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**MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR**

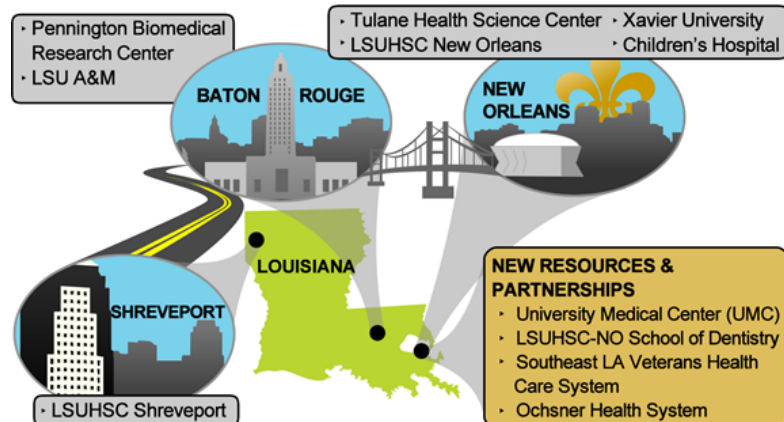


**Donna Ryan, MD**  
*LA CaTS Principal Investigator*

Over the summer, there have been several closing chapters and new beginnings for the LA CaTS Center. Most importantly, change in the director and the renewal of the LA CaTS Center grant from the NIH. As you know, I enthusiastically accepted the opportunity to lead this successful center last February after Dr. William Cefalu was selected as the new Chief Scientific and Medical Officer at the American Diabetes Association. Dr. Cefalu remains integrated in the center as a member on the Internal Advisory Committee. The NIH and my fellow Co-Program Directors, Dr. Steve Nelson (LSUHSC New Orleans) and Dr. L. Lee Hamm (Tulane University) have all been most supportive during that time of leadership change. Most notably, I am proud of the renewal of the LA CaTS Center for another five years from the NIH, that started July 1, 2017. The accomplishments and successes reported in our application were astounding and is a true testament to level of collaboration and commitment from all of our institutions involved.

Now that we are in the first year of our renewal, what does the future look like? How will we grow? How can we improve our reach? What are our priorities? All questions answered in our 1500+ page grant application, so I will try and sum up the highlights. The theme of the next five years is “addressing health disparities & improving health outcomes”. The LA CaTS Center Cores and Resources are set up to provide the infrastructure to address the health issues plaguing Louisiana citizens, especially in our most vulnerable populations. We will continue to invest in our junior investigators, providing more funding, collaboration and training opportunities, continuing to increase the critical mass of clinical and translational researchers. Particularly through our professional development and pilot grants activities, we plan to engage more multi-disciplinary users of our resources that will lead to more multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional team science. We also look forward to the expansion of our biomedical informatics capabilities to further promote research involving clinical data, biorepositories and precision medicine, and make it more accessible. We will grow the number of clinical trial units available to investigators to conduct clinical and translational projects, starting with units at LSU Health Sciences Center-Shreveport and LSU Dental School in New Orleans, and continue to work towards more streamlined facilitated IRB processes. Lastly, probably the largest expansion, is the addition

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**Acknowledgement:**  
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of new institutional partners to the LA CaTS family. Like the other LA CaTS Center Research Partners, our new partners all bring strengths and expertise to our program. Therefore, it gives me great pleasure to welcome our new Research Partners- Ochsner Health System, University Medical Center (UMC) and Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System ("New Orleans VA"). Investigators from these institutions have access to LA CaTS Center resources and will offer their own resources to other LA CaTS researchers.

To sum up, we will expand access to our resources and continue to build upon the strengths and collaborations that have been built over the last five years. As Director and Principal Investigator of the LA CaTS Center, I am enthusiastic about the opportunities this center will bring to research in Louisiana, and the potential impact to our chronic disease and vulnerable populations.

## LA CaTS in the Community

Researchers are able to use the LA CaTS Community Advisory Boards (CABs) to solicit community feedback at any stage of the research process, even at the grant application stage. Depending on the type of grant, this proactive approach may strengthen the application. Currently the LA CaTS Center supports three CABs, one in New Orleans, one in Baton Rouge and a newly formed one in Shreveport. Below is a real world example of researchers utilizing the CABs in a NIH grant submission.

"A pragmatic, scalable e-health intervention for management of gestational weight gain in low-income mothers."

*Dr. Leanne Redman, PI, and Dr. L. Anne Gilmore, Co-PI (Pennington Biomedical) presented their concept proposal for feedback to the LA CaTS Baton Rouge CAB at large. A subcommittee of the larger CAB consisting of 4 CAB members provided detailed feedback. Dr. Redman walked the CAB through the aims of her intended research in the Louisiana WIC program which included at the heart, translation of a smart phone intervention (called "SmartMoms") for healthy management of weight gain in pregnancy to the WIC population. The CAB was intimately involved in helping to determine selection of study outcomes, subject eligibility criteria, frequency of outcome assessment measures, recruitment and retention plan.*

*Click [here](#) for more details on the planned involvement of the CABs in this research.*

*If you are interested in learning more about the LA CaTS CABs and how to utilize them in your research, contact the Community Engagement & Outreach Resource at [community@LACaTS.org](mailto:community@LACaTS.org) or make a SPARC service request.*

## SPOTLIGHT: New LA CaTS Funding Opportunities

The LA CaTS Center Pilot Grants Program is now accepting applications for two funding opportunities, the 2017 Planning Grant Program & Visiting Scholar Program (Round 2). Applications for both programs will be accepted on a rolling deadline basis until June 30, 2018 or until the maximum number of applications awarded has been met. Click on the program below for more information.

### 2017 Planning Grant Program

The overall objective of the program is to provide support so that junior and/or senior faculty can collaborate on planning and preparation for submission of interdisciplinary and innovative grant applications. Investigators with sufficient preliminary data will be eligible to apply for a Planning Grant for up to \$5,000 in total costs for collaborative scientific grant-writing teams.

### 2017 Visiting Scholar Program

The overall objective of the program is to provide support so that junior faculty can extend and enhance their skill set in research by visiting laboratories or research programs, and working with mentors to learn new techniques or obtain expertise in a specific topic area. Each award may be up to \$5,000 in total costs.

## THE 411: WHAT'S COMING UP ON THE CALENDAR

1. Level 1 Research Coordinator Training - **November 10, 2017** at Tulane University
2. Round 6 Pilot Grants Full Applications Due - **November 13, 2017**
3. Monthly REDCap Hour Webinar - **November 30, 2017**
4. Round 7 Pilot Grant Funding Opportunity to be released - **January 2018**
5. Call for 2018-2019 LA CaTS Roadmap Scholar Applications - **Mid-January 2018**
6. Translational Science 2018 (Association for Clinical & Translational Science) - **April 19-21, 2018** in Washington  
<http://www.actscience.org/translationalscience>

For more information on our Calendar of Events, please visit [www.lacats.org/calendar/](http://www.lacats.org/calendar/). To add an event, contact us at [info@LACaTS.org](mailto:info@LACaTS.org).

## LA CaTS Center 2017-2018 Roadmap Scholars

Each year the Professional Development Core selects qualified Scholars into the LA CaTS Roadmap Scholars Program. The Roadmap Scholars are junior faculty members whose goals are to become sustainable independent researchers. The Roadmap Scholars together with their mentors, will design an individual Roadmap leading to independence that includes didactic courses in clinical research methodology, molecular medicine and genetics, health disparity, ethics, and their mentored research leading to a “K” award or equivalent.

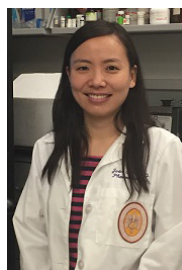
Please join us in welcoming the 6th Cohort of Roadmap Scholars: Juan Gao, MD (LSUHSC), Candice Myers, PhD (Pennington Biomedical), and Ibolya Rutkai, PhD (Tulane University).



Candice Myers, PhD



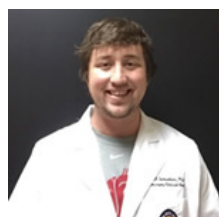
Ibolya Rutkai, PhD



Juan Gao, MD

For further detail about each Scholar’s project, please visit the following link on the [Professional Development Core website](#).

## FEATURED INVESTIGATOR



### Derrick Samuelson, PhD

Postdoctoral Researcher  
LSU Health Sciences Center-New Orleans  
LA CaTS 2016 Meritorious Scholar

Dr. Samuelson graduated from Montana State University with a B.Sc. in microbiology, and then joined the laboratory of Dr. Konkel in 2009 at Washington State University for his graduate studies. After completion of my Ph.D. he joined the laboratory of Drs. Shellito and Welsh at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center New Orleans as a postdoctoral researcher. In 2016, Dr. Samuelson received the LA CaTS Meritorious Scholar award. His research interests are in microbiology, host-pathogen interactions, and immunology.

Read more about Dr. Samuelson & his research:

[www.lacats.org/news-and-publications/featured-investigators/derrick-samuelson/](http://www.lacats.org/news-and-publications/featured-investigators/derrick-samuelson/)

## The Healthy Literacy Corner

### “Biobanking. What does it mean? A Literacy Pilot Study”



Terry Davis, PhD  
Director



Connie Arnold, PhD  
Co-Director

Rapidly developing precision medicine and genomic testing

initiatives are creating health literacy and communication challenges. Clear, accessible information on clinical trials, genomics and bio banking is lacking. Early evidence from the Precision Medicine Initiative, “All of Us” found messages need to be simpler and that people needed to be clear what they are consenting to do.

The Health Literacy Core received a pilot grant from LSUHSC-S’s Feist Weller Cancer Center to conduct focus groups to identify understandable and acceptable messages for Louisiana citizens. The study included 103 participants in urban and rural communities in Louisiana, including FQHC patients and providers, church groups, support groups and other community groups such as Council on Aging sites.

### Brief Findings

- People are increasingly aware of clinical trials and personalized medicine due to ads on TV, especially 23 & me and health center genomic treatment ads.
- Almost all participants were interested in research but not aware of studies or how to find out about them or enroll.
- They were particularly interested in learning about studies focused on disease they or their family had.

### Genomic /biobanking

- Most participants were open to participating in clinical trials and biobanking even if it would not benefit them directly.
- Confidentiality was a concern, some patients wanted to know what researchers were going to do with their blood? How much information about “me” will be kept and what will it be used for?

### Messaging

- African American participants indicated that the message needs to be ALL people are needed for studies to improve treatments and find cures. Targeted African American recruitment seems suspicious.
- Patients suggested calling it study instead of clinical trial. Terms like biobanking and genomics sounded intimidating and alarming

and did not mean anything to most participants. Suggested wording: “your blood or tissue is going to be stored in a bank”.

### Recruitment suggestions

- Patients said information and recommendation about participation in clinical trials is most effective/actionable if they come from Primary Care Physician (PCP) or oncologist whom they have relationship with and trust.
- FQHC patients suggested poster in waiting room so they could ask their primary care provider about the study, avoid billboards and grocery stores which appear untrustworthy.
- Very few had ever looked for clinical trials on the internet or social media.
- A source of health information for community participants was community magazines, health system pamphlets and materials from organization like AARP.

### Provider input

- All safety-net clinic physicians, NPs and Medicine residents were interested in clinical trials and wanted closer ties with researchers.
- Primary Care physicians want basic information about clinical trials to inform patients and suggested closer relationships with academic health center faculty to have update to date information.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

- African American and white adults were interested in clinical trials but not clear how to learn about them. Most are willing to participate but never asked.
- Participation of vulnerable patients in clinical trials and biobanking could be enhanced by developing working relationships with community clinic PCPs.
- PCPs are conduit to patient participation.
- Participation in biobanking with underserved and rural participants could be enhanced using health van to overcome transportation barriers.

To contact the Health Literacy core, email [literacy@LACaTS.org](mailto:literacy@LACaTS.org) or request a consultation on [SPARC](#).

## IRBs: SMART vs. Choice

Are you interested in collaborating on a research study with other institutions but not sure how to work with multiple IRBs? There are 2 reliance platforms to streamline the IRB review process for multisite studies, IRBchoice & SMART IRB.

For more information, you can visit the LA CaTS Ethics & Regulatory Knowledge Core webpage or go directly to the reliance platform’s websites listed below:



<https://www.irbchoice.org/p/investigators/>

- System Demo videos
- Guidance Documents
- Study Registration Page



<https://smartirb.org/reliance/>

- Reliance Walkthrough Video
- Request Investigator Access
  - Reliance Checklist

### Questions?

Contact the Ethics & Regulatory Core at [ethicsreg@lacats.org](mailto:ethicsreg@lacats.org) or request a consultation on [SPARC](#).





**IF YOU ARE USING A LA CATS CENTER RESOURCE, YOU CAN:**

- Manage your project information and requests in one central location!
- Request or obtain pricing for research services across LA CaTS Center Institutions!
- Build your budget with budget development tools!
- Create patient visit schedules and indicate source of funding!
- Communicate directly with your service providers!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [SPARC.LACATS.ORG](http://SPARC.LACATS.ORG)



LA CaTS Center  
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