fellows.
- **Core Members.** Core Members will be UCSF faculty with scientific interests in the area of gastrointestinal biology who are primarily associated with Center. The Center may provide Core Members with laboratory space, access to Center facilities, and administrative support.
- **Associate Members.** Associate Members will be faculty at UCSF or elsewhere with scientific interests in the area of gastrointestinal biology and with close scientific interactions with the Core Members.
- **Trainee Members.** Trainee Members will be junior faculty and senior fellows without independent funding who would be expected to become Core or Associate Members.
- **Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee of Core and Associate Members will advise the Director and Clinical Director, and make recommendations about new policies, programs, recruitment and major financial matters.

**External Advisory Committee.** The External Advisory Committee will comprise an independent group of prominent investigators from outside UCSF. They will be appointed by the Director with the concurrence of the Executive Committee. The charge of the External Advisory Committee will be to:

- Advise the Director about important policies, research, personnel and institutional matters.
- Provide new insights into gastrointestinal research to maintain the Center at the forefront, both nationally and internationally.
- Serve as advocates for the Center nationally, internationally and at the NIH.
Advisory Committee. An Advisory Committee has been established to advise the Director on the scientific and clinical focus of the Center and on areas of recruitment. The following faculty serve on an Advisory Committee.

- Luc Jasmin, M.D., Ph.D.
- David Julius, Ph.D.
- Kimberley Kirkwood, M.D.
- Uri Ladabaum, M.D.
- Jon Levine, M.D., Ph.D.
- Marco G. Patti, M.D.
- Donald Payan, M.D.
- Marvin Sleisenger, M.D.
- Michael Stryker, Ph.D.
- John Terdiman, M.D.
- Madhulika Varma, M.D.
- Julia Voice, Ph.D.
- Robert Warren, M.D.

External members

Dr. Greg Aponte, Ph.D. UC Berkeley
Dr. Kent Lloyd, DVM, Ph.D., UC Davis
Dr. Helen Raybould, Ph.D., UC Davis

RECRUITMENT

Three new Core Members will be recruited by the following mechanism

Advertisement

The UCSF Center for the Neurobiology of Digestive Disease invites applications or nominations for up to three faculty positions at the level of Assistant, Associate or Full Professor.

The Center is a new initiative at the University of California, San Francisco with the mission to acquire knowledge about the molecular, cellular and physiological processes that control gastrointestinal function and to translate this knowledge into the treatment of disease. The Center provides a stimulating and multi-disciplinary environment with close interactions among basic and clinical scientists.

The principal research focus is on neural regulation of gastrointestinal and pancreatic function and on the contribution of the nervous system to disorders of secretion and motility, inflammation and pain.
We will appoint outstanding scientists with research interests including but not limited to the enteric nervous system and its development, gut hormones, brain-gut interactions, visceral sensation and pain, neuro-immune interactions, and control of food intake.

Appointments will be made in the appropriate basic or clinical departments and in the Graduate Programs in Biomedical Science or Neuroscience. The level of appointment will be commensurate with experience.

Candidates should have (1) a Ph.D. or M.D. degree or equivalent; (2) an excellent record of and potential for scholarly activity, publications and funding; and (3) a commitment to medical and graduate education.

Applicants should send a curriculum vitae, a statement of their research interests, and arrange for three letters of recommendation to be sent to Nigel Bunnett, Head of Search Committee, UCSF, Rm. C317, 521 Parnassus Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94143-0660.

Resources

Appointments will be in the In Residence Series
Resources will be provided by Surgery, Physiology and the Dean's Office
Surgery and Physiology will provide ~1,000 square feet of laboratory space for Assistant Professors
Matching funds will be provided by Surgery and Physiology

Mechanism

We propose a broadly defined search in the general area of neural regulation of gastrointestinal function.
We have appointed one search committee with membership that is acceptable to both BMS and Neuroscience Graduate Programs.
Members of the search committee include faculty from basic and clinical departments, and include members of the Center, and representatives from the BMS and Neuroscience Graduate Programs. At least 50% of the membership is affiliated with one of these programs and there are at least two members who do not have primary appointments in Departments initiating the search (Physiology and Surgery). Thus, the search mechanism is acceptable to PIBS and BMS.
Posts will be advertised in Nature and Science in August/September.

Search committee membership

Nigel Bunnett (Surgery and Physiology - BMS)
Jon Levine (Medicine - Neuroscience/BMS)
Mary Dallman (Physiology - Neuroscience/BMS)
Allan Basbaum (Anatomy - Neuroscience/BMS)
David Bredt (Physiology - Neuroscience/BMS)
Larry Tecott (Psychiatry - BMS)
LABORATORY SPACE FOR THE CENTER

A detailed proposal for contiguous laboratory space has been made to the Basbaum/Hauser committee.

FUNDING OF THE GASTROINTESTINAL RESEARCH CENTER

Multiple sources of funding are being pursued.

NIH Center Grant. The NIH intends to fund new digestive disease centers. We will apply for a Center Grant within the first two years.

NIH Program Project Grant. Recruitment will be made to synergize and expand existing research programs. We will apply for a Program Project Grant within three years.

NIH RO1 Grants. All Members will be expected to be fully funded by the NIH.

Industry. The Center’s focus on digestive diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome will attract substantive industry funding.

Private donors. We will aggressively seek funding from donors. The focus on digestive diseases will facilitate fund raising.