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**Obstetrics, Gynecology &
Reproductive Sciences**

Independent Citizens Oversight Committee
Scientific Staff
California Institute for Regenerative Medicine

October 17, 2014

Dear Members of the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee and CIRM
Scientific Staff:

I am writing with regard to the CIRM Bridges to Stem Cell Research funding mechanism. I have been closely involved with four of the awardees: San Francisco State University, Humboldt State University, Berkeley City College and City College of San Francisco. I have helped my colleagues at these institutions place their students in the labs of top stem cell researchers who are UCSF Professors. I have also taught them in our courses. It is very hard for me to put into words the transformative experience that the Bridges Program provides to trainees. They enter UCSF very uncertain of their place in a major research enterprise. To a person, they leave with boundless enthusiasm for a career dedicated to advancing the goals of the CIRM research agenda. Moreover, this life-changing experience is being offered to students who have traditionally not had these sorts of opportunities, making the program even more valuable. How many training experiences are truly transformative, setting students on a completely new life path while advancing the work of the funding agency? In my thirty years of experience, with many numerous training mechanisms, the CIRM Bridges Program is unique in this regard. I urge you to continue supporting this initiative, which offers unprecedented value in terms of the dollars that are spent.

Sincerely,

Susan J. Fisher, Ph.D.
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Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology and Reproductive Sciences
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The Eli & Edythe Broad Center for Regeneration Medicine and Stem Cell
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From: Carmen R Domingo <cdomingo@sfsu.edu>
Date: Sat, 18 Oct 2014 06:09:16 +0000
To: Oswald Steward <osteward@uci.edu>
Subject: CIRM Bridges program and ICOC meeting

Dear Dr. Steward,

I am writing to you as a member of the ICOC committee. I communicated with Dr. Susan Fisher at UCSF about the precarious situation that the CIRM Bridges program is in. The majority of our CIRM Bridges scholars have had the pleasure of obtaining training at UCSF. Since 2009, 70 SFSU CIRM Bridges students have been a part of this program (50 have completed the program and 20 are in the pipeline). Of the 70 students, 51 have been or are working with labs at UCSF (below is a list of those labs). They have all been terrific mentors and supporters of the program. Nearly 100% of the students who graduated this program (n=49/50) were either admitted into PhD or MD or health-related programs or found employment within a year of graduating. I don't know of another program that has been so successful in providing students with such career prospects. This will be a huge loss for us.

In the hopes of advocating for the continuation of this program, I have attached Susan's letter of support. Can you share this with the ICOC committee?

Thank you and let me know if there are other things we can do to help convince the ICOC and ultimately, the President of CIRM, of the important impact of this program on the training of future stem scientists and importantly, scientists that reflect the diversity of our State.

best wishes,
Carmen

UCSF CIRM Bridges Mentors

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Harold Bernstein
John Rubenstein
Miguel Ramalho-Santos
Ophir Klein
Susan Lynch
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Robert Blelloch
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Paolo Rinaudo
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Geeta Narlikar
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