

Keck School of Medicine of USC

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Interim Dean

To: KSOM Faculty and Staff

From: Laura Mosqueda, MD *Laura Mosqueda, M.D.*
Interim Dean, Keck School of Medicine

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Subject: Winners of the FY18 Dean's Pilot Funding Program

Currently in the second year of its existence, the Dean's Pilot Funding Program received some top-notch applications this year. Out of 60 applications, 9.5 applications were chosen to be funded with one being co-funded. Up to \$37,000 is awarded to the PI, which is composed of a 2:1 ratio of funds from the Dean's office and the PI's home department. As you can see from the numbers, the competition was quite fierce, and the funding decisions were not easy ones. With the gracious help of reviewers from both inside and outside of KSOM as well as a committed final review steering committee, the following applications were chosen to be funded through the Dean's Pilot Funding Program in FY18:

- **Shohreh Farzan**, PhD and **Jill Johnston**, PhD: "Disappearing Seas: The Consequences of Wind-blown Dust on Children's Health"
- **Raymond Goldsworthy**, PhD: "Improving Sound Processing for Bilateral Cochlear Implants"
- **Brian Lee**, MD, PhD: "Identifying Neurophysiological Biomarkers of Voluntary Movement Planning, Initiation, and Inhibition in the Basal Ganglia of Patients with Parkinson's Disease"
- **Leda Chatzi**, MD, PhD: "Developmental Origins of Child Liver Injury: The Effect of Early Life Environmental Exposures"
- **Benjamin Xu**, MD, PhD: "Predictive Models for Angle Closure Disease Based on Anterior Segment Optical Coherence Tomography Measurements"
- **Jesse Berry**, MD: "Analysis of Chromosomal Changes and Driver Genes in the Aqueous Humor of Retinoblastoma Eyes: The Surrogate Tumor Biopsy"
- **Sanjay Arora**, MD: "Leveraging Social Media to Encourage Safe Opioid Use and Disposal Among Adolescents in the ED"

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- **Hossein Ameri**, MD, PhD: “Evaluating the Efficacy of Lipofectamine-CRISPR-Cas9 in Silencing VEGF-A Gene in vitro”
- **Brian Luna**, PhD: “Environmental Antibiotic-Resistance Transmission In Mice”
- **Meng Law**, MD: “Ultrahigh Field 7T MRI of Brain Perivascular Spaces, CSF Dysregulation, Vascular Cognitive Impairment Dementia and Alzheimer's Disease”

Started in 2016, the Dean’s Pilot Funding Program funds pilot projects from full-time KSOM or CHLA faculty who are involved in initial explorations of new research areas. Priority is given to projects that will obtain feasibility data, which will lead to submission of NIH R-series or other major research proposals. Eligible faculty members include junior faculty members who are establishing an independent research program, established investigators who are transitioning into a new phase of research and two or more established investigators from different disciplines who are proposing a new collaboration.

Please join me in congratulating this year’s winners of the Dean’s Pilot Funding Program. And thank you to all those who participated this year – please know that you are an integral part of keeping KSOM’s research portfolio robust and diverse.