



# UCSF Department of Medicine ZUCKERBERG SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL

## THE VICE DEAN'S OFFICE: ADVANCING UCSF'S MISSION AT ZSFG

*This year marks the 150th anniversary of the partnership between ZSFG and UCSF, as well as a new chapter in this thriving collaboration: in May 2022, Elena Fuentes-Afflick, MD, MPH, was appointed Vice Dean of the UCSF School of Medicine at ZSFG.*

*The role of the ZSFG Vice Dean's Office is to represent all aspects and units of the University on the ZSFG campus in fulfilling the academic missions of providing outstanding clinical care, educating trainees, and conducting groundbreaking research. This issue introduces and highlights Dr. Fuentes-Afflick and members of her leadership team and how they support the departments at ZSFG, including Medicine, to succeed in their missions.*

### "An Immense Privilege"

Vice Dean Fuentes-Afflick succeeds Sue Carlisle, MD, PhD, who served for 18 years in the role. Dr. Fuentes-Afflick brings deep institutional knowl-



Elena Fuentes-Afflick MD

edge; she previously served as Vice Chair of Pediatrics at UCSF, Chief of Pediatrics at ZSFG, Vice Dean for Academic Affairs and Faculty Development for UCSF School of Medicine, and in many national leadership roles. "Since I assumed this role, I've spent a fair amount of time reintroducing myself to the community," she said. "People knew me as Chief of Pediatrics [at ZSFG], but now I'm going to talk about other services as well."

She is focusing much of her current efforts on the Zuckerberg Research and Academic Building (ZRAB), slated to open in May 2023. "It's a beautiful building which represents a new opportunity



UCSF at ZSFG Vice Dean's Office staff gather together in a guided group graffiti mural creating event.

for our research community and educators," said Dr. Fuentes-Afflick. "The synergies of bringing people together under one roof will be very exciting, and I'm hoping that the geographic proximity will promote new research."

She also hopes to enhance support for academic activities. "[At ZSFG] we often have this attitude of making do with less, and 'How can we be really resourceful?'" said Dr. Fuentes-Afflick. "While I honor that and certainly have perfected my own skill set, I'd also like us to have a few more resources to work with."

She wants to foster greater integration with the San Francisco Department of Public Health. "The interface between the University and the City and County is a well-established relationship – we'll be celebrating our 150th anniversary [in 2023]," said Dr. Fuentes-Afflick. "Yet it's also a very dynamic relationship, because both we and the City change

all the time. Because we're a very collaborative community, there's a lot of opportunity for give and take, as well as shared brainstorming and decision-making. We have slightly different areas of responsibility and bring different resources and people to the party. When you have strong relationships and can say, 'Here are my priorities, my limitations, and what I can offer,' you have the potential to bring out the best in both entities."

Dr. Fuentes-Afflick also seeks to strengthen connections between ZSFG and UCSF as a whole. "At the General, largely because the hospital is owned by the City and not the University, we are clearly distinct from many other parts of UCSF," she said. "Sometimes we feel slighted, and sometimes that outsider perspective can be very energizing. One of my goals is to foster greater integration." For example, at one of her recent leadership meetings, she invited department chairs to participate and asked each service chief to give brief presentations.



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Diego Rivera's *La Tortillera* and Frida Kahlo's *Portrait of Dr. Leo Eloesser*, part of the ZSFG art collection, which the UCSF at ZSFG Dean's Office was key in curating, were on loan until this January for SFMOMA exhibit *Diego Rivera's America*.

"I really want department chairs to celebrate our faculty, actively support their chiefs of service, and to think about how we fit into philanthropic efforts," she said. "I really hope I can help integrate us more strongly, deeply, and intricately into the UCSF fabric."

Dr. Fuentes-Afflick has three other interests. "I want to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism, and to embed that within everything we do," she said. "We have a lot of great momentum, and there are many programs within the University, as well as being a strong priority for the hospital and City. I want to create policies, an everyday work environment, and representational diversity that actively embrace and promote these ideals."

Second, she wants ZSFG to be a model workplace. "We have some very encouraging data from provider experience surveys and staff Gallup surveys," said Dr. Fuentes-Afflick. "People have a deep commitment to our workplace, but often feel they don't get the support they need. I want to take a data-driven approach to address those issues. All our employees are valued, but how can we manifest and communicate that so people feel recognized, supported, and seen?"

Third, she seeks to elevate sustainability. "There are many ways to understand that, whether it's in the way we do our work or in the health care we provide," she said. "We can draw a very clear line between climate change, sustainability, and human health. There are also implications for how we act as stewards. There's a lot of interesting work in product-intensive settings such as operating rooms that might be a good place to start. I hope we could both save money, but more importantly, find more sustainable ways to do our work"

Dr. Fuentes-Afflick is honored to serve in this new role. "Many of us who work at the General consider it to be the best part of UCSF – the jewel in the crown," she said. "It's an immense privilege to represent all my colleagues."

Outside of work, Dr. Fuentes-Afflick is an avid knitter, belongs to several book groups, and is a coffee and pizza aficionada.

### The Power of Working in Partnership

"The role of the UCSF at ZSFG Vice-Dean's Office is really about managing that intersection between UCSF and ZSFG," said Margaret Damiano, MBA, Associate Dean for Administration and Finance. "It's a lot of translating language and policies, and trying to find commonality."

Ms. Damiano joined ZSFG in 2006, serving in various leadership roles for the Division of General Internal Medicine, Division of Hospital Medicine, and Department of Radiology before joining the Vice Dean's Office at ZSFG in 2013. She has served in her current role since 2017. She leads a dynamic team which includes the Directors of Administration, Operations, Finance and the Clinical Practice Group within the ZSFG Dean's Office.

"One of our most visible buckets of responsibility is managing the affiliation agreement, which is the partnership between the University and the City," she said. "That includes many components related to finance, space, policies, HR issues, regulations, and requirements"

To successfully navigate at the crossroads between UCSF and ZSFG, Ms. Damiano brings a deep understanding of both organizations' policies and financial structures. "It requires patience, listening thoughtfully to concerns and frustrations, and understanding that change takes time," she said. "I always try to work towards 'yes,' and to think, 'How can we do this?'"

For example, she was part of a huge team of UCSF and City leaders who negotiated a 100-year ground lease of City-owned land to build the ZRAB. It was a watershed achievement, involving intense negotiation between UCSF and City attorneys, advocacy from UCSF faculty and staff, buy-in and support from the Board of Supervisors, and collaborating with many others. "It took us over 20 years to get to the point where we got a contract signed," said Ms. Damiano. "It was a team effort, and required determination, optimism, and asking, 'What's the best thing for both organizations?'"



Margaret Damiano MBA

She appreciates the ZRAB's inclusive design process. "It was done in the spirit of what's wonderful about UCSF at ZSFG, which was the community coming together to collaborate," said Ms. Damiano. "There are hundreds of people who have influenced what that building is, and that's really powerful. Having a physical representation of our partnership [between UCSF and the City] for the first time on our campus is really great. I'll always take a lot of pride in the small role I played."

She has great esteem for her many collaborators. "I started at UCSF in the Department of Medicine, and have a deep appreciation for those continuing relationships," said Ms. Damiano. "There is a strong partnership between the Dean's Office and the Department of Medicine, and I'm very

grateful to Dr. Neil Powe and Laurae Pearson and their team. They're the people we go to for a lot of questions and ideas, and they're always very thoughtful. The hospital leadership have also been wonderful partners in supporting UCSF's education and research missions. That partnership is in a really nice spot right now because of leadership on both the City and University sides."

Besides her job, Ms. Damiano enjoys trying out new recipes, spending time with family and friends, and kayaking on Lake Merced and Tomales Bay.

She is enthusiastic about the next chapter with Dr. Fuentes-Afflick at the helm. "Elena brings a wealth of knowledge about both UCSF and ZSFG, as well as new energy and opportunities," said Ms. Damiano. "She's very thoughtful, kind, and considerate, and it's been really fun and energizing to work with her. ... Our history of compassionate innovation has gotten us to this point and will continue to move us forward. The best part about working here is collaborating with people who want to make things better for our patients, each other, and UCSF."

**Building Trust through Communication**

Since 2017, Jake Blackshear, MM, MBA, has served as Director of Finance for the Vice Dean's Office at ZSFG. He oversees the finances of the approximately 40 people who work in the ZSFG Dean's Office, as well as the \$224 million affiliation agreement detailing the service package which UCSF provides to the City at the ZSFG hospital.

"That entails everything from scoping the service, looking at new services and what they might cost, and negotiating the final amount of that contract and budget every year," said Mr. Blackshear. The affiliation agreement supports the clinical enterprise at ZSFG, covering some of the costs of services provided by physicians, residents, and clinical fellows, as well as the Clinical Laboratory, Biomedical Engineering, and Outpatient Dialysis Unit, among other areas.



Jake Blackshear MM MBA

Both partners have worked hard to cultivate their relationship. This is especially important because each year the costs of operating the ZSFG hospital exceed income by about \$100 million. "Every additional dollar we ask for is coming from San Francisco taxpayers and the Mayor's budget," said Mr. Blackshear. One contributing factor is that most ZSFG patients are insured by public payors like Medi-Cal and the San Francisco Health Plan, which reimburse services at a lower rate than private insurers.

Another inherent tension is that UCSF and the City have complementary but distinct missions. "The hospital is part of the City, which is required to prioritize resources to provide essential public services for clinical care, whereas UCSF historically prioritizes innovation." said Mr. Blackshear. "We want to do more and do better, but there is limited money." In recent years, the City has started including UCSF in their five-year planning process, which helps smooth annual budget negotiations. "If we've already put something forth in the five-year plan, it's not a surprise," he said.

Over the past five years, Mr. Blackshear and his team have negotiated additional affiliation agreement revenue to help cover cost-of-living increases and even fund some new programs. One is the Division of Hospital Medicine's third (Faculty Inpatient Service (FIS) Team (Purple Team) that has been critical for COVID care and this winter's rise in the inpatient census due to a combination of infectious illness. Another is improvements in cardiac care and patient outcomes with impella left ventricular assist device technology. His team also helped secure additional funding for modernization of the care model in intensive care units.

Clear communication is essential. "I try to build trust by being consistent, doing what I say I will do, and providing opportunities for feedback," said Mr. Blackshear. "We all care about patients and health, so how do we get out of the 'us/them' dynamic and more into the 'we'? With Elena coming on board, we've talked a lot about what's unique about the UCSF at ZSFG culture, and how



Wynne Bamberg, Project Manager in the Vice Dean's Office, speaks at the dedication of the UCSF at ZSFG Garden Poetry Walk.

to strengthen it. How do we better coordinate and collaborate across siloes, both within UCSF and with the City?"

He also is dedicated to process improvement. "We constantly ask, 'Can we simplify things? How can we be more transparent?'" said Mr. Blackshear. "Every year we bring everyone together to hear what people think, take recommendations, and build a new [budget] formula that is objective and enables us to all calculate our budgets ourselves, once we know the assumptions that are going in."

Mr. Blackshear appreciates contributing to the care of underserved San Franciscans. "Before the pandemic, I could look out my window, hear screeching wheels and see patients coming to the Emergency Department," he said. "Then I'd go to my meeting with the manager of the ED to talk about their needs."

A semi-professional jazz saxophonist, Mr. Blackshear earned master's degrees in music as well as an MBA in sustainable management. He is especially excited about Dr. Fuentes-Afflick's commitment to improving sustainability. "The takeaway from my MBA program was that we shouldn't just measure financial results, but should

also think about our ‘triple bottom line,’” he said. “How do we keep our business afloat, but also holistically consider our contribution or detriment to people and the environment? People often start by thinking about having less environmental impact, but you can also go really deep and consider how U.S. health care is structured around acute interventions when people are sick, rather than promoting healthy lifestyles and social supports to keep people healthy. I’m happy we’re starting to have that conversation.”

Besides work, Mr. Blackshear enjoys playing sax, listening to John Coltrane and Miles Davis, and cheering on his children at their sporting events.

“We’ve got a really great partnership with the City right now,” he said. “That makes my job a lot easier. We are focused on collaborating with the City and continuing to improve things over time.”

### The Joy of Problem-Solving

While the affiliation agreement provides salary support for services rendered, it does not cover the full cost of providing care. Insurance reimbursements fill in some of that gap, and Grace Fernandez, CHC, Director of the Clinical Practice Group, leads this important effort.



Grace Fernandez CHC

The Clinical Practice Group is comprised of all the UCSF physicians at ZSFG. “The Clinical Practice Business Office is the administrative arm of that group, and our primary function is to do professional fee billing,” said Ms. Fernandez, who has held her position since 2006 and has worked within the Clinical Practice Group since 1994.

Her “clients” are the various UCSF departments. While some areas such as primary care are already entirely funded through the affiliation agreement, her team does professional fee billing for all Medicine inpatient services including the Resident Inpatient Service, the Faculty Inpatient Service, the Cardiology Service, Medician Intensive Care Units and Medicine’s Inpatient Consult Services. Once physicians perform services, her team uses Epic to generate claims to insurance companies,



The Vice Dean’s Office hosts regular diversity, equity, and inclusion panels as well as the Dean’s Seminar to enhance collaboration. The Zoom screenshot features ZSFG DOM faculty Margot Kushel MD and Jeff Critchfield MD in a UCSF at ZSFG event.

and follows up on delayed or denied claims. Once funds are received, they distribute that money to departments monthly, along with detailed reports.

Her team is separate from the UCSF Health billing team. “It’s a fulfilling and unique opportunity at ZSFG, as our primary patient population is comprised of Medi-Cal, San Francisco Health Plan, some Medicare, and marginalized communities in the area,” said Ms. Fernandez. Navigating these public insurance systems requires persistence and meticulous organizational skills. “You need to respond to all the big things as well as the details,” she said. Because ZSFG is a Level I Trauma Center, some patients have private insurance but have not received previous care at ZSFG. This requires extra paperwork, since UCSF is not already contracted to provide care for those patients.

Her team meets regularly with major payors to troubleshoot problems, and runs reports to identify claims which have not received responses or have been denied. They also communicate with colleagues at UC Davis, UCLA and other UC medical centers to share best practices on how to improve reimbursement for the services provided.

One major advance was the 2019 implementation of Epic, the electronic medical record system. “For the Billing Office, EPIC helped tremendously in capturing all pertinent medical records to support billing charges and receiving appropriate reim-

bursement for services rendered to patients,” said Ms. Fernandez. “Prior to that, there were some forms of electronic systems, but they weren’t integrated. For some charges, we also had to hunt for actual paper medical records. Epic totally changed the game for us.”

Ms. Fernandez appreciates collaborating with her clients. “I enjoy interacting with doctors and department managers and solving problems together as a team,” she said. “I genuinely enjoy my work - every day is different and diverse.”

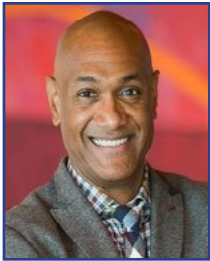
She is also inspired by the opportunities offered by the new Vice Dean at ZSFG. “It’s an exciting new chapter,” said Ms. Fernandez. “For example, paper is still a big thing for our office, because not every health care plan accepts electronic claims. So we’ve started the work of sustainability in my little office, ensuring that the paper we use is 100 percent from recycled materials. We’ve done away with single-use utensils and cups at events, and engaged with our landlord [at 20th and Alabama Streets] to provide a composting bin. I’ve also asked all our unit managers to go through DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion] training, and we’re also going to do unconscious bias training. It’s important work, and I’m hopeful each step in the right direction brings forth positive change.”

In addition to her work, Ms. Fernandez enjoys hiking and gym workouts with her husband.



### Small Steps to Meet Big Challenges

As the Director of Administration for the ZSFG Dean's Office since 2014, Roger Mohamed, MS, and his team represent the University and UCSF employees on the ZSFG campus, ensure that UCSF's missions are carried out, and serve as cultural translators between UCSF and the City. "We put our mission first," he said. "A lot of our work is about process improvement, with the goal of ensuring that people don't get caught up in the bureaucracies of working with two large institutions, and can instead focus on their work."



Roger Mohamed MS

Mr. Mohamed and his team oversee research and education administration, risk management, privacy, training and compliance.

He co-lead development of Hydra, a database that tracks the thousands of UCSF-affiliated employees and trainees connected with ZSFG. This is no small feat, since this group includes clinical faculty, researchers, administrators, rotating learners at all levels from the schools of medicine, dentistry, nursing and pharmacy, graduate students, and visiting college students. Before Hydra, Mr. Mohamed and his team had to ask departments to verify spreadsheets of employee and trainee rosters; now they can easily pull current data from Hydra. Besides facilitating appropriate access to Epic, Hydra has been invaluable for other needs, such as helping ensure that UCSF employees and trainees are up-to-date with vaccine mandates.

Some of Mr. Mohamed's projects improve the work environment in more targeted ways. He and his colleague, Dr. Esther Chen, Graduate Medical Education Site Director, along with Architecture and Planning, established a sleep room hoteling system, enabling residents rest during long shifts. Residents let themselves into a vacant room and lock the door from the inside. When they are done, Environmental Services changes the sheets and prepares the room for the next occupant. The team also had additional lockers installed so residents can securely store belongings. "It was low-budget, low-tech, and helped make residents



ZSFG DOM Clinical Operations Manager Melody Davenport-McLaughlin and Marta Gilbert shares their professional journeys as part of a UCSF at ZSFG Staff Career Journey Storytelling Event, also known as StoryCore, moderated by Roger Mohamed.

happier, which was a big win," he said. He believes in the power of addressing big challenges through smaller steps. As part of Dr. Fuentes-Afflick's vision of promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism, Mr. Mohamed is working with GME Site Director Esther Chen, MD, and the Nursing Department to pilot an educational campaign about how to respond to patient microaggressions. "Sometimes female residents introduce themselves as a doctor, but patients [continue to] assume they are a nurse," he said. "Attendings and nurses may not know what to say. We will share a simple response strategy that will help them be upstanders. If they don't remember what to do, we have a QR code so they can pull up the information on their phone. We want to change the culture to: 'If you see something, say something, and this is what you can say.' It's important to approach these issues in smaller chunks to eventually have a larger impact."

Mr. Mohamed also developed StoryCore, a series of public forums about the career journeys of managers and leaders on the ZSFG campus, particularly those from underrepresented groups. "I'm a big believer in 'If you can see it, you can be it,'" he said. "We share lessons learned and provide resources for our audiences."

His group works collaboratively with the ZSFG hospital's risk management team. "In the past it was an 'us versus them' mentality, but the relationship has gotten a lot better," said Mr. Mohamed.

"It requires a keen sense of political acumen and diplomacy to ensure we're representing our employees, but also being collaborative and providing information the City and County requires. A lot of my job is ensuring that the partnership stays strong. It comes down to communication and collaboration."

Another facet of his team's work is ensuring compliance with both UCSF and City policies, and helping administrative systems run more smoothly. For example, UCSF employees and trainees need access to Epic, so Mr. Mohamed worked with the IT group to create an onboarding workflow for clinicians and learners. Members of his team also investigate accesses to a patient's electronic medical record that might be inappropriate to determine if there was a privacy breach. "We also are proactive, providing education to help ensure this does not occur again," he said.

Mr. Mohamed loves world travel. Originally from Trinidad and Tobago, he also enjoys cooking meals infused with the flavors of the Caribbean. He volunteers as the board chair for the Booker T. Washington Community Service Center, a San Francisco nonprofit which helps youth transitioning out of the foster care system.

"I truly enjoy my job," said Mr. Mohamed. "We have a great team of people, and I'm really excited under Elena's leadership to see where we go."





The UCSF Research and Academic Building at ZSFG (ZRAB) is nearing completion with move in scheduled for later this Spring.

### Always Learning Something New

As Director of Operations in the Vice Dean's Office at ZSFG, Ronald Campbell, MSM, and his team work behind the scenes to keep systems running smoothly so faculty and staff can perform their work. He currently spends most of his time overseeing the upcoming Zuckerberg Research and Academic Building (ZRAB) opening. His portfolio also includes coordination and troubleshooting in areas related to technology, facilities, capital projects, transportation, and security, among other areas.



Ronald Campbell MSM

Mr. Campbell first joined UCSF about a decade ago, working in the UCSF Program Management Office to oversee system implementations and training rollouts for several major campus-wide initiatives. He started his current position in 2019.

In preparation for the ZRAB move-in, he collaborates closely with the building's governance committee and real estate project team. "We're working on a laundry list of items, from selecting furniture, determining how people will work in shared spaces, and figuring out everything from the cost structure to printing and room scheduling," said Mr. Campbell. Based on a number of metrics, the ZSFG Dean's Office has also worked to equitably determine the amount and location of space allocated to each department in the ZRAB.

Mr. Campbell brings considerable experience in change management, which is an essential part of preparing for this upcoming opening. In the coming months, he and his collaborators will share updated information through Town Halls, other meetings, flyers, an occupant website, tours of the new building, and helping people meet their future ZRAB neighbors. "We want people to understand the space they'll be working in before they move in," he said. "I'm very excited about getting us into the new building, and to have most of our people in one space."

In addition to all things ZRAB, Mr. Campbell's portfolio includes supporting UCSF Facilities and custodial work in UCSF-leased spaces in the campus's red brick buildings. That includes everything from addressing heating and cooling issues to fixing leaks. He serves on committees that address security as well as transportation-related issues such as parking and shuttles. He also oversees the work of the Computing and Network Services (CNS) Group, which works closely with the IT Campus team and the City to ensure appropriate data access and data security as well as network services and badging issues.

He serves as an escalation point and troubleshooter for the Clinical Laboratories and Biomedical Engineering Department, both of which have a dual reporting structure to both UCSF and the San Francisco Department of Public Health. "If Clin Labs are having issues purchasing equipment, I can jump in and broker meetings with our procurement team," said Mr. Campbell. "Similarly,

if the Biomed group has challenges with departments staying on top of their equipment maintenance schedules, I can help maintain channels of communication and resolve issues before they become problems."

Some of the skills he relies on most in his job are strategic planning and organization, problem-solving, listening, and communication. "I like the diversity and challenge of my work," said Mr. Campbell. "It's never boring, and every week I learn something new."

Besides his work, Mr. Campbell enjoys traveling and has spent years honing his skills in kenpo karate. A science fiction buff, he is a huge fan of the Dune and Harry Potter series, and loves to escape to the movies.

"The people at ZSFG are very engaged and passionate about their work," said Mr. Campbell. "We all have a shared mission of caring for disenfranchised people."

Neil R. Powe, MD, Chief of Medicine said, "The Department of Medicine appreciates how passionately the ZSFG Vice-Dean's office advocates for and facilitates our vision to be the best department of medicine at a public hospital in the nation. We are fortunate to have such a talented team advancing all of UCSF's missions and departments at ZSFG."

*Elizabeth Chur*

*Editors: Neil Powe, Laurae Pearson, Brooks Bigart*

## SPOTLIGHT

### February is Black History Month

For community events and resources, please see: <https://mrc.ucsf.edu/events/black-history-month-events>.

**Elena Fuentes-Afflick, MD, MPH**, Vice Dean, is the 2023 recipient of the Joseph W. St. Geme, Jr. Leadership Award by the Federation of Pediatric Organizations.

**Babak Javid, PhD, MB BChir**, Experimental Medicine, will be inducted into the American Society of Clinical Investigation (ACSI) and **Priscilla Hsue, MD**, Cardiology, into the Association of American Physicians (AAP) on April 21, 2023.

**Larissa Thomas, MD**, Hospital Medicine, was awarded a 2023 Catalyst Award for Transformation in Graduate Medical Education from the Macy Foundation.

**Ward 86** HIV Clinic in the Division of HIV, Infectious Diseases, and Global Medicine celebrated its 40th Anniversary in a ceremony on January 25.

**UCSF International Women's Day** events are scheduled March 6-10, 2023. <https://womenofucsfhealth.ucsf.edu/iwd-2023-events>.

