

## **NEW DIRECTOR TAKES THE HELM IN DIVERSIFYING UC FACULTY IN PRESIDENT'S POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM**

Following a national search, the President's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program (PPFP) announces the appointment of its new Director, Dr. Mark Lawson, Professor in Residence of Reproductive Medicine, UC San Diego, effective October 1, 2015. A former PPFP fellow himself, Professor Lawson has worked for many years to successfully engage and promote students from diverse backgrounds into professional careers. A molecular biologist by training, Dr. Lawson has spent time in both private industry and in academia. His NIH-funded research has focused on the regulation of reproductive hormone synthesis and infertility. During his time on the UC faculty, he has developed novel career development programs targeting undergraduates through early-career faculty and he has championed diversity issues both within his professional field and in the academic community. He has twice received the UC San Diego Diversity Award, most recently in 2014 for his efforts in building a broad coalition of partners to increase recruitment of underrepresented minority students to UC San Diego graduate programs.

For over 30 years, PPFP's primary goal has been to diversify the faculties at the 10 University of California campuses, in all disciplines. PPFP Advisory Committee Chair and the Director Search Committee Chair, Dr. Patricia Baquedano-Lopez (Professor of Education, UC Berkeley) notes that, "Mark Lawson has a strong vision of the direction we should take as a program and he has a fierce commitment to social justice – you can't go wrong with this formula." UC San Diego Associate Vice Chancellor of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and Professor of History and Urban Studies, Dr. Natalia Molina indicated, "Mark Lawson's appointment as the new PPFP Director is cause for celebration. I have known Mark for over ten years and have come to know him as a champion for the recruitment, retention, and advancement of underrepresented students. People always speak of needing to 'tap the pipeline' in order to build a diverse campus climate. Mark has taken this mantra to the next level – he actually *builds* the pipeline by securing funding for programs and serving in leadership roles in key organizations while, at the same time, committing to understand his mentees' individual aspirations and dreams to help them achieve their goals."

Professor Lawson assumes the leadership of PPFP just after the acceptance of its largest class of young scholars; in academic year 2015-16, there will be 75 new and renewed postdoctoral fellows in both the President's and the Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowship (CPFP) Programs. Each UC campus has tenure-track and tenured faculty hired from the fellow program and of the last 75 eligible for tenure, 74 have been promoted. PPFP also includes the Partnership for Faculty Diversity that currently includes the University of Michigan, the University of Colorado, Boulder, the California Alliance, and the UC affiliated national laboratories. See [ppfp.ucop.edu/info](http://ppfp.ucop.edu/info) for more information.

In 2013, President Janet Napolitano generously provided \$5 million dollars in one time funding to PPFP for additional faculty hiring incentives, for educational programming about diversity awareness, and for start-up packages for science, technology, engineering and math Fellows hired into tenure track positions at a UC Campus. Dr. Lawson joins the program at a time of the program's increasing recognition, growth, and continued success. Lawson himself notes, "I am

both honored and humbled to be selected as the next director of the PFPF. As a past Fellow, I am personally aware of the positive impact this program can have on a young scholar's research and career development. The diversity of the Fellows, the breadth of their research, and their perspective is vital to maintain both academic excellence and relevance to the community we serve as a public institution. I am dedicated to strengthening the program and assuring its continued success in training future UC faculty in this changing and challenging academic environment."

Professor Lawson will assume the position of Director on October 1<sup>st</sup>, in a 50% appointment, succeeding Professor in Residence Emerita Caroline M. Kane, Ph.D., of UC Berkeley, who has served as interim Director of PFPF for the past year. Dr. Lawson will guide the selection of next year's fellows, work with the current Fellows in their professional development and hiring, maintain contact with former Fellows, and increase membership in the Partnership for Faculty Diversity. Working with the PFPF Advisory Committee as well as with other campus stakeholders, he will bring new vision to one of UC's hallmark systemwide programs.