Meet the Candidates on the RCMB Assembly Ballot

Assembly Chair
Scott Randell, PhD
Patricia Sime, MD

Programming Chair
Jeanine D'Armiento, M.D., Ph.D
Oliver Eickelberg MD
Gisli Jenkins, MD, PhD

Scott Randell PhD

Who are you?
The Bio on the ATS Election Website details my academic and professional lineage (SUNY, Hopkins, Duke, NIH, UNC) and service to ATS, but there was not much room for personal background. Thanks for the opportunity. I was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY to a working-class family, and am incredibly thankful for the high quality public elementary and secondary education I was provided, and low cost undergraduate higher education of the time. A product of the tumultuous late 60's and early 70's, the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene and Public Health (now Bloomberg) took a chance on me, and it has been all about lung disease research from that point forward. I received multidisciplinary training in lung biology, having had the good fortune to work with outstanding lung scientists and mentors in my pre-doctoral and post-doctoral years, and lots of exposure to clinical Pulmonary medicine. I've worked in lung disease models, lung development, stem cell biology and innate immunity, with a current focus on cystic fibrosis (CF), including the possibility of *in vivo* gene editing and cell therapy. I consent people for lung donation, attend lung transplant operations, and dissect end stage lungs. The human airway epithelial cells we provide world-wide from the Core facility I direct has helped fuel progress in basic and translational research and the breakthrough CF therapies directed at the underlying cause. When I see the devastation that lung disease can cause, it drives me to press on with the fight! While my strongest scientific motivation is the search for the "mother of all airway epithelial cells", I greatly enjoy teaching the next generation of budding physicians and scientists about lungs and lung disease.

Why RCMB?

RCMB is the home of lung stem cell biology and the most fundamental, mechanistic, cutting edge science. It is the place where PhD's and MD's mix to create dynamic teams to solve the most challenging problems. RCMB is where I met some of the most wonderful people influencing my career. I had close relationships with Carol Basbaum and JoRae Wright, both inspiring scientists and leaders taken from us way too soon. I'll never forget eulogizing Carol at an ATS Conference Symposium dedicated to her memory, just managing to keep from bawling. The support and comradery of my good RCMB friends is a great pleasure of the annual meeting.

RCMB strengths and weaknesses

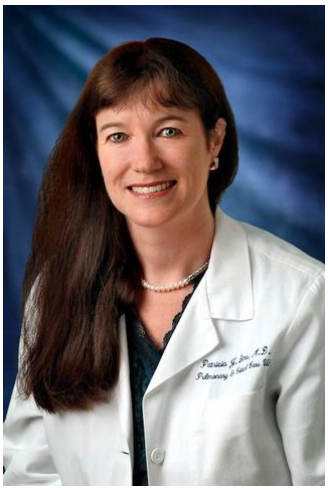
The current pace of scientific discovery is mind boggling, imagine the possibilities of gene editing, single cell 'omics of all kinds, super resolution confocal imaging, 3D spatial reconstructions of the multitude of lung cells, and better than 3-Å resolution cryo EM, just to name a few of the most recent hot topics. We are the place in ATS where cutting-edge research comes together to support advances against the leading causes of morbidity, mortality and suffering of our times. It is important to develop the best teams to keep pace, and RCMB is a place where that happens. To build strong teams it is important that all professionals have a clear role and voice. We could do better, making the "operating manual for planet ATS" more transparent, supporting early stage investigators, and creating contributory and leadership opportunities for all members.

Leadership

At an Annual ATS Conference RCMB business meeting, the then current Chair put up a slide of the nominees for Assembly leadership positions. 100% were MDs. Although I tend to be shy and retiring in public, I stood up and took a poll of the RCMB audience, asking "how many are MD's"? About half. "How many are PhDs"? About half, with some having combined degrees. The leadership imbalance was exceedingly obvious. I'm not a "single-issue PhD candidate", but am strongly dedicated to working to help craft an RCMB and ATS that best meets the needs of all its members.

Fun Fact

My vegetable garden is a great outlet, and I love to cook meals for my family and friends.



Patricia J. Sime, MD

Who are you?

I grew up in Scotland and attended the University of Edinburgh Medical School where I did my clinical training. During medical school I was fortunate to have a year out to pursue a degree in Medical Sciences which was primarily an opportunity to engage in bench research, and I was hooked! As I continued my training in Pulmonary Medicine, I was struck by the paucity of treatments for patients with lung inflammatory and scarring diseases, and an area where research into pathogenesis would surely identify new targets. Realizing that I was not trained on how to begin to address these issues, I travelled to McMaster University in Canada to pursue post-doctoral training with Dr. Jack Gauldie a leading expert in lung fibrosis. This was a transformative experience, filled with exciting scientific opportunity surrounded by wonderful colleagues and mentors. My passion for discovery and its translation was fueled along with a deep respect for those pursuing excellence. My formal training complete, in 1999 I joined the faculty at the University of Rochester, NY, USA as a physician-scientist. I have been fortunate to have a career where I can combine clinical work with scientific discovery. I lead our Interstitial Lung Disease clinic and am privileged to have an NIH funded laboratory group focused on lung fibrosis and the resolution of inflammation. As my career has developed I have enjoyed fulfilling leadership roles in my home institution as Chief of Pulmonary and Critical Care, Vice Chair for Research in Medicine and as a Director of an NIH T32 grant for pulmonary trainees. These roles have allowed me to grow research, mentor others and help develop the next generation of basic researchers and physician-scientists.

Why RCMB?

I was initially drawn to RCMB because of my scientific interest in lung fibrosis. As a junior researcher I remember feeling a bit intimidated by the idea of “showing up” to an assembly meeting. I honestly was not sure what it was all about. I need not have worried as several people went out of their way to introduce themselves and I have never forgotten that feeling. I was very excited when I was first asked to be on the Planning Committee years ago by Jesse Roman! That was my first experience of ATS leadership and it was really fun. I learned more than I contributed, and continue to marvel at the enthusiasm and commitment of the RCMB members. Connected by a passion for basic and translational research we are well positioned to address disease pathogenesis, identify targets for therapy and understand lung development. We bring some of the most exciting science to the international meeting and champion some superb assembly projects. As we look to the future key one of our missions is the recruitment of rising stars to RCMB and the Mentor and Apprenticeship Programs, and the Junior Professional group are great resources to help foster the careers of our colleagues.

RCMB strengths and areas for growth

RCMB is home for state of the art research focused on cell and molecular biology. This often leads to innovative projects that reach across the ATS. The passion for science is palpable and the assembly is working hard to include junior trainees. It has a strong identity and a level of energy that is admirable. One of the challenges is helping to ensure inclusion of those involved including our international colleagues. This includes participation in committees, chairs of sessions and mentoring roles. As leaders in translational lung research, RCMB members have unique opportunities to increase our advocacy for expanded funding for lung research and to help bring our science to the public. This is a time for optimism and our opportunity to share our excitement with the global community.

Leadership

My leadership style is one of building consensus and allowing innovative people to take ownership and responsibility. I have lived and worked in Europe, Canada and the USA and enjoy integrating these experiences to help foster inclusion in ATS. As a Division chief and mentor I appreciate the value of research networks and RCMB is home to many high impact researchers and abundant networking opportunities. Crossing disciplines and assembly boundaries often makes for the greatest impact and excitement and I have always enjoyed connecting talent from disparate areas. Leadership is an opportunity to serve and I have enjoyed my roles on the RCMB Planning Committee, Program Committee and currently the Scientific Advisory Committee. It is also an opportunity to help develop the assembly leaders for tomorrow.

Fun fact

I like to jump! I spent much of my childhood competing on the trampoline but now prefer to have a horse do the work (my job is to hang on tightly!)

Jeanine D'Armiento, M.D., Ph.D

Who are you?

I was born in the Bronx, NY, educated at Rutgers University and have lived in New York City for the past 25 years since arriving for my medicine internship. I am a pulmonologist who Directs the Center for Molecular Pulmonary Disease and The Center for Lymphangiomyomatosis (LAM) and Rare Lung Disease at Columbia University. The clinical center serves as a tertiary referral center for the Northeast region and cares for patients with LAM and Alpha1. The foremost goal of my research program is to develop insight into lung physiology and pathology through understanding the fundamental mechanisms modulating lung injury and repair and translating these findings into practical clinical solutions. My laboratory integrates both in vitro and in vivo approaches and is situated to characterize the molecular changes in the study of lung injury and disease to identify potential therapeutic targets.

I have trained over 15 clinical and basic fellows most of which now hold academic and industry positions. I currently serve on the Executive committee of the Columbia University senate and Chair the Commission on the Status of Women at the University. I am serving as Chair of the board of directors of the Alpha1 Foundation and presently serve as a Consultant to the Director of the Office of Rare Disease, NCATs, National Institute of Health.

Why RCMB?

I look forward to the Monday night RCMB assembly to meet colleagues who have become friends over the years. As a young investigator the assembly was very helpful in networking and I now appreciate interacting with young scientists at the meeting.

RCMB strengths and areas for growth

The RCMB integrates the most cutting edge science with clinical medicine and is at the forefront of pulmonary biology. I would like to see direct interactions with other assemblies to integrate programing across assemblies. I also believe that there should be flexibility in the programing so that we can work with members to develop submitted proposals to add young investigators and experts in the area of the proposal focus.

Leadership

I have served in leadership positions at the University that have involved programming and professional development, which have provided me with a valuable experience to guide a leadership role at RCMB.

Presently, I am the Chair of the Board of the Alpha-1 Foundation. This leadership role prepares me for a leadership role as a Program Chair for our assembly. At the Alpha-1 Foundation, we sponsor multiple conferences nationally and internationally requiring careful programing for patients and scientific workshops.

Fun Fact I am a ventriloquist.

Gisli Jenkins MD, PhD

Who are you?

Gisli Jenkins I am originally from Akureyri Iceland, I grew up in London UK and went to Medical School in Southampton UK. I undertook clinical pulmonary training in a number of London teaching hospitals and a PhD in Biochemistry at University College London before finally undertaking Post-Doctoral studies at UCSF in San Francisco USA. I returned to the UK in 2005 to take up a Faculty position at the University of Nottingham initial where I have developed the Fibrosis and Airway Biology (FAB) lab and I am the NIHR Research Professor of Experimental Medicine

Why RCMB?

The RCMB reflects the two most important things in my professional life, the combination of cell and molecular biology and respiratory medicine. It combines perfectly my training, my experience, my career and the loves of my career. It also just happens to also be the best, and most likely, way to develop new therapies for the devastating disease, IPF, that I have spent the last 20 years studying. The assembly itself is fantastic because of the diverse group of people who make it up. The diversity in scientific experience, gender and culture come together to generate a hugely successful and healthy assembly.

My favourite memory - the Kaminsky mike drop.

RCMB strengths and weaknesses

I love encouraging young scientists and new speakers to rise to the challenge and speak in front of big audiences of their peers. The opportunity to promote excellent young speakers undertaking cutting edge research has been a real highlight of my time at RCMB. I also love the opportunity to interact with there members of the programming committee opening up new opportunities for friendship and collaboration. I would like to see even more young and diverse speakers and I would like to see a the number of talks that high profile speakers can give at a single ATS meeting limited. Much better to give up and coming researchers a chance rather than hear the same people give the same talks throughout the meeting.

I would also like the programming meetings start two hours later ☺.

Leadership

I have organised a number of meetings including the hugely successful British Association of Lung Research meeting in 2014 which generated record attendance and

a large profit for the BALR. I have also chaired the organising committee for the British Thoracic Society Winter Scientific Meetings from 2015-2018. In my final meeting I focused on diversity trying to ensure that each session included fundamental science, translational science and clinic research and that each session was chaired by a Senior and Junior investigator, as well as where possible a man and a woman. I also raised some eyebrows when I suggested 3 women for the 3 Keynote lectures. When accused of being 'politically correct' I reminded them that I was choosing the 3 best speakers and nobody had objected when I had previously chosen 3 men. The result was the most highly attended Winter BTS meeting of all time. I would bring these same principles to the RCMB and that would hopefully generate similar success.

Fun fact

I love sport. I cycled 7500 miles in 2018 and I support Tottenham Hotspur Football Club and the San Francisco Giants baseball team.

Oliver Eickelberg MD

Who are you?

I am a physician-scientists born in Dortmund, Germany. I studied Medicine in Lübeck (Germany), Vienna (Austria), and Basel (Switzerland). After a PostDoc at Yale University from 1998-2002, I established my first lab at the University of Giessen and Marburg Lung Center (UGMLC) in 2002. In 2008, I had the honor to establish the Comprehensive Pneumology Center (CPC) in Munich, where I also directed the Institute of Lung Biology and Disease (iLBD). I served as Vice-Chairman of the Munich Site of the German Center of Lung Research during my tenure in Munich as well. In 2016, I moved to the USA (once again), this time to Denver, CO, where I am tenured Professor of Medicine and Biochemistry and Molecular Genetics.

Why RCMB?

Well, there is no doubt that RCMB has the coolest members and is clearly the assembly to be at in ATS. We have the best science and the best receptions (which will even get better from hereon I guess ☺). I will always cherish the ATS conference, in particular those early conferences, where we always booked apartment-style accommodations and went with an entire class of MD/PhD students. This was from 2003 - 2008, and it was priceless.

RCMB strengths and weaknesses

I fondly remember when I was asked to join the RCMB program committee in 2003 (by Naftali, at the time). I so much enjoyed our group and the vivid discussions in person and by email during the programming of sessions. I believe RCMB programming has been superb in the past years. If I had a wish for improvement, it would be to increase diversity for speakers and chairs in the future, and include the best cutting-edge science, also from outside our field.

Leadership

Hmmm, I think I am a pretty good motivator and recruiter. When I look at faculty whom I recruited to Munich and Denver, this is a pretty cool list of outstanding people with wonderful successes by now. I do believe this would serve me well at RCMB, with respect to e.g. committee members.

Fun fact

I love music and the outdoors. I love wildlife, particularly bisons, bighorn sheep, coyotes, bears, wolves, eagles, among others (check my twitter account for this ☺). This appreciation for nature's amazing skills for keeping everything in balance fuels my research ambition. There is no better place to recharge than in nature. I also need to lose weight….