



Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to announce that Rob Spitale, Ph.D. has been appointed as Associate Director and Founding Associate Dean of Research for the planned UC Irvine School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences. In this role, Dr. Spitale will provide leadership to develop and implement strategies supporting faculty research within the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences and the Department of Clinical Pharmacy Practice. He will also facilitate efforts to increase graduate and postdoctoral fellowship and training grant submissions as well as actively promoting excellence, diversity, and inclusion in all research programs. A major focus of his role will be to cultivate mutually beneficial research opportunities and partnerships within the UC system and among outside entities (e.g., pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies, foundations, collaboratives).



Dr. Spitale received his Ph.D. degree in Chemistry at the University of Rochester in 2009 as an Elon Huntington Hooker Fellow. He then transitioned to postdoctoral studies at Stanford University and was awarded the A.P. Giannini Fellowship to support his research. Dr. Spitale joined UCI Pharmaceutical Sciences department as an Assistant Professor in 2014, was promoted to Associate Professor in 2018, and recently rose to the ranks of Professor this year. In this time his research has focused on developing novel chemical and bioinformatic approaches toward understanding the role of RNA structure and function in normal biology as well as disease. He has received numerous awards for his research contributions, including: the NIH Director's New Innovator Award, Pew Biomedical Research Fellowship, an American Cancer Society IRG Award, a W.M. Keck Medical Research Grant Award (w/ Professor John Chaput), the Ono Pharmaceuticals Breakthrough Science Award, and was recently named the Rising Star by the International Chemical Biology Society. Beyond his research accomplishments, Dr. Spitale has also been an active presence in the UCI community as the Director of the RNA Club and its annual symposium, a co-founder of the Chemical and Systems Biology Club, the faculty advisor for the Pharm Sci undergraduate student council, and a vital part of the development of the planned School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences having served on the Pharmacy Planning group responsible for creating proposals to the UCI Senate, UC System, and the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE).

With his energy, wealth of knowledge, and expertise Dr. Spitale will be a valuable member of the leadership team. Building on the stellar research record of the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences he will spearhead initiatives to create a high value translational research continuum within the school from target identification, drug discovery and diagnostics, evaluation of toxicology and pharmacology, through to clinical practice and patient populations.

Please join me in congratulating Dr. Spitale on his new role he will assume on July 1, 2020.

Jan D. Hirsch
Director and Founding Dean



