
Dean of UC Davis School of Medicine Joins Stem Cell Agency Board

Posted: August 7, 2020

Oakland, CA – Growing up in Indiana, Allison Brashear says medicine was often a topic of conversation at the family dinner table. Her father was a physician and her mother had a PhD in marriage and family therapy and she says that's where she learned the importance of patient-centered care and the need to be an advocate for women. She has carried those lessons with her throughout her career. Now she's an MD with an MBA and the Dean of the UC Davis School of Medicine, and the newest member of the Board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM).

"Patient-centered care is at the core of all that we do at CIRM, so Dr. Brashear is an excellent addition to the team," says Jonathan Thomas, JD, PhD, Chair of the CIRM Board. "She has an extraordinary reputation as a physician and researcher and also as a powerful advocate for women in science. We are delighted to have her join us."

Dr. Brashear is an internationally renowned expert in movement disorders, particularly a group of rare neurologic disorders called ATP1A3-related diseases. This group includes a unique genetic form of Parkinsonism known as Rapid Onset Dystonia Parkinsonism, or RDP. RDP was first reported in 1993 by Dr. Brashear and her research team about a family from the Midwest and now is known worldwide as RDP, which is caused by mutations in the sodium potassium pump. She is also the author of a pivotal paper on the use of botulinum toxin in spasticity published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2002.

She was appointed Dean of the School of Medicine at UC Davis after spending 14 years as Chair of Neurology at Wake Forest. She says it was a great honor leading the department, and also a great challenge. "I became chair when I was 44 and was the only woman chair for four years. When I was appointed to the Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center Board of Directors as one of two faculty, I was the first and only woman director on the board. It's still not uncommon for me to walk into a room and be the only woman. Ensuring that there is appropriate support for women leaders is really important for me."

Prior to her leadership role at Wake Forest she was at Indiana University School of Medicine where she got her MD, completed a residency in neurology and later became a tenured professor of neurology.

Dr. Brashear says she is honored to join the CIRM Board: "CIRM's innovative work offers hope to patients suffering from both rare and common diseases. I am honored to join a group that is focused on improving the health of all Californians through partnerships between communities and researchers to deliver groundbreaking health care treatments."

Having only recently joined UC Davis, Dr. Brashear says she looks forward to exploring California with her husband, their two college-aged children and their two rescue dogs when the pandemic subsides.

About CIRM

At CIRM, we never forget that we were created by the people of California to accelerate stem cell treatments to patients with unmet medical needs, and act with a sense of urgency to succeed in that mission.

To meet this challenge, our team of highly trained and experienced professionals actively partners with both academia and industry in a hands-on, entrepreneurial environment to fast track the development of today's most promising stem cell technologies.

With \$3 billion in funding and approximately 300 active stem cell programs in our portfolio, CIRM is the world's largest institution dedicated to helping people by bringing the future of cellular medicine closer to reality.

For more information go to www.cirm.ca.gov