



**Bruce T. Liang, MD**  
Interim Executive Vice President for Health Affairs  
Dean, UConn School of Medicine

September 27, 2023

TO: Members of the Board of Trustees

FROM: Bruce T. Liang, MD  
*Bruce T. Liang*  
Interim Executive Vice President for Health Affairs  
Dean, School of Medicine

RE: Annual Reports of Endowed Chairs

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the University of Connecticut Board of Trustees approve the annual reports for the following Endowed Chairs for the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

1. Infectious Diseases
2. Human Genetics
3. Transfusion Medicine

**BACKGROUND:**

The three endowed chairs referenced above were established during the Fiscal Year 1988 to 1989 as authorized by CGS 10a – 20a. Subsection (f) of the statute states the “Board of Trustees shall submit annual reports to the Board of Governors concerning their expenditures.” The reports presented today are for the period of July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023.

**State of Connecticut Board of  
Governors for Higher Education  
Chair in Infectious Diseases**

**Kevin Dieckhaus, MD**

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## **THANK YOU MESSAGE**

I would like to express my gratitude to the donors that support the endowed chair. The endowment provides material support for ongoing educational activities of infectious disease fellows, students, and residents pursuing research and interests in the field of infectious diseases. The chair also supports ongoing development activities to increase infectious disease related opportunities for learners at UConn.

## **RESEARCH AND TEACHING**

This chair supports the development of trainees interested in infectious diseases at all levels of medical training. Specifically, it facilitates the onsite tropical medicine training provided to University Connecticut trainees in Southwestern Uganda. This experience promotes the acquisition of direct medical skills as well as valuable cross cultural and integrative skills important for any physician practicing in a multiethnic world. In the past academic year, a total of 9 resident physicians traveled to Uganda for a 4-week experience each. With the easing of the pandemic, the chair is helping to support discussions to expand opportunities for collaborative research as well as immersive opportunities for learners in additional locations including Columbia, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam.

Collaboration with Storrs investigators have focused on CRISPR-based technology for respiratory disease diagnostics, resulting in two published papers and a third manuscript submission emanating from this collaboration thus far.

## **PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCES, AND AWARDS**

The chair supported the UConn Global Health symposium series (April 2023) where the theme “The Price of life” was explored. This symposium at UConn health integrated with a related symposium at UConn Storrs, as well as Connecticut Children’s, and brought in a wide variety of speakers both nationally and internationally.

Cross-campus collaborations facilitated by this chair have led to two published manuscripts, with a third submitted.

## **SERVICE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**

Related to infectious diseases in the global setting, programs have fostered ongoing and developing relationships between collaborators in the global north and south. One specific focus has been to foster linkages between researchers at international sites within low and middle income countries with potential collaborators within the UConn system through numerous web-based formats. Over the past 12 months, discussions have advanced for locations including Colombia, Sri Lanka, Uganda and Vietnam. Formal memorandum of understandings for ongoing cooperation have been in place for the Uganda site as well as the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Programs have fostered developing partnerships between collaborators at UConn with those in the global south. One specific focus has been to foster linkages between researchers at international sites within low and middle income countries with potential collaborators within the UConn system through numerous web-based formats.

## LOOKING AHEAD

We plan to continue to advance many of the initiatives already in process. This includes additional studies of CRISPR-based infectious diseases diagnostic and pursuing ongoing international collaborations in research, education, and clinical care. With the easing of the COVID-19 pandemic and travel restrictions, a renewed focus on learner participation in immersive global health experiences will resume. A seminar series is planned between the University of Connecticut and the University of Peradeniya in Sri Lanka to strengthen educational and research ties, with a site visit planned for autumn 2023.

UConn Health  
 Endowed Chair in Infectious Diseases/AIDS Research  
 631129-10141-10

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Beginning Cash Balance</b>	<b>\$36,703.75</b>	<b>\$29,724.75</b>	<b>\$31,410.28</b>	<b>\$40,387.28</b>	<b>\$55,364.16</b>	<b>\$67,944.17</b>	<b>\$71,169.17</b>	<b>\$71,169.09</b>
<b>Receipts :</b>								
Interest Transferred from DHE:		3,327.03	13,237.81	17,433.88	26,250.38	5,887.00	2,161.82	19,330.15
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,327.03</b>	<b>13,237.81</b>	<b>17,433.88</b>	<b>26,250.38</b>	<b>5,887.00</b>	<b>2,161.82</b>	<b>19,330.15</b>
<b>Expenditures :</b>								
Salaries and Wages								
Fringe Benefits								
Purchased Services	6,979.00			285.00	3,919.98	2,047.00	1,547.55	5,928.27
Supplies				1,527.00	4,242.47	615.00		199.98
Equipment		1,641.50	4,260.81	645.00	5,507.92			
Change in accruals							614.35	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>6,979.00</b>	<b>1,641.50</b>	<b>4,260.81</b>	<b>2,457.00</b>	<b>13,670.37</b>	<b>2,662.00</b>	<b>2,161.90</b>	<b>6,128.25</b>
<b>Ending Cash Spendable Balance</b>	<b>\$29,724.75</b>	<b>\$31,410.28</b>	<b>\$40,387.28</b>	<b>\$55,364.16</b>	<b>\$67,944.17</b>	<b>\$71,169.17</b>	<b>\$71,169.09</b>	<b>\$84,370.99</b>

**Health Net, Inc. Chair in Human Genetics**

**David W. Rowe, MD**

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## THANK YOU MESSAGE

The prior years of Genetics Chair support to acquire and operate advanced microscope imaging systems has placed our Skeletal Center in an international leadership position for implementing high throughput imaging and computer analysis of skeletal tissues. This year it has allowed me to make two international trips to demonstrate how these new computer intense techniques will provide a pathway for the skeletal tissue discipline to participate in the new era of computer driven biological research.

## RESEARCH AND TEACHING

This technology enabled us to participate with the international HuBMAP consortium for spatial mapping individual cells in human joint cartilage. We are implementing two new cell mapping methods (CODEX and MERFISH) based on the latest advances in distinguishing cells within a tissue (single cell RNA composition). The methods will uncover how individual cells interact with each other in a manner analogous to "it takes a village" to make our joint cartilage support painless ambulation.

## PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCES, AND AWARDS

My research group has continued to be successful in obtaining NIH research funding for our skeletal studies. We were recognized by the senior faculty of the School of Dental Medicine with the annual Outstanding Research Award. I have been invited to Israel and Korea to make major presentations based on the technologies we are developing.

## SERVICE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In August 2022, my senior technician (Ms. Li Chen) and I traveled to Tel Aviv, Israel to lead a 3-day hands-on workshop for our histological methods. Then in May 2023, I was invited to give the plenary presentation at the Korean Bone Society on the topic of preparing for the big data environment that is now required for basic biological skeletal research. In both cases, it demonstrated that our approach is reaching an international audience.

## ACADEMIC PROGRAMS AND FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

The fluorescence imaging core utilizes the capabilities of the instrumentation obtained with the help of the chair funds. We have implemented new imaging applications for specific research faculty from Farmington, Storrs, Jackson Laboratory, and even outside laboratories. Work done for two different commercial enterprises will have platform presentations at their respective scientific societies.

## LOOKING AHEAD

I want to develop new educational technology programs for student and faculty computer scientists at Storrs and our imaging centers at UCHC to enhance the computer interpretation of visual data.

UConn Health  
 Endowed Chair in Human Genetics  
 300041-10600-10

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Beginning Cash Balance</b>	<b>\$277,187.31</b>	<b>\$186,903.31</b>	<b>\$172,657.41</b>	<b>\$174,872.63</b>	<b>\$231,368.95</b>	<b>\$252,898.25</b>	<b>\$168,110.45</b>	<b>\$93,768.59</b>
<b>Receipts :</b>								
Interest Transferred from DHE:		5,992.10	5,581.85	8,968.00	18,720.97		1,577.13	14,101.91
Interest Transferred from UCONN Foundation:	78,968.00	74,710.00	79,254.86	79,455.00	74,454.25	79,521.78	84,668.98	86,692.02
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>78,968.00</b>	<b>80,702.10</b>	<b>84,836.71</b>	<b>88,423.00</b>	<b>93,175.22</b>	<b>79,521.78</b>	<b>86,246.11</b>	<b>100,793.93</b>
<b>Expenditures :</b>								
Salaries and Wages	88,817.00	49,024.00	18,122.14	5,140.00	438.88	17,941.00	87,612.66	17,559.36
Fringe Benefits	37,155.00	26,287.00	47,749.40	3,019.00	429.75	1,383.00	15,567.41	2,676.73
Purchased Services	42,045.00	19,637.00	16,749.95	1,993.00	48,490.60	61,721.33	63,030.54	54,458.18
Supplies				1,895.68		8,854.00	(5,722.14)	13,023.40
Equipment	1,235.00			19,879.00	22,286.69	68,963.67	99.50	1,419.50
Change in accruals						5,446.58	-	
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>169,252.00</b>	<b>94,948.00</b>	<b>82,621.49</b>	<b>31,926.68</b>	<b>71,645.92</b>	<b>164,309.58</b>	<b>160,587.97</b>	<b>89,137.17</b>
<b>Ending Cash Spendable Balance</b>	<b>\$186,903.31</b>	<b>\$172,657.41</b>	<b>\$174,872.63</b>	<b>\$231,368.95</b>	<b>\$252,898.25</b>	<b>\$168,110.45</b>	<b>\$93,768.59</b>	<b>\$105,425.35</b>

**Health Net, Inc. - American Red Cross Chair in Transfusion Medicine**

**Biree Andemariam, MD**

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## THANK YOU MESSAGE

I am deeply indebted to my donor. Being granted this endowed chair this academic year has been such an enormous honor and I remain humbled to have been selected. Hematology, and specifically transfusion medicine, is a field of medicine that is dwindling in numbers of experts despite very large clinical demand and research needs. On a more granular level, here at the UConn School of Medicine, my sickle cell and thalassemia programs account for 50% of the blood transfusions given on an annual basis. These transfusions are life saving and there has been little advance in either of these conditions toward reducing the ongoing transfusion burden. In sickle cell disease in particular, there is widespread use of unnecessary blood transfusions by physicians who are unfamiliar with managing the patients' steady-state anemia and do not know that avoiding transfusions except in clearly defined clinical circumstances is the standard of care. These unnecessary transfusions lead to a number of potential complications including red blood cell allo-immunization, iron overload and delayed hemolytic transfusion reactions. Moreover, such practice puts increased burden on the overall blood supply for the larger population. One transfusion that unnecessarily went to someone with sickle cell disease who didn't need it could have been used for another patient who desperately does. Having received the endowment has motivated me to focus my efforts toward (1) educating providers on when and when not to transfuse patients, (2) increasing the overall donor pool, and (3) identifying alternatives to blood transfusion for both sickle cell disease and thalassemia.

## RESEARCH AND TEACHING

The endowed chair has enhanced my research in multiple ways. It has given me even greater stature both within and outside the University that tells current and potential research collaborators that my institution finds me incredibly worthy of such an honor. It gives me protected time to conduct independent investigator-initiated research and develop additional testable research hypotheses. It also gives me the opportunity to enhance education around proper use of blood transfusions in sickle cell disease and to engage in community-directed efforts to expand the blood donor pool.

## PUBLICATIONS, CONFERENCES, AND AWARDS

In October of 2022, I received the 2022 Sickle Cell Disease Association of America Chairman's Award. This is a national award and recognizes my commitment to the sickle cell disease community. I was invited in 2022 to be amongst a select group of experts to author the Lancet Haematology commission guidelines on sickle cell disease. This will be published in 2023 and has been a huge honor for me. The commissioned guidelines will set the global priorities for sickle cell disease and will be disseminated all over the world.

I am an appointed member of the U.S. Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Blood and Tissue Safety and Availability. In this role, I serve on the committee that advises the federal government on all concerns related to blood availability and general safety. As such, I play a critical role at the national level on ensuring that every American who needs blood can access it and rest assured that it is safe.

## SERVICE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

In my role as a member of the U.S. Health and Human Services Advisory Committee on Blood and Tissue Safety and Availability we moved policy to expand organ donation by adjusting the position related to HIV positive donor organ use. This was groundbreaking work.

Locally, I have worked with the American Red Cross to educate the African American community on the importance of blood donation. This culminated in a blood drive held on Juneteenth in Hartford that was geared toward recruiting African American donors. My work with sickle cell patients and educating the public on the transfusion needs of sickle cell patients (most of whom are African American) was particularly compelling. This was highlighted by several Connecticut news outlets on June 19th.

## LOOKING AHEAD

I want to expand efforts to partner with the American Red Cross to expand the numbers of African Americans who contribute to the blood donor pool. This is an area of great need as there is a disproportionate use of blood by African Americans in comparison to the availability of blood from African American donors. This is clinically important because blood is more likely to be compatible between individuals of the same racial/ethnic background and having this disparity in the donor pool can lead to lack of availability of matched blood for some African Americans. This is especially true for those with sickle cell disease.



UConn Health  
 Endowed Chair in Transfusion Medicine  
 300037-10149-10 (and 35021)

	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23
<b>Beginning Cash Balance</b>	<b>\$423,141</b>	<b>\$425,555</b>	<b>\$429,380</b>	<b>\$438,097</b>	<b>\$450,927</b>	<b>\$410,633</b>	<b>\$300,935</b>
<b>Receipts :</b>							
Interest Transferred from UCONN Foundation:							\$25,289
Interest Transferred from DHE:	\$4,107	\$3,825	\$8,717	\$12,830	\$2,944	\$1,081	\$9,665
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$4,107</b>	<b>\$3,825</b>	<b>\$8,717</b>	<b>\$12,830</b>	<b>\$2,944</b>	<b>\$1,081</b>	<b>\$34,953</b>
<b>Expenditures :</b>							
Salaries and Wages					\$32,921	\$81,941	\$67,966
Fringe Benefits					\$10,317	\$28,838	\$22,599
Purchased Services	\$1,693						
Supplies							
Equipment							
Change in accruals							
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,693</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$43,238</b>	<b>\$110,779</b>	<b>\$90,565</b>
<b>Ending Cash Spendable Balance</b>	<b>\$425,555</b>	<b>\$429,380</b>	<b>\$438,097</b>	<b>\$450,927</b>	<b>\$410,633</b>	<b>\$300,935</b>	<b>\$245,323</b>