WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE A SEMINAR PRESENTED BY

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University of California, San Diego

“Mining Natural Products as a Source of Drugs for Neglected Tropical Diseases”

Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 9:00 AM
Astellas Conference Room, SLSRC 3410/3430
Refreshments will be served at 8:45 AM

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) such as schistosomiasis, Chagas Disease, sleeping sickness, and leishmaniasis affect hundreds of millions of people worldwide. However, because these are predominantly diseases of the poor children in resource poor areas of the world, there is little interest in the pharmaceutical industry in developing much needed new therapies. There are no vaccines for any of these diseases and most drugs are decades old. Furthermore current drugs are plagued by low efficacy, drug resistance, and unacceptable side effects. The Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at UCSD is focusing on the discovery and development of new drugs to treat infected people safely. We have built a facility with the tools, expertise and equipment to carry out a drug development program outside of the usual industry setting (www.cdipd.org). Through collaborations with other schools, biotech, and motivated industry chemists we have access to diverse chemical libraries. The approach to be discussed will highlight high throughput screens of marine natural products and “repurposed” drugs already in use for other diseases.

Bio: Dr. McKerrow leads a consortium of scientists dedicated to the discovery and development of new drugs for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). This consortium, the Center for Discovery and Innovation in Parasitic Diseases (www.cdipd.org), is a division within the Skaggs School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences at UC San Diego. The Center pioneered the development of high-throughput screening assays for seven neglected diseases. Over 30 companies have shared compound libraries with the Center. The Center includes expertise in structure-based drug design, encompassing both computational approaches and structure-guided medicinal chemistry, and maintains animal models of NTDs for proof of concept studies. Among its accomplishments, the Center discovered and developed a drug for Chagas’ disease through a successful pre-IND meeting with the FDA. The Center has also received Orphan-Drug Designation from the FDA for two drugs targeting NTDs in a “repurposing” screening campaign.

Dr. McKerrow received his BSc in Chemistry and Biology from Haverford College, followed by a PhD in Biology from the University of California, San Diego. He then completed an MD at the State University of New York, and did postgraduate training in Internal Medicine and Pathology. He is the recipient of numerous awards including the Gregor Mendel Honorary Medal.