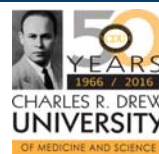


# CDU CANCER RESEARCH

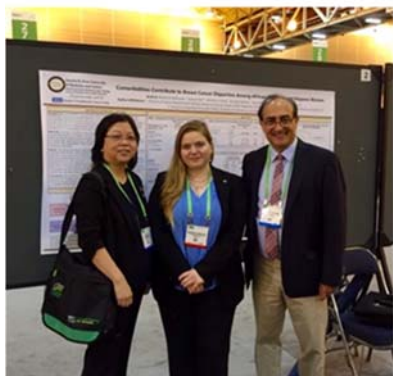
CDU News Supplement

| Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

JUNE 2016



## Division of Cancer Research and Training represents CDU at the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2016



Dr. Jay Vadgama and his team attended the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Annual Meeting 2016 representing cancer health disparities research from CDU.

Dr. Yanyuan Wu, Dr. Piwen Wang and Ms. Marianna Sarkissyan had poster presentations at the scientific gathering. Dr. Yanyuan Wu presented her research on “A83-01 inhibits TGF- $\beta$ /Smad3 and Wnt/ $\beta$ -catenin-mediated EMT and tumor metastasis in HER2-overexpressing breast cancer cells”, Dr. Piwen Wang – “A lignan compound arctigenin inhibits prostate tumor growth in vitro and in vivo” and Ms. Marianna Sarkissyan presentation was titled “Comorbidities contribute to breast cancer disparities among African-American and Hispanic women.”

The CDU team attended Vice President Joe Biden’s remarks at “Highlights 2016: Vision for the Future” Plenary Session on moonshot cure for cancer. The AACR’s annual meeting took place in New Orleans, LA gathering more than 4 000 scientist from all over the world to discuss “Delivering Cures through Cancer Science”. The theme reinforced the vital link needed between research and advances in patient care. Notably, VP Biden discussed his vision of the steps that could be taken now to accelerate the rate of cancer cure discovery and delivery to patients. These steps included the not only re-aligning incentives in cancer research but also the importance of removing political barriers at local and federal levels.

Dr. Vadgama summarized the major priority points of VP Biden’s speech as:

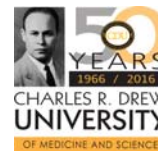
- Promoting greater “team science” approaches in cancer research which include partnerships between academic, private, federal, and community organizations. This also includes open access to data sharing and collaborations to enhance the rate of discovery and validation.
- Engaging and supporting the younger generation of scientists at earlier stage in their career for high risk/high reward research.
- Streamlining the grant application and funding cycles within the federal government.
- Centering on patient care and supporting quality of research, not quantity, which contributes directly to patient health. Measuring progress by successes in actual patient health vs. traditional measures likes publications.
- Involving patients earlier into clinical trial design to increase participation and making new therapy options available to patients the norm.

“VP Biden’s vision for accelerating the discovery of cures and delivery of cures to patients is truly a momentous event in cancer research,” said Dr. Vadgama. “It is more imperative than ever to make sure that directing these research efforts towards bridging cancer health disparities for our underserved communities also remains a priority.” More photos on [page 3](#).

# CDU RESEARCH NEWS BRIEFS

Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science

JUNE 2016



## Dr. Pranabananda Dutta presents at the Division of Cancer Research and Trainings' Weekly Cancer Journal Club Meeting

Dr. Pranabananda Dutta, Post-Doctoral fellow in the CDU/UCLA Cancer Center Partnership to Eliminate Health Disparities presented at the Division's weekly Cancer Journal Club. Dr. Dutta presented an article titled, "Blocking c-Met-mediated PARP1



phosphorylation enhances anti-tumor effects of PARP inhibitors". The Cancer Journal Club series is designed to gather audience from clinicians, researchers, post-doctoral fellows, community members, and students from the undergraduate and graduate level to discuss cancer disparities research and new findings. Dr. Dutta is one of the newest team members and joined Dr. Vadgama's lab in March 2016 investigating the roles of chemokines in triple negative breast cancer.

Dr. Dutta received his Ph.D. in genetics from the University of Rochester. During his work, he focused on Polycomb mediated genetic repression. Prior to joining Dr. Vadgama's lab, Dr. Dutta worked with Dr. Willis Li at the University of California San Diego as a postdoctoral fellow. At UCSD he studied how unphosphorylated STAT3 affects tumorigenic potential in lung cancer. Dr. Dutta interests are in genetic regulatory mechanisms underlying carcinogenesis that influence disease outcome in relation to health disparities. He is one of many researchers who take part in the Journal Club that is used as a platform for weekly presentations and discussions on the latest research findings in cancer.

## Division of Cancer Research and Training student trainee, Mrs. Nikki Orr, presents at weekly Cancer Journal Club Meeting

Mrs. Nikki Orr, CDU post-baccalaureate student and research intern in the Division of



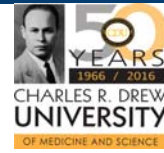
Cancer Research and Training recently completed her training in Vadgama Lab. As part of her experience, Mrs. Orr was invited as a presenter to the Cancer Journal Club. Mrs. Orr presented the article titled, "Affinity-Tuned ErbB2 or EGFR Chimeric Antigen Receptor T Cells Exhibit an Increased Therapeutic Index against Tumors in Mice." During her time in the Division,

Mrs. Nikki Orr worked under the mentorship of Dr. Yanyuan Wu, where she investigated the "Role of Smad3 in TGF- $\beta$  induced EMT in HER2-overexpressing breast cancer". This project builds on previous studies from the Division that have shown that HER2+ breast cancer (an aggressive subtype of breast cancer) disproportionately affects underrepresented women and contributes to increased mortality due to metastasis. The JC presentation allowed Mrs. Orr to critically review scientific literature and tie in the information with her own research experience. After her outstanding internship in the Division, Mrs. Orr was sponsored by Dr. Jay Vadgama and the CDU/UCLA Cancer Center Partnership to attend the upcoming Partnerships to Advance Cancer Health Equity (PACHE) meeting in Rockville, MD. PACHE is organized by the Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities (CRCHD) at the National Cancer Institute as part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Mrs. Orr will be co-presenting a poster with her mentor and other colleagues from the Division, as well as learning about cancer disparities research conducted nationally through NCI.

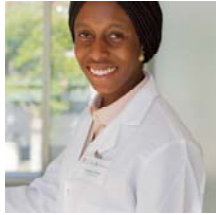
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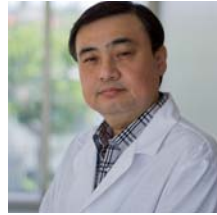
## Innovative Researchers at CDU



Ms. Nwamaka Amobi



Mr. Trevor Anesi



Dr. Steve Chung



Mrs. Nikki Orr

## Dr. Juana Gatson was a guest panelist at the Inaugural Healthy Earth Music & Arts Festival in Los Angeles

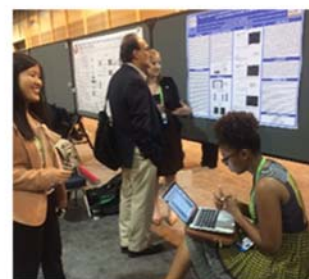
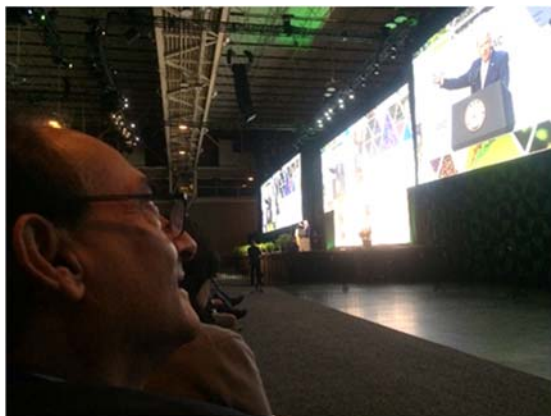


Dr. Juana Gatson was invited to discuss the impact of cancer on communities in South Los Angeles as a guest for the "Forever Young" panel at the Healthy Earth Music & Arts Festival in Los Angeles' historic Leimert Park recently.

Dr. Gatson, community health educator in the CDU/UCLA Cancer Center Partnership at CDU, discussed the importance of working collectively to create healthier communities for families.

Dr. Gatson also discussed the importance of developing strategies that employ "the buddy system," to ensure we are encouraging one another to engage in healthy living habits that help prevent cancer. The CDU/UCLA Cancer Center Partnership with Principal Investigator Dr. Jay Vadgama is funded by NIH/NCI. The studies conducted in the Center include basic laboratory research, research education and training, community outreach, and clinical research activities.

Events like the Healthy Earth Music and Arts festival play a role in the battle against cancer, providing informative spaces for community to be entertained and engaged around important health issues at the same time.



## More photos of CDU's Division of Cancer Research and Training Trip to the AACR Annual Meeting

Here are a few more shots from the Division of Cancer Research and Training's journey to the American Association for Cancer Research Annual Meeting, continued from the first page. At the top, Dr. Jay Vadgama is attentive to the presentation by Vice President Joseph Biden. Top right: Vice President Biden, middle photo: Dr. Vadgama with CDU research students and bottom Dr. Yanyuan Wu gives a presentation.

