

Dear Colleagues,

We write to share the news that **Gaudenz Danuser, Ph.D.**, holder of the Patrick E. Haggerty Distinguished Chair in Basic Biomedical Science, has announced his intention to step down from his position as Chair of the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics this fall. Dr. Danuser has accepted an opportunity to serve as the inaugural Co-Director for Computational Biology at Hoffmann-La Roche's Institute of Human Biology (IHB) in Basel, Switzerland. The IHB is a new initiative at Roche to leverage advances in organoid technology for drug discovery and gain deeper mechanistic understanding of the modes of action by therapeutic intervention.

Dr. Danuser joined UT Southwestern in 2013 and worked on the vision and implementation plan for a new Department of Bioinformatics structured as a computer science department in an academic medical center. Dallas philanthropist Lyda Hill supported the idea with a \$25 million gift to create the new Department. In 2015, Dr. Danuser was named the inaugural Chair of the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics, which was established to generate the intellectual and technical infrastructure required to integrate vastly diverse data types into models for the purpose of explaining biomedical processes from the molecular to the human scale and predicting future outcomes of process interventions from current observations.

Under his leadership, the Department has grown to 17 tenure- and research-track faculty leading the research activities of 120 scientists and become an important driver of discovery at our institution, not only by producing original research, but by housing the BioHPC – a world-class academic computing facility with a team of scientists dedicated to enabling computationally-driven research in the environment of a major academic medical center. The Department also oversees the Cecil H. and Ida Green Center for Systems Biology, which focuses on probing, modeling, and programming of genetic and molecular circuits in cancer and bacteria.

Dr. Danuser received his training as an engineer and computer scientist at ETH Zurich in Switzerland. He completed his postdoctoral studies at the Marine Biology Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, where he developed his vision for applying machine learning to the discovery of basic cellular functions. He returned to ETH for his first faculty position and then went on to serve as Professor of Cell Biology at The Scripps Research Institute in California and at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Danuser's work at UTSW has focused on understanding roles of cell shape regulation in cancer cell proliferation, survival, and drug resistance. The Danuser Lab develops innovative quantitative imaging methods to experimentally probe these processes and uses machine learning and tools from financial mathematics to compile the data in mechanistic models. Key findings have shown how cancer cells acutely modulate morphological programs and cytoskeleton structure to control molecular signals and metabolism in ever-changing environments. This rather unexpected mechanism of oncogenesis is opening new windows for effective cancer therapy.

He is a Fellow of the American Society of Cell Biology (2020) and the American Institute for Medical and Biological Engineering (2018). His commitment to nurturing the next generation of scientists has been recognized with the Outstanding Educator Award from the UT Southwestern Academy of Teachers (2017) and the Excellence in Postdoctoral Mentoring Award granted by UT Southwestern's Postdoctoral Association (2015).

We are pleased to announce that **W. Lee Kraus, Ph.D.**, Director of the Cecil H. and Ida Green Center for Reproductive Biology Sciences and Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, will serve as interim Chair until Dr. Danuser's successor is identified. **Michael Rosen, Ph.D.**, Professor and Chair of the Department of Biophysics, will serve as Chair of the committee that will conduct a national search. Other members of the Search Committee are:

- Samuel Achilefu, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of Biomedical Engineering
- Wendy Chapman, Ph.D., Associate Dean for Health Informatics and Director of the Center for Clinical Informatics
- Jaehyuk Choi, M.D., Ph.D., Director, Center for Cellular Therapies and Cancer Immunology in the Simmons Comprehensive Cancer Center and Professor of Dermatology
- Nick Grishin, Ph.D., Professor of Biophysics and Biochemistry
- Anke Henning, Ph.D., Director of the Advanced Imaging Research Center and Professor of Radiology
- Gary Hon, Ph.D., Associate Professor in the Cecil H. and Ida Green Center for Reproductive Biology Sciences, the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics, and of Obstetrics and Gynecology
- Steve Jiang, Ph.D., Professor of Radiation Oncology and Division Chief of Medical Physics and Engineering
- Amil Shah, M.D., Professor of Internal Medicine and in the O'Donnell School of Public Health
- Guanghua Xiao, Ph.D., Professor in the O'Donnell School of Public Health, in the Department of Biomedical Engineering, and in the Lyda Hill Department of Bioinformatics
- Joan Conaway, Ph.D., Vice Provost and Dean of Basic Research (ex-officio)
- Eric Peterson, M.D., M.P.H., Vice Provost and Senior Associate Dean of Clinical Research (ex-officio)

We are grateful for Dr. Danuser's service and contributions to UT Southwestern and look forward to building on the success made possible by his vision and leadership.

Sincerely,

W. P. Andrew Lee, M.D.  
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost  
Dean, UT Southwestern Medical School

Joan W. Conaway, Ph.D.  
Vice Provost and Dean of Basic Research