

Annual Report 2018



SCIENCE
PHILANTHROPY
ALLIANCE



**A special thank you to
our board and members
for supporting our
mission of increasing
philanthropic support for
basic scientific research.**

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Executive Summary

2018 was a notable year for the Science Philanthropy Alliance. With an additional advisor hired in 2017 and two science fellows on the team, the Alliance continued to mature as an organization that focuses on supporting philanthropists who are interested in funding basic science. While 2016 tested the proof of concept for the Alliance's strategy and 2017 saw the expansion of advising resources, 2018 saw the Alliance begin to consistently utilize the expertise and models of members in its advising work with new philanthropists.

In 2018, Alliance staff and consultants actively advised 28 funders whose total net worth is approximately \$261 billion. At least eleven of these began or expanded their giving programs in 2018, with the support of the Alliance, funding a wide range of research, including basic science in biochemistry, energy, ocean science, cosmology, artificial intelligence-supported research relating to infectious disease and neurodegeneration, and supporting early career women and minority life-scientists, among others. Additional philanthropists are laying the groundwork and infrastructure for their future giving. The Alliance estimates total commitments to basic science in 2018 influenced by the Alliance at \$388 million.



In 2018, Alliance staff and consultants actively advised 28 funders whose total net worth is approximately \$261 billion.

Two tactics in particular proved useful in accelerating private funding to basic science:

1. Partnership opportunities. The Alliance's initiation and facilitation of introductions and discussions among members and advisees led to additional science research funding through partnerships. Partnerships with established funders help new funders accelerate their giving without the need to build their own infrastructure, while giving them an opportunity to learn from their partners about science funding. At the same time, partnerships allow established foundations to leverage their own funding with additional support from new funders. Partnership development has been one of the Alliance's fastest growing areas of service; to lead it, the Alliance has named its science fellow Jason Tung (whose fellowship, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, concluded at the end of 2018) as the new director of partnerships.
2. Building community. In 2018 the Alliance also built and supported affinity groups for particular areas of science to help educate new funders and to facilitate opportunities for collaboration with established funders. In response to interest from a number of advisees interested in ocean science, and spurred on by one advisee in particular, the Alliance organized three ocean science workshops in 2018. These workshops helped inform funders about opportunities for philanthropists to fund ocean science. Funder demand for the ocean-related workshops continues, and the Alliance hosted another event on ocean science data in January 2019.

100X the Impact of Direct Science Grants

Critical to the Alliance's mission are its members, who provide financial support for the Alliance's work. For the past three years (2016–2018), the Alliance estimates that each dollar of support from members has influenced \$105 in private funding for basic science, creating

significant leverage for members' philanthropic investment in the Alliance's activities.¹ In addition, many members have been engaged in the Alliance's advising work, sharing their experiences and knowledge with the philanthropists whom the Alliance advises ("advisees").

Each dollar to the Science Philanthropy Alliance influenced \$105 in private funding for basic science.

While some members act as informal "advisors" to new philanthropists, others are advisees who have found value in the Alliance's services and have become members. In 2018, two organizations that began their interactions with the Alliance as advisees, Mountain Philanthropy Partners and the Open Philanthropy Project, joined the Alliance.

Here are some of the Alliance's highlights and accomplishments in 2018:

- Provided advising services to 28 philanthropists
- Grew membership from 22 at the end of 2017 to 25 in 2018 with the addition of three new members: the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (benefactor), Mountain Philanthropy Partners (associate member), and the Open Philanthropy Project (associate member)
- Hosted three ocean science workshops in response to advisee requests
- Hosted three regional science philanthropy events for philanthropists, in Austin, Texas, Chicago, and London
- Hosted four members' meetings, including two in-person meetings and two meetings via videoconference

In recognition of its contributions, the board of the Association of Independent Research Institutes honored the Science Philanthropy Alliance with the 2018 AIRI Public Service Award.

¹ Average yearly total new commitments per year (2016–2018)/average yearly Alliance revenues from members (2016–2018)

2018 Activities

This report describes the Science Philanthropy Alliance's activities in 2018 in pursuit of each of the following objectives:

- 1** Support new and established US and UK philanthropists' increased giving to basic science.
- 2** Ensure board and members have high satisfaction with Alliance services and activities, and continue a high level of engagement to support the Alliance mission.
- 3** Help research institutions be more successful in increasing private funding for basic science to their institutions.

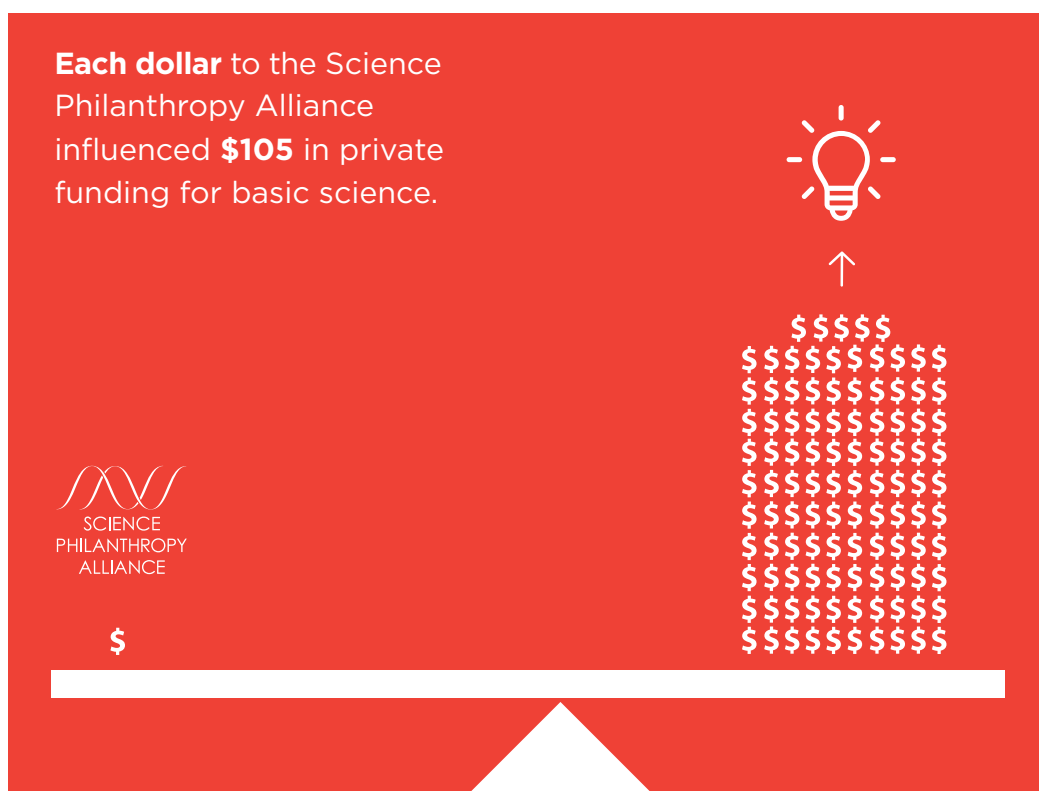
Objective 1

Support new and established US and UK philanthropists' increased giving to basic science

Advising work continued to be the Alliance's focus in 2018. With the addition of Alliance advisor Sue Merrilees and a second science fellow funded by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Kate Lowry, the Alliance devoted more time and attention to work with each of its advisees.

These additional staff resources have resulted in a growth in the number of advisees and increasing engagement of philanthropists interested in

supporting basic science. For the past three years (2016-2018), the Alliance estimates that each dollar of support from members has influenced \$105 in private funding for basic science, creating significant leverage for members' philanthropic investment in the Alliance's activities. The impact of a member's grant to the Alliance is 105 times greater than that of an equivalent grant to support science directly.



Notably, partnerships turned out to be one of the Alliance's fastest growing opportunities to accelerate giving. Alliance staff identified a number of opportunities for those new to science philanthropy to collaborate with more established foundations. These win-win scenarios leveraged investments that established foundations were already making, and allowed new philanthropists to take advantage of already vetted programs, to support science research with a minimum of staff, and to learn from more experienced foundations. For example, because of a connection made by

the Alliance, an advisee agreed to fund its first science gift—an artificial intelligence project funded by an Alliance member. The Alliance also facilitated partnership connections for the Research Corporation for Science Advancement (RCSA)'s 2018 Scialog programs, ultimately bringing in three partners to expand these programs. To support the growth in partnership opportunities, the Alliance named Jason Tung, whose fellowship with the Alliance ended in December 2018, as director of partnerships.

Community-building was another significant activity in 2018. In response to requests and feedback from funders, the Alliance continued to host events to build community and to provide learning opportunities for philanthropists. In particular, the interest of one advisee in ocean science sparked three funder events related to ocean science: in January, April, and September. Fourteen funders, including three principals, and six scientists attended the September workshop. The success of this workshop led to the development of a subsequent “Ocean Data Science” workshop, which was co-hosted with Schmidt Marine Technology Partners in January 2019.

Because of the extensive interest of members and advisees in neurodegeneration research and related diseases, the Alliance engaged with multiple organizations (ex. World Without Alzheimer’s, OneMind, and the Milken Institute’s Center for Strategic Philanthropy) to help identify promising and fundable areas of basic research, and to encourage the involvement and participation of

the philanthropic community. The Alliance invited funders to two events on “Reconfiguring the Landscape for the Alzheimer’s Challenge,” hosted by the UC Santa Barbara Neuroscience Research Institute and the MIT Laboratory for Financial Engineering, in February and October. The Alliance also hosted discussions with funders at these events.

The Alliance also hosted events to educate the philanthropic community about giving to basic science. With members Wellcome and Winton Philanthropies (now the David and Claudia Harding Foundation), the Alliance co-hosted the Alliance’s first UK science philanthropy learning session in London in March. Seventy-three attended, including 24 philanthropists and foundation representatives. In addition, in recognition of the concentration of philanthropists in Texas, the Alliance co-hosted a learning session for Texas philanthropists in February at the University of Texas at Austin. More than 83 attended, including 25 philanthropists and foundation representatives.



Scientists at the Alliance’s September ocean science workshop (left to right): Stuart Sandin, Scripps Institution of Oceanography; Alexandra Worden, Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute; Jim Bellingham, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution; Jennifer Lewis, Harvard University; LuAnne Thompson, University of Washington; and Kanna Rajan, Norwegian University of Science and Technology



Panelists at the Science Philanthropy Alliance's London event (left to right): David Harding and David Sainsbury, and moderator Harvey Fineberg. Photo by David Sandison/Wellcome



Panelists at the Science Philanthropy Alliance-University of Texas, Austin learning session (left to right): Heather Winn Bowman, Steve Winn, Lowisa Rainwater, Todd Rainwater, and Sheridan Mitchell Lorenz. Photo by Vivian Abagiu, UT Austin

The Alliance also hosted a luncheon for Chicago-area philanthropists in July.

Other outreach to philanthropists included:

- a presentation at the Goldman Sachs Women's Symposium,
- a presentation at the Analytical, Life Science & Diagnostics Association meeting,
- co-organizing a meeting about ocean science at TED,
- representing science philanthropists and foundations at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER)'s Science of Science Funding annual conference, and
- support for the Aligning Science Across Parkinson's Initiative Funders Forum hosted by The Milken Institute Center for Strategic Philanthropy and the Sergey Brin Family Foundation (agenda, attendee, and speaker identification).

In addition to partnerships, community building, and events, the Alliance engaged in many custom projects to support the development and execution of its advisees' philanthropy.

These included:

- supporting foundations with their recruitment of science advisory committees or science advisors,
- providing information on search firms for science program officers and compensation for science program officers,
- creating customized content on ocean acidification and coastal human health,
- identifying scientists working on microbiomes in food and agriculture,
- developing an information packet on measurement and evaluation for advisees, including content from previous workshops and additional resources, and
- advising and helping vet basic science research opportunities on behalf of a prize-giving organization, to ensure that the science proposals represented strong basic science.

Ultimately, two out of the ten science proposals that moved on to the donor review stage represented basic science.

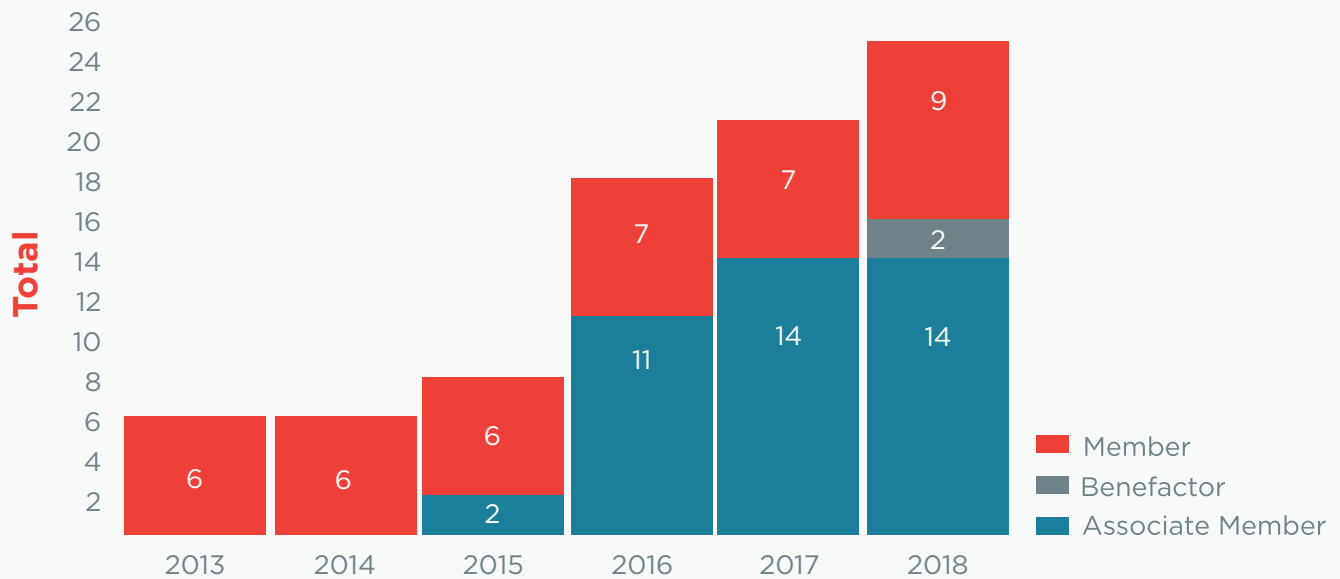
Objective 2

Ensure members have high satisfaction with Alliance services and activities, and continue their high engagement to support the Alliance mission

In 2018, three associate members became full members: the Rita Allen Foundation, the Heising-Simons Foundation, and the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation. The Alliance welcomed as new board members the three leaders who represent these institutions: Elizabeth Christopherson (Rita Allen Foundation), Deanna Gomby (Heising-Simons Foundation), and Claire Pomeroy (Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation). This reflects the fact that as philanthropies mature they are more likely to take the Alliance's mission as part of their own.

In addition, one new benefactor and two new associate members joined the Alliance: the David and Lucile Packard Foundation (benefactor); Mountain Philanthropy Partners (associate member); and Open Philanthropy Project (associate member).

Growth and Retention of Members



While the Alliance's mission is to increase private funding for basic science, its role as a hub for the science philanthropy community also provides value to members. As such, the Alliance has provided support to members in various ways. This has included promoting partnership opportunities for several members and supporting recruitment for a communications study sponsored by the Rita Allen Foundation and the Lasker Foundation. The Alliance also participated in the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) meetings about the science of science research. This NBER initiative, funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, is a topic of interest to members. Established member organizations have told Alliance staff that it is of great value that, through the Alliance, their science staff members get to know peers at other philanthropies.

The Alliance hosted four members' meetings in 2018, including:

- videoconference meetings in February and September,
- a May in-person meeting, hosted by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The meeting included:
 - presentations from Alliance members
 - Adam Falk from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation,
 - Marc Malandro from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative,
 - Claire Pomeroy from the Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation,
 - Elizabeth Christopherson from the Rita Allen Foundation, and
 - Dan Linzer from Research Corporation for Science Advancement,
 - a panel of economists discussing their research on improving the productivity of scientific research (led and organized by Daniel Goroff from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation),
 - a presentation by Ron Daniels, president of Johns Hopkins University, on a multi-institution initiative to support early career scientists, and
 - discussions about federal funding for basic science and communications, among other topics.

- an in-person meeting in November, hosted by the Heising-Simons Foundation. The meeting included:
 - member presentations including:
 - a presentation by Stu Feldman from Schmidt Futures on supporting artificial intelligence in scientific research,
 - an interview by Harvey Fineberg of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation of Priscilla Chan from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, and
 - a presentation by Nicole Small from Lyda Hill Philanthropies,
 - a presentation by Beth Hillman from Mills College on the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM)'s study on sexual harassment of women in scientific fields,
 - a discussion with Alliance consultants David Baltimore (Caltech) and Robert "Tij" Tjian (UC Berkeley) about their role in advising science philanthropists, and
 - recognition of outgoing consultant Robert Birgeneau, chancellor emeritus and professor of physics at the University of California, Berkeley. Birgeneau worked closely with the Alliance's research partners, and was lauded for his influential role in the early years of the Alliance.

Upon member organizations' request, the Alliance also organized an Alliance communicators' meeting in San Francisco in October 2018. Over half of the Alliance's member organizations attended.



Harvey Fineberg, president of the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, interviews Priscilla Chan, co-founder of the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, at the November Science Philanthropy Alliance meeting

Objective 3

Help research institutions be more successful in increasing private funding for basic science

The Alliance encourages research institutions to be more successful in fundraising for basic science. In 2018, the Alliance convened and participated in workshops, scientific events, and topic-specific meetings to share best practices in fundraising for basic science. It hosted the fourth Alliance's research partners' conference in July, which was attended by 126 people: senior research and senior development representatives from 38 research institutions and 17 member and non-member funding organizations. Attendees heard from 25 presenters, including philanthropists and foundations.



Alliance members sharing their perspectives at the Alliance's Research Partner Conference (left to right): Adam Falk, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation; Dan Linzer, Research Corporation for Science Advancement; and Bob Conn, The Kavli Foundation. Photo by John Zich

The Alliance also continued to provide content about the science philanthropists' perspective to research institutions. This included nine original blog posts about science philanthropists' insights and science fundraising, quarterly newsletters to the Alliance distribution list (which includes research institutions as well as members, advisees, and other stakeholders), as well as news about basic science and science philanthropy distributed via Twitter and Facebook.

For the third year in a row, the Alliance collaborated with the Council for Aid to Education to conduct and disseminate the results of the 2017 "Private Funding of Basic Science" survey, which provides data on research institutions' fundraising for basic science. The survey indicated that 42 research institutions in the US received more than \$2.3B for basic science research from private sources. Survey participation increased from 27 research institutions in 2016 to 42 in 2017; the percentage of giving to basic science remained steady.

The Alliance staff attends and participates in a significant convening of national organizations interested in basic science. During the 2018 American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Annual Meeting, Alliance fellow Jason Tung moderated a panel on basic science philanthropy that included two Alliance members. Valerie Conn also presented at the AAAS Forum on Science and Technology Policy in June. At the American Geophysical Union fall meeting in December, Alliance fellow Kate Lowry gave a presentation about the work of the Alliance.

Operations

Upon request of the Alliance board, in 2018 the Alliance began a five-year evaluation of the Alliance's effectiveness. Alliance staff identified an outside measurement and evaluation consultancy (ORS Impact) with whom to partner. ORS Impact and Alliance staff began preparations for the study, which will be conducted in early 2019, culminating in a report to the board and members by mid-2019.

To support its activities, the Alliance continues to fine-tune its operations, including updates to the Salesforce database and related applications. The Alliance hired Lana Ha, an administrative assistant, in 2018.

Challenges Faced

After nearly four years of operating with a professional staff, the Science Philanthropy Alliance continues to learn from and adjust its strategies and tactics to meet its objectives effectively. In support of deeper engagement with philanthropists, in 2017 the Alliance recognized the need for support of advisees' specific fields of interest and the advantages of building funding communities to encourage giving in these areas. This resulted in event programming focused on ocean science and neurodegenerative diseases. The strategy has been successful and the Alliance plans additional field-specific, community-building activities in response to advisee and member needs.

One challenge faced by the Alliance was its effort to increase private giving to basic science in the UK. Alliance members Wellcome and Winton Philanthropies encouraged Alliance staff to explore UK philanthropy opportunities, leading to a learning session in London in March. Alliance members and staff invited a broad range of potential basic science philanthropists to this event, which featured highly-respected scientists as well as established science funders from the US and UK. Alliance staff found that philanthropy is at a different stage in the UK than in the US; there is greater reliance on government funding for science in the UK. Alliance staff also learned that several notable wealthy individuals with established foundations fund basic science; several others are building foundations that will include basic science support. The Alliance staff is actively advising the latter.

The Alliance also looked for opportunities to maximize its efficient use of resources. One project that was re-assessed was the Alliance's annual survey of research institutions to track private funding for basic science. The Alliance survey proved useful in providing a benchmark for the scale of private giving to basic science. However, the data gathering was not without complications: respondents found the process of gathering data for this survey very cumbersome and time-intensive, and there was significant disagreement on the definition of basic science, which resulted in discrepancies in the data collected. In 2018, the National Science Foundation (NSF) began a new survey of nonprofit institutions which, together with its annual survey of higher education institutions, will provide the best data on all sources of funding for basic science at universities and research institutes. The NSF plans to publish the survey results in 2019. As a result, the Science Philanthropy Alliance chose to discontinue its own survey until it has had an opportunity to review the results from the NSF survey later in 2019.

Looking Ahead

The Alliance's focus will continue to be on advising new philanthropists, as well as building the membership and serving members' needs, while shifting away from activities focused on research partners.

As the Alliance begins 2019, its advising portfolio continues to grow due to referrals, as new individuals and families start foundations that will include basic science research funding. Its unique advantage is the knowledge and experience of its established member organizations, which provides new philanthropists opportunities for peer-to-peer learning. The Alliance plans to continue to implement this successful strategy to encourage and support new philanthropic commitments to basic research.

The Alliance's focus will continue to be on advising new philanthropists, as well as building the membership and serving members' needs, while shifting away from activities focused on research partners.

In 2019, the Alliance also looks forward to the findings of the five-year evaluation of the Alliance's activities. Once this evaluation is completed, the Alliance staff will work with its board and consultants to develop a three-year plan reflecting the findings of the report.



Board Members

Robert W. Conn, Ph.D. (board chair)

President and CEO, The Kavli Foundation

Adam F. Falk, Ph.D.

President, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Harvey V. Fineberg, M.D., Ph.D.

President, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

Deanna Gomby, Ph.D.

President and CEO, Heising-Simons Foundation

Elizabeth Good Christopherson

President and CEO, Rita Allen Foundation

Daniel Linzer, Ph.D.

President, Research Corporation for Science Advancement

Claire Pomeroy, MD, MBA

President, Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation

James Simons, Ph.D.

Chairman, Simons Foundation

Sir Jim Smith, Ph.D.

Director of Science, Wellcome

Members

Members

Heising-Simons Foundation

The Kavli Foundation

Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation

Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

Research Corporation for Science

Advancement

Rita Allen Foundation

Simons Foundation

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Wellcome

Benefactors

Howard Hughes Medical Institute

David and Lucile Packard Foundation

Associate Members

Anonymous

Chan Zuckerberg Initiative

The Shurl and Kay Curci Foundation

Dalio Philanthropies

David and Claudia Harding Foundation

The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley

Charitable Trust

Lyda Hill Philanthropies

The Klarman Family Foundation

Leon Levy Foundation

Mountain Philanthropy Partners

Open Philanthropy Project

The Page Family

The Rockefeller Foundation

Schmidt Futures

Winn Family Foundation

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Valerie Conn

Executive Director

Ruby Barcklay

Director of Communications

Elenoa Fuka

Operations Manager

Lana Ha

Executive Assistant

Julie Kohrt

Director of Events

Kate Lowry, Ph.D.

Fellow

Sue Merrilees

Advisor

Jason Tung, Ph.D.

Fellow

David Baltimore, Ph.D.

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