



David McKeon
212-365-7440
dmckeon@nyscf.org

THE NEW YORK STEM CELL FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES 2017 CLASS OF NYSCF – ROBERTSON INVESTIGATORS

NEW YORK, NY (October 24, 2017) – The New York Stem Cell Foundation (NYSCF) announced the 2017 class of NYSCF – Robertson Investigators, welcoming six of the most talented stem cell researchers and neuroscientists from around the world into the NYSCF Investigator Program.

The NYSCF Investigator Program fosters and encourages promising early career scientists whose cutting-edge research holds the potential to accelerate treatments and cures, and provides support for the NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Investigator Awards and the NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigator Awards.

The awards provide critical seed funding – \$1.5 million over five years – to outstanding young scientists as they move beyond their postdoctoral training to establish their own, independent laboratories. This year, three scientists joined the eighth class of **NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Investigators** and three others joined the seventh class of **NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigators**.

“These promising young scientists represent the future of their respective fields,” said Susan L. Solomon, CEO and Co-founder of NYSCF. “Their research will play a critical role bringing the most promising stem cell science to patients in a wide number of disease areas and we are thrilled to support their important work and welcome them to the NYSCF Innovator Community.”

These awards enable Investigators to pursue high-risk/high-reward research that traditional funding does not support. To date, the NYSCF global community includes 47 NYSCF – Robertson Investigators and Alumni at 34 institutions throughout the world.

The NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Investigator Awards selection committee included 2015 MacArthur Fellow Lorenz Studer, MD, Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; Fiona Watt, DPhil, King’s College London in the United Kingdom; Owen Witte, MD, University of California, Los Angeles; Irv Weissman, MD, Stanford University, and Amy Wagers, PhD, Harvard University, NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Investigator Awards jury member and 2013 NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Prize recipient.

Catherine Dulac, PhD, Harvard University, chaired the NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigator Awards selection committee and was joined on the jury by Jonathan Flint, MD, Wellcome Trust Centre for Human Genetics and University of California, Los Angeles; Arnold Kriegstein, MD, PhD, University of California, San Francisco; and Leslie Vosshall, PhD, The Rockefeller University.

The 2017 NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Investigators:

- **Sergiu Pasca, MD**, Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at Stanford University, develops new approaches for studying human brain development and uncovering the mechanisms of neuropsychiatric disorders.
- **Louis Vermeulen, MD, PhD**, Principal Investigator at the Center for Experimental Molecular Medicine at Academic Medical Center, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, focuses on the role stem cells play in colorectal cancer development and progression, studying the effects of genetic mutations on the behavior of stem cells in the gut.
- **Brian Wainger, MD, PhD**, Assistant Professor of Neurology and Anesthesia at Massachusetts General Hospital, aims to develop a precision medicine platform by which analyses of stem cells and derived cell types can be used to build more powerful human models in the laboratory. Dr. Wainger is also conducting clinical trials in patients with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS),

The 2017 NYSCF – Robertson Neuroscience Investigators:

- **Stephen Brohawn, PhD**, Assistant Professor in the Department of Molecular & Cellular Biology at the University of California, Berkeley, focuses on understanding how the nervous system senses and responds to physical forces. This function underlies many important senses, including hearing and touch, as well contributing to balance, pain, breathing, digestion, and blood pressure control.
- **Gregory Scherrer, PhD, PharmD**, Assistant Professor in the Departments of Anesthesiology and Neurosurgery at Stanford University School of Medicine, works to alter the brain's interpretation of pain signals to eliminate the unpleasantness associated with pain and restore patients' quality of life with a goal of finding new pain relief solutions.
- **Iilana Witten, PhD**, Assistant Professor in the Neuroscience Institute and Department of Psychology at Princeton University, studies the neural circuits for reward learning and decision-making with a focus on the role of dynamics and feedback in these cognitive processes. This work explores the link between actions and outcomes in support of learning.

About The New York Stem Cell Foundation Research Institute

The New York Stem Cell Foundation (NYSCF) Research Institute is an independent organization accelerating cures and better treatments for patients through stem cell research. The NYSCF global community includes over 150 researchers at leading institutions worldwide, including the NYSCF – Druckenmiller Fellows, the NYSCF – Robertson Investigators, the NYSCF – Robertson Stem Cell Prize Recipients, and NYSCF Research Institute scientists and engineers. The NYSCF Research Institute is an acknowledged world leader in stem cell research and in developing pioneering stem cell technologies, including the NYSCF Global Stem Cell Array™ and in manufacturing stem cells for scientists around the globe. NYSCF focuses on translational research in a model designed to overcome the barriers that slow discovery and replace silos with collaboration. For more information, visit www.nyscf.org.