Mark Anderson, MD, PhD, works at the intersection of diabetes, genetics, and stem cells and holds great promise for the understanding of autoimmune diseases. He is the 2013 recipient of the UCSF Byers Award for Basic Science, granted to a young faculty member for high-risk research projects that may not qualify for traditional funding. He holds the Robert B. Friend and Michelle M. Friend Endowed Chair in Diabetes Research at UCSF and is Program Director of the UCSF Medical Scientist Training Program.

Diana Laird, PhD, is interested in fertility, cancer and evolution, beginning with the germline that arises early in the embryo and culminates as egg or sperm. She began her scientific career in physics, and then shifted her interests to the emerging field of stem cells, earning her doctorate in the Weissman lab at Stanford. In 2010 Dr. Laird received the 2010 NIH New Innovator Award, and was 2012 as a fellow in the Sandler Fellows Program, which brings exceptionally promising recent PhD graduates to UCSF with Principal Investigator status and five years of support for a small lab, a blend of sheltered independence markedly distinct from traditional postdoctoral fellows. The program facilitates ‘the development of remarkable young scientists, who are becoming the next generation of scientific leaders.’

Jeff Bluestone, PhD, is one of the leaders in UCSF’s initiative in precision medicine, an emerging field aimed at revolutionizing medical care by harnessing the wealth of data available from the human genome and research into the molecular basis of disease. Founder and first director of the NIH-funded Immunology Tolerance Network, he currently serves as Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, and Director of the Hormone Research Institute at UCSF.

Saul Villeda, PhD, examines the ways that changes in aging blood contribute to age-related impairments in neural stem cell function and cognitive processes. He joined the UCSF community in 2012 as a fellow in the Sandler Fellows Program, which brings exceptionally promising recent PhD graduates to UCSF with Principal Investigator status and five years of support for a small lab, a blend of sheltered independence markedly distinct from traditional postdoctoral fellows. The program facilitates ‘the development of remarkable young scientists, who are becoming the next generation of scientific leaders.’

Brad Voytek, PhD, is a world-class expert in both zombies and neuroscience, an avid science teacher, and an outreach advocate. At UCSF he is an NIH-funded neuroscience postdoc interested in problems in cognitive neuroscience, recovery from brain injury, and brain-computer interfacing. His research has appeared in peer-reviewed scientific publications including PNAS, Neuron, Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, and others. His creative use of zombies to illustrate key points in neuroscience has made him a popular speaker at events ranging from elementary schools to TEDx, @GoogleTalks, and Foo Camp. In 2011, he was featured in Forbes as an "Edge Thinker."

Ryan Hernandez, PhD, studies patterns of genetic variation from populations around the world, using detailed computer modeling to learn more about human evolutionary processes and to discover regions of the genome vital to function and underlying disease. He recently was awarded a 2013 Alfred P. Sloan Research fellowship, which seeks to "stimulate fundamental research by early-career scientists and scholars of outstanding promise."

Victoria Hale, PhD, is founder of a new venture, Medicines360, a hybrid nonprofit/for-profit company focused on women’s reproductive health. Previously she founded One World Health, the first nonprofit pharmaceutical company in the US. She is a member of Institute of Medicine and a MacArthur Fellow. She has been internationally recognized as a social entrepreneur and The Economist named Hale the recipient of its Social and Economic Innovation Award in 2005.

Elizabeth Watkins, PhD (moderator), is known as a prolific and versatile historian of science, and became dean of the UCSF Graduate Division in the spring of 2012. She studies the interplay among medicine, commerce, and culture in the United States in the 20th-21st centuries and has written books and articles on the history of pharmaceuticals, birth control, estrogen replacement therapy, and male menopause. She is especially interested in relationships among biomedical researchers, health care providers, lay people, drug makers, government regulators, and the media and how information flows between these groups.

To learn more and RSVP, email discovery@support.ucsf.edu.