Q & A with David Engman, MD, PhD, Chair, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine

Cedars-Sinai welcomed David Engman, MD, PhD in January 2016 as the Chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. Dr. Engman most recently served as Professor of Pathology and Microbiology-Immunology at the Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine where he directed the Molecular Genetics Laboratory and the Diagnostic Molecular Biology Division and Laboratory. In his leadership role at Cedars-Sinai Dr. Engman will be responsible for the quality of patient care and services associated with CSMC anatomic and clinical pathology. Further, he will engage physicians, staff and patients to maintain and enhance state-of-the-art responsive and efficient laboratory services.

Dr. Engman was kind enough to answer some questions related to his vision for the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, his leadership experience as well as tips on mentoring relationships.

What brought you to Cedars-Sinai?

DE: I was recruited to Cedars-Sinai to be the Chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine. I had been Professor of Pathology at Northwestern University Medical School for 25 years, in a career combining molecular genetic pathology, basic and translational research on tropical parasitic infections, teaching of medical students, graduate students and undergraduates and administration. My most significant administrative roles were directing the Northwestern MD-PhD program for 17 years and serving as Medical Director of the Diagnostic Molecular Biology Lab at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. During the past few years, I have been looking for a new career challenge and I found the opportunity here at Cedars-Sinai to be a unique opportunity to help a very strong department grow and develop to achieve national prominence.
What is your vision for the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine?

DE: I consider the Department to be very solid with respect to its clinical mission. Dr. Amin and the division and section heads did a wonderful job recruiting a large number of talented and energetic new faculty during the past decade. I was also very happy to find out that a number of faculty have national and international reputations, which will greatly facilitate the development of the next generation of leaders in the field. There is also an excellent, albeit small, research division and excellent residency and fellowship programs.

My vision for a large multifaceted department like Pathology and Laboratory Medicine must consider all of our missions–patient care, education, research and support of our institutional leaders and colleagues in other departments and institutes. I would like to help our clinical programs continue to grow and for our clinical leaders to mentor their junior faculty to develop into leaders themselves.

Basic, translational and clinical research is an area that will enjoy dramatic expansion, both through the recruitment of scientists and pathologist-scientists and through enhanced research of current faculty and trainees. I would note that the publications of the current faculty members are impressive when compared to those of their counterparts at most other institutions. I believe that the enhancement of the Biobank and Translational Research Core under the direction of Drs. Beatrice Knudsen and Kimia Sobhani will increase the scholarly output of faculty in the department and throughout the institution.

Finally, the residency and fellowship programs are on solid ground, having just received reaccreditation with flying colors, and I expect them to grow as well, with enhanced opportunities for trainees to develop into even stronger diagnosticians and scholars.

What are your goals and/or focus for your first three months at Cedars-Sinai?

DE: My first goal was to assure the clinical operation is sound and well-served by the current faculty. Indeed, this is the case and I have the luxury of focusing on enhancements rather than addressing any significant shortcoming.

My second focus was on the residency and fellowship programs. Again, these are very well run by Drs. Sumire Kitahara, Oksana Volod and Jing Zhai and the fellowship directors as well. I have been helping with the recruitment of the next class of residents, and my interactions with candidates have reinforced my positive view of the residency program.

Third, I have begun to develop a strategy for growing the research enterprise, and a large part of this will involve collaborative recruitments with other departments and institutes. Because pathology spans all areas of science and medicine, it makes sense to grow along areas of institutional priority and/or strength. We may also carve out a new area of emphasis that, while based in pathology, would have participation from many others as well.

Fourth, I am learning how the department impacts other areas of the institution and opportunities for us to do even more to help advance translational research and Precision Health at Cedars-Sinai. Pathologists have special expertise in diagnosis, technology and informatics and are critical to the successes of essentially all other research and clinical initiatives.
My fifth and final goal for my first three months is to begin to establish my own research laboratory here at Cedars-Sinai and I am just beginning to get to that point, now one month into my tenure here.

**What have been your most significant leadership successes and challenges on the pathway to your current role?**

DE: I was involved in a number of important leadership activities at Northwestern University, including serving as Director of the Northwestern MD-PhD program for 17 years, directing the pre-doctoral training program of our CTSI equivalent, and leading an initiative to align the many life science graduate programs. I also led the expansion of the Diagnostic Molecular Biology Lab to an entity having seven faculty members performing molecular diagnostics on a subspecialty basis. I have also been involved in national service in research, research training, and diversity and inclusion. I have served as President of the National Association of MD-PhD Programs, President of the American Association of University Pathologists, chair of several NIH study sections, and member of the AAMC Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Among these, the one about which I am most proud is the MD-PhD program, which grew from a program having 30 students and a budget of $200,000, to one with well over 100 students and a multi-million dollar budget, including a $1.5 million NIH training grant. More important was a major expansion of programming, including development of a highly successful Women’s Forum, Topics in Molecular and Translational Research Course and a Fellowship Program that resulted in a nation-leading number of individual Predoctoral Fellowships.

The most significant challenge for me has been learning how to balance research, clinical practice and administration in a manner in which I can succeed in all three. I am not sure that I ever succeeded in all three simultaneously but, overall, I think that I have led a balanced academic career. The other serious challenge was the graduate program alignment at Northwestern, since each program viewed its independence as of paramount importance. The key was to help everyone realize how aligning the programs actually benefits all programs, facilitates recruitment and, most important, gives students a much broader range of training opportunities.

I view the greatest challenge in my chairmanship at Cedars-Sinai to be balancing my mission of advancing the department with my important role in helping the institution to advance as a global entity. I have accepted the fact that my own research laboratory will take a back seat to these objectives, but also realize that one of the reasons I was recruited by Dr. Melmed and Mr. Gavens is because of my personal dedication to my own research.

**What is your experience with mentorship? Do you have any tips for mentoring relationships?**

DE: Clearly, as a principal investigator in a research lab for 25 years and a program director for 17 years, mentorship of those nearly 300 students has been an important part of my career. I have also spent significant effort mentoring junior faculty throughout Northwestern University, as well as many junior colleagues at other universities.

Mentorship is not easy. At the beginning I applied the same mentoring philosophy to my first six students. They all happened to thrive, giving me the false impression that every student needs the same kind of mentoring. I learned shortly thereafter that this was not true. Each person needs something different, ranging from basically being left alone with occasional encouragement to day-to-day discussion and guidance. I have also learned that the most important mentors in a person's life are often not assigned, but are those a person happens to connect with through the course of daily life. I have many mentors, even today, and actually learn as much from those I have mentored as they have learned from me.

If I have any tips for mentoring, they would be: (i) Enter the mentoring relationship without any preconception that you know what is best for that person. (ii) Do not assume that you have expertise in all the areas where an individual needs mentoring. Refer the person to others who may have more expertise or perhaps a different perspective on the issue at hand. (iii) Perhaps most important, try to instill in people you mentor that they have primary responsibility for their own development and should not rely on any mentor for ultimate guidance. It is important for each person to lift his or her head up out of their daily grind periodically to make an overall assessment of how he/she is doing, both at work and in life. When all is said and done, I believe that mentoring is the greatest accomplishment a person can have since, if effective, mentees become the next mentors, and so-on. ●
Upcoming AAMC Professional Development Opportunities

The Office of Faculty Development looks forward to supporting faculty attendance at two of the upcoming Association of American Medical Colleges Professional Development Seminars this summer: the Early Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar, and the Mid-Career Minority Faculty Seminar.

**Early Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar**

This three and a half-day seminar is designed for women physicians and scientists at the Assistant Professor rank. Seminar attendees develop academic medicine career building skills such as communication, conflict management, and financial acumen, and employ strategic thinking about their career and leadership development.

**Dates: July 9—12, 2016**  
**Location: Englewood, Colorado**

[https://www.aamc.org/meetings/347984/upcomingmeetings.html](https://www.aamc.org/meetings/347984/upcomingmeetings.html)

To apply for either seminar, please submit the following to [denise.gallagher@chet.org](mailto:denise.gallagher@chet.org) by Friday, March 11, 2016:

1. Self-statement outlining your interests and why you believe this seminar will contribute to your success in academic medicine. (Please limit to 250 words)
2. Statement of support from your Division Director or Department Chair
3. Up-to-date CV

**Mid-Career Minority Faculty Seminar**

This seminar is designed for faculty at the Associate Professor rank who aspire to leadership positions in academic medicine. Participants assess professional development goals and identify strategies and tools for promotion and tenure, develop key professional competencies in academic leadership, enhance leadership skills in the areas of communication, team building, change management and work/life balance, and expand their network of colleagues and sponsors.

**Dates: June 23-25, 2016**  
**Location: Washington, D.C.**

Lali Medina-Kauwe, PhD, Associate Professor of Biomedical Sciences and Associate Director of the Graduate Program in Biomedical Sciences and Translational Medicine was the most recent faculty member to attend the AAMC Mid-Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar in December 2015.

“Thank you so much for recommending the AAMC Mid-Career Women Faculty Professional Development Seminar to me and for supporting my attendance to this meeting in Austin, TX. It was an invaluable experience, and I learned critical communication and organizational navigation skills that will no doubt augment my career development. The workshops were great. Hearing the perspective from, and networking with, other women at my level was hugely beneficial. I would definitely recommend this meeting to others.”

The application period and details for the 2016 seminar will be announced in Fall 2016. Please continue to check the Office of Faculty Development website for professional development opportunities: [http://www.cedars-sinai.edu/faculty-development/leadership-and-career-development.aspx](http://www.cedars-sinai.edu/faculty-development/leadership-and-career-development.aspx).
Congratulations to the most recent Cedars-Sinai academic appointment holders and promotions

**Appointments**

**Instructors**
- Han, Bingchen, PhD, Surgery
- Qu, Ying, PhD, Surgery

**Assistant Professors**
- Alban, Rodrigo, MD, Surgery
- Daskivich, Timothy, MD, Surgery
- Ewalt, Mark, MD, Pathology & Laboratory Medicine
- Haglund, Margaret, MD, Psychiatry
- Khandwalla, Raj, MD, Medicine
- Lawrenson, Kate, PhD, OB-GYN
- Solt, Anna, MD, Psychiatry
- Wu, Arthur, MD, Surgery

**Associate Professors**
- Desai, Anish, MD, Medicine
- Gao, Wei, PhD, Biomedical Sciences
- Kim, David, MD, PhD, OB-GYN

**Professors**
- Freedland, Stephen, MD, Surgery
- Saouaf, Rola, MD, Imaging

**Promotions**

**Associate Professors**
- Burch, Miguel, MD, Surgery
- Patil, Chirag, MD, Neurosurgery
- Rosen, Bradley, MD, Medicine
- Shufelt, Chrisandra, MD, Medicine

**Professors**
- Yumul, Roya, MD, PhD, Anesthesiology

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**Cedars-Sinai Academic Titles on ID Badges**

Faculty may now include their CSMC academic title on their identification badge. Beginning in March 2016, faculty will receive an authorization letter to obtain a new badge with the approval of their academic appointment or promotion. Faculty may take their authorization letter to the Security Office during regular business hours listed on the authorization letter to get a new identification badge printed.
Calendar of Events

February

2/25/16: Educating the Educator: Teaching About the Unknown
By: Sandra Orsulic, PhD, 12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m., HMCC 4 & 5

March

3/15/16: Learning to Lean In Discussion Group: Holding Difficult Conversations Effectively
5:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m., AHSP PEC 8

3/18/16: Educating the Educator: There’s an App for That: Using Technology to Support Learning
By: Melissa Wong, MD, 12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m., ECC-B

3/24/16: New Faculty Lunch
12:00 p.m.—1:00 p.m., ECC-B

3/29/16: Speaker Series: Understanding CSMC Academic Appointment and Promotion Criteria
By: Academic Appointments and Promotions Council Leadership, 5:00 p.m.—6:00 p.m., HMCC 4 & 5

April

4/19/16: Educating the Educator: Maximally Invasive Teaching and Learning in the Operating Room
By: Debra DaRosa, PhD, Professor Emerita of Surgery and Medical Education, Northwestern University
Feinberg School of Medicine, 5:00 p.m.—6:30 p.m. AHSP PEC 6 & 7

4/20/16: Educating the Educator: How People Learn
By: Debra Da Rosa, PhD, 12:00 p.m. –1:00 p.m., Davis Research Building, 1004
Review: The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business by Charles Duhigg

The Power of Habit provides a detailed look at both the neuroscience and psychology behind human habit. Illustrative examples provided range from our shopping habits at Target, to how and why we use toothpaste, to the psychology of an NFL team. More importantly we learn how we may influence habit formation to promote positive change in our own lives and those of others. The book is interesting, entertaining, provocative and extremely useful to the medical professional.

-Kathryn Sharma, MD

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