

Yearly Mini-Symposium/Retreat

The Educational Enrichment Program also includes a yearly mini-symposia

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The Educational Enrichment Program also includes yearly mini-symposia. We initially had a focused yearly retreat with Dr. Allison Eddy, PI of Project 4, from the University of Washington and her then-fellow, Dr. Daryl Okamura, in attendance, with presentation of ongoing data from all projects and Pilots. We have expanded this yearly meeting to a more formal structure with an outside speaker and to also include attendance by our External Advisory Committee, Dr. Tom Coffman from Duke, Dr. Jeff Davidson from Vanderbilt Department of Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology, and Dr. Ray Harris from Vanderbilt Nephrology Divisions, respectively, Pilot applications in response to the previous RFA (every other year cycle) are reviewed and scored in an afternoon session attended only by the External Advisory Committee, followed by a social/networking dinner (the latter funded by division monies) and an all day symposium the following day. Participants included Project and Pilot PI's and personnel, including research assistants, post-doctoral fellows and other key personnel, and the External Advisory Committee. The mini-symposium focuses on scientific presentations by Center investigators with input on progress and advice from all members and the External Advisory Committee.

The Pediatric Center had its first expanded retreat May 21-22, 2008, with guest speaker Dr. Mark Does, Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering, Radiology and Radiological Sciences. The topic for the keynote talk was imaging technologies for small animals. The next retreat was held in May 2010, with guest speaker Dr. Jeremy Duffield. The topic of Dr. Duffield's talk was macrophage and pericyte-related injury in the kidney, with use of lineage tracing genetic models. Our next retreat was in May 2011, with guest speaker Dr. Martin Pollak. The topic of Dr. Pollak's key note address was podocyte-related injury, with focus on ApoL1-related FSGS. Outside speakers are chosen based on relevance of their expertise to ongoing projects of the Center, with focus on interactive sessions and new approaches and techniques to explore areas of research with the most innovative and up-to-date approaches. All personnel and PI's attended, with presentations from each Project and each Pilot, and input and discussion from all participants and the External Advisory Committee. The mini-symposium is structured to allow ample time for discussion and questions and critical input from the outside speaker and External Advisory Committee members, as well as from other Center members.