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Campus News May 12, 2017

2017 Founders Day Awards Recognize Extraordinary Public Service, University Management

By [Mike Billings](#)



The 2017 Founders Day awardees (from left) Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, PhD, MD, MAS; Jane Wong; Michael Nordberg, MPA/HSA; Alexandrina Eppel; Travis Clark; Khang Nguyen; Wayne Cheung; Jeselle Abilla, BSN, RN; Heyman Oo, MD, MPH; Peter Cooch, MD; and Robert Pizzi. *Photo by Susan Merrell*

This year's UCSF Founders Day Awards were given to 12 faculty, staff and students to recognize their contributions in the areas of public service, exceptional service to UC San Francisco and excellence in nursing.

The awardees were honored during a luncheon Friday that showcased their commitment to causes around the world and their work at UCSF.

"I view this event as one of our great traditions; a wonderful time for us all to gather together and recognize our outstanding community; to reflect on some of our remarkable accomplishments over the past year; and to acknowledge some exemplary individuals who help make this institution the incredible place that it is," said Chancellor [Sam Hawgood](#), MBBS, in his opening remarks.

The chancellor touched on a number of accomplishments and University highlights, noting faculty awards, educational advancements and major partnerships. Hawgood also noted the recent advocacy and commitment on topics that include inclusion, immigration and supporting federal research funding.

"Not only is UCSF known for our outstanding research, education and clinical care, but we are all part of an inspiring community of individuals committed to improving the lives of others," Hawgood said.

The following awards were given for 2017:

Chancellor Award for Public Service

Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, PhD, MD, MAS

Professor at the School of Medicine and director of the UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations at Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital



Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo, PhD, MD, MAS

The Chancellor Award for Public Service for faculty was awarded to [Kirsten Bibbins-Domingo](#), PhD, MD, MAS, who is the director of the [UCSF Center for Vulnerable Populations](#). She has made numerous contributions to advancing knowledge about science and evidence-based medicine. A large contribution in this area is serving as a member of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, which is a national, independent body of volunteer experts that reviews scientific evidence and creates evidence-based guidelines related to prevention in clinical practice.

“Kirsten has translated her skill and expertise as a clinician, researcher, and teacher into remarkable public service as leader of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force,” said [Andrew Bindman](#), MD, in nominating her. “In doing so she has expanded the national discussion about the science of clinical prevention and ensured that the evidence

available to support shared decision-making between patients and clinicians reflects the diversity of the patient population.”

Wayne Cheung

Business Analyst, UCSF Campus Life Services



Wayne Cheung

The Chancellor Award for Public Service for staff was awarded to Wayne Cheung, a senior business systems analyst in UCSF's Campus Life Services. Cheung's work outside of UCSF includes establishing and leading the Nepal Education Initiative Organization (NEIO), which is a charitable organization that works to facilitate modern education by building schools for children in geographically disadvantaged regions. Since NEIO's founding in 2008, it has constructed four buildings and 16 classrooms to

serve more than 1,000 students as well as other physical structures, including libraries and technology labs.

“Wayne aspires to be a strong member of society by contributing to the greater good,” said Timmy Ta, manager of business and technology solutions, in nominating Cheung. “His happiness does not lie in the grandeur of monetary gains, but rather it is ignited by the smiles of the Nepalese children.”

Heyman Oo, MD, MPH; and Peter Cooch, MD

Pediatric Residents in the UCSF School of Medicine



Peter Cooch (left), MD, and Heyman Oo, MD, MPH

The Chancellor Award for Public Service for students was co-awarded to Heyman Oo, MD, MPH, and Peter Cooch, MD, both of whom are pediatric residents in the UCSF

School of Medicine. The two have shown exemplary public service through their work to develop, implement and evaluate FUERTE, a school-based group mental health intervention for newly arrived Latino migrant youth who have experienced trauma. The program to date has served 34 youth in three high schools, and an evaluation process has demonstrated a reduction in symptoms of depression and anxiety among program participants.

In addition to the work on the FUERTE program, Oo and Cooch have engaged in advocacy for immigrant youth at the national level including their involvement in the American Academy of Pediatrics Immigrant Health Interest Group.

“Dr. Oo and Dr. Cooch are extremely compassionate physicians with a strong commitment to improving the health of immigrant youth who have experienced trauma,” said [Amy Beck](#), assistant clinical professor of pediatrics, in nominating the two. “They have devoted themselves to service and advocacy efforts for this population on both the local and national levels and the results of their efforts are tremendously impressive. What is even more remarkable, and a true testament to their devotion to service, is that they have accomplished all of this work during a grueling clinical residency program.”

Thomas N. Burbridge Award (Staff)

Coleen Kivlahan, MD, MSPH

Executive Director of Primary Care, UCSF Health

The Thomas N. Burbridge Award was given to [Coleen Kivlahan](#), MD, MSPH, professor of family and community medicine and the executive medical director of primary care services for UCSF Health, for her work in asylum medicine and heroic efforts as a clinician and educator in addressing torture and other human rights violations. Kivlahan’s volunteer work in asylum medicine has put her at the frontline of regions in Africa and the Middle East embroiled in civil wars. She has made many trips to the Syrian border to

train Syrian physicians in the forensic evaluation of torture, working in partnership with these physicians to create curricula on human rights law, injury identification, and international documentation standards. Together they have produced reports for international courts to be used in any eventual prosecution of President Bashar al-Assad and his designees.

“Coleen’s volunteer work in asylum medicine and human rights violations is inspiring and humbling,” said [Kevin Grumbach](#), MD, professor and chair of family and community medicine, in nominating Kivlahan. “In these times of turmoil across the globe and in our own nation’s approach to refugees and asylum seekers, Coleen’s bravery and remarkable public service provides a clarion example of what it means to be a true humanitarian.”

Kivlahan was unable to attend the awards ceremony due to attending a conference. Her husband, David Higginbotham, accepted the award on her behalf.

Chancellor Award for Exceptional University Management

Alexsandrina Eppel

Administrative Director, Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology



Alexsandrina Eppel

Alexsandrina Eppel is an administrative director in the Department of Gastroenterology and Hepatology, but she also is a mentor and leader to her peers. Through responsiveness and follow-through on projects, Eppel has become a role model for others to have the same work ethic. Her enthusiasm even carried forward as she took on additional duties this last year in the Department of Neurology.

“She is an energetic and enthusiastic manager who is able to relate to her team and inspire them,” said Jennifer Dearman, director of ambulatory administration, in nominating Eppel. “She is highly regarded by all of her provider partners, her staff and her peers.”

Michael Nordberg

Associate Dean. Finance and Administration in School of Pharmacy



Michael Nordberg, MPA/HSA

[Michael Nordberg](#), MPA/HSA, has served as a leader at UCSF for 25 years, most recently as the associate dean of finance and administration in the School of Pharmacy since 2011. His leadership in that role has emerged on several fronts, including day-to-day management and through longer-term projects. His innovative thinking led the school to be a leader in green technology and to overhaul the school's website – a key mode of communications for the School of Pharmacy. In addition, Nordberg is widely known for being calm, collected and responsive even when dealing with emergency situations.

"A key member of the Dean's Leadership Group, Michael is a well-respected, valued leader of the school, clearly responsible for both the long-term vision and day-to-day firefighting associated with finance and administration," said School of Pharmacy Dean [B. Joseph Guglielmo](#), PharmD, in nominating Nordberg. "Michael has provided 25 years

of first-class service to the campus, and the School and the University are indeed richer today as a result of his leadership service and management.”

Jane Wong

Executive Director, Enterprise Applications, IT



Jane Wong

Jane Wong, executive director for enterprise applications in the UCSF information technology department, joined UCSF from the commercial sector, and she has brought with her the culture of innovation and creativity. Her skills have allowed her to problem-solve and innovate in cost-effective ways. Wong is an assertive and frank leader, but her integrity, respect for others, empathy and supportiveness allows for employees and all around her to feel empowered and safe.

“Early in my relationship with Jane it was evident that she had a strong character and was highly respected not only by her peer and team members, but by so many of the constituents she serves,” said Joe Bengfort, senior vice president and chief information officer, in nominating Wong. “Over the past four years, Jane has taken on the most assertive and ambitious set of programs we’ve ever executed in IT.”

Chancellor Award for Exceptional University Service

Travis Clark

Environmental Compliance Officer, Environment Health and Safety



Travis Clark

In light of the national focus on lead in water, UCSF undertook voluntary, proactive steps to test the quality of drinking water at its campus and medical center locations to ensure

that lead levels are within the standards recommended by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Travis Clark, an environmental compliance officer in UCSF's Office of Environmental Health and Safety, serves as project manager for the program. The program, which began last summer, continues today to test all sources of drinking water across UCSF-owned locations and to take corrective actions where necessary to meet EPA standards.

"Travis helped guide and coordinate the efforts of a multidisciplinary team of individuals that included health care professionals, scientists, public health officials, senior UCSF leadership, local regulatory agencies, engineers, and facility personnel to accomplish the goals of the project," said Tim Orozco, program manager for hazardous materials management, in nominating Clark. "Through his outstanding work, organizational skills, and professional and political acumen he was able to coordinate a diverse group of stakeholders as they continue to work to accomplish the goals of the project."

Khang Nguyen

IT Manager, Department of Microbiology and Immunology



Khang Nguyen

Khang Nguyen's job as an IT manager in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology is desktop support, server administration and web hosting. But the role he has played in his decade at UCSF has expanded into improving systems within his department and across other parts of the University. His enthusiasm extends to his supervisory role of four employees, providing them opportunities to grow within the department.

"It is hard to describe Khang without the use of multiple superlatives," said Stephanie Louie, department manager in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology. "He is simply one of the best employees I have ever worked with, and not just because of his service to my departments, but also because of his commitment to UCSF and the contributions he has made to IT support and the University."

Robert Pizzi

Space Analytics Specialist, Campus Planning



Robert Pizzi

During his 32 years of work at UCSF, Robert Pizzi, now a space analytics specialist for campus planning, has earned a reputation as a cheerful, upbeat problem solver. In working with space management over the last three decades, which includes tracking how spaces are assigned to different departments and principal investigators for research, Pizzi saw the work move from information tracked with pen and paper to a real-time information system, which he helped to implement.

“I consider myself very fortunate to have worked and gained all the institutional knowledge from Bob in the past few years,” said director of space analytics Ritesh Khanna. in nominating Pizzi. “As Bob is now getting ready to venture upon a new phase

of his life with his upcoming retirement, on behalf of all the team members and colleagues who endorsed him for this award, I want to wish him the very best to many more good years to come.”

Distinguished Nurse Award

Jeselle Abilla, BSN, RN

ICU Nurse at UCSF Medical Center



Jeselle Abilla, BSN, RN

Jeselle Abilla, BSN, RN, is an ICU nurse at UCSF Medical Center, where, as a charge nurse, he advocates for all staff by teaching, mentoring, monitoring care and ensuring their competence with assignments. Along with his work in the ICU, which colleagues say he accomplishes with a smile and good humor, he is the co-facilitator of the UCSF

Professional Development Council since 2014, and leader of the same unit level council. In that role, he helps to facilitate RN specialty certification.

“Abilla embodies the compassion, intelligence, diligence and creativity characteristic of recipients of the Distinguished Nurse Award, yet he remains humble and clear in his goals,” said interim assistant patient care manager Julie Vavuris, RN, in nominating Abilla. “His focus is always on best outcomes for the patient and family. He realizes that excellent care is provided by nurses who are developed, nurtured, valued and rewarded.”

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