

Hoeft recognized by Society for Neuroscience for outreach and education efforts

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Staff reports



Fumiko Hoeft, MD, PhD ^[1]

The Society for Neuroscience (SfN) has announced that Fumiko Hoeft, MD, PhD ^[2], will receive this year's Science Educator Award, one of the organization's prestigious Science Education and Outreach Awards. The award will be presented in San Diego at Neuroscience 2018 ^[3], SfN's annual meeting for basic scientists and clinicians who study the brain and the nervous system.

Hoeft is an adjunct professor of psychiatry at the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences ^[4], deputy director of the UCSF Dyslexia Center ^[5], and director of the Laboratory for Learning Engineering and Neural Systems (brainLENS) ^[6]. She is also a professor of psychological sciences and director of the Brain Imaging Research Center at the University of Connecticut. In addition, Hoeft is co-director of the Precision Learning Center ^[7], a cross-disciplinary center spanning 6 UC campuses and Stanford with experts in medicine, neuroscience, cognitive psychology, statistics, education, bilingualism and policy.

The Science Educator Award is supported by the Dana Foundation ^[8], and recognizes up to

two neuroscientists each year who have made significant contributions to educating the public about neuroscience through outreach, policy, and education, while continuing to devote time primarily to research. Recipients receive \$5,000 and the opportunity to write a feature commentary on science education in SfN's open-access peer-reviewed journal, *eNeuro*.

"Hoeft bridges outstanding research into the root causes of learning with giving back to the neuroscience community and the public. She is well-deserving of this award that recognizes her creativity in her work and her passion for communicating scientific knowledge to others," said SfN President Richard Huganir.

By studying the neurobiological mechanisms responsible for individual differences in learning to read, brain maturation, and how the two interact, Hoeft aims to find the causes of learning disabilities and to implement that knowledge to improve education. As her model system, she studies dyslexia, a neurobiological condition that affects five to ten percent of children.

Hoeft also researches how genetics and environment influence neurodevelopment. As a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University, she discovered how dyslexia's atypical neurobiological processes are a fundamental neurobiological signature of dyslexia, not of reading level. This understanding led her to hypothesize a neurobiological model of reading development, which she is now exploring. Her research has involved using and developing innovative tools and techniques such as neuroimaging, machine-learning algorithms, and perturbation to gather and analyze data.

When she is not at the bench, Hoeft partners with primary and secondary schools as well as universities and nonprofits to help to improve reading proficiency. She has diversified the International Dyslexia Association's Scientific Advisory Board by creating a nomination process that increases representation in academic expertise, seniority, and nationality.

About UCSF Psychiatry

The UCSF Department of Psychiatry ^[9], UCSF Langley Porter Psychiatric Hospital and Clinics ^[10], and the Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute are among the nation's foremost resources in the fields of child, adolescent, adult, and geriatric mental health. Together they constitute one of the largest departments in the UCSF School of Medicine and the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences, with a mission focused on research (basic, translational, clinical), teaching, patient care, and public service.

UCSF Psychiatry conducts its clinical, educational and research efforts at a variety of locations in Northern California, including UCSF campuses at Parnassus Heights, Mission Bay and Laurel Heights, UCSF Medical Center, UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals, Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center, the San Francisco VA Health Care System, and UCSF Fresno.

About the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences

The UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences ^[11], established by the extraordinary generosity of Joan and Sanford I. "Sandy" Weill, brings together world-class researchers with top-ranked physicians to solve some of the most complex challenges in the human brain.

The UCSF Weill Institute leverages UCSF's unrivaled bench-to-bedside excellence in the neurosciences. It unites three UCSF departments—Neurology, Psychiatry, and Neurological Surgery—that are highly esteemed for both patient care and research, as well as the Neuroscience Graduate Program, a cross-disciplinary alliance of nearly 100 UCSF faculty members from 15 basic-science departments, as well as the UCSF Institute for Neurodegenerative Diseases, a multidisciplinary research center focused on finding effective treatments for Alzheimer's disease, frontotemporal dementia, Parkinson's disease, and other neurodegenerative disorders.

About UCSF

UC San Francisco (UCSF) [12] is a leading university dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care. It includes top-ranked graduate schools of dentistry, medicine, nursing and pharmacy; a graduate division with nationally renowned programs in basic, biomedical, translational and population sciences; and a preeminent biomedical research enterprise.

It also includes UCSF Health [13], which comprises three top-ranked hospitals — UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals in San Francisco [14] and Oakland [15] — as well as Langlely Porter Psychiatric Hospital and Clinics, UCSF Benioff Children's Physicians, and the UCSF Faculty Practice. UCSF Health has affiliations with hospitals and health organizations throughout the Bay Area. UCSF faculty also provide all physician care at the public Zuckerberg San Francisco General Hospital and Trauma Center, and the San Francisco VA Medical Center. The UCSF Fresno Medical Education Program is a major branch of the University of California, San Francisco's School of Medicine.

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