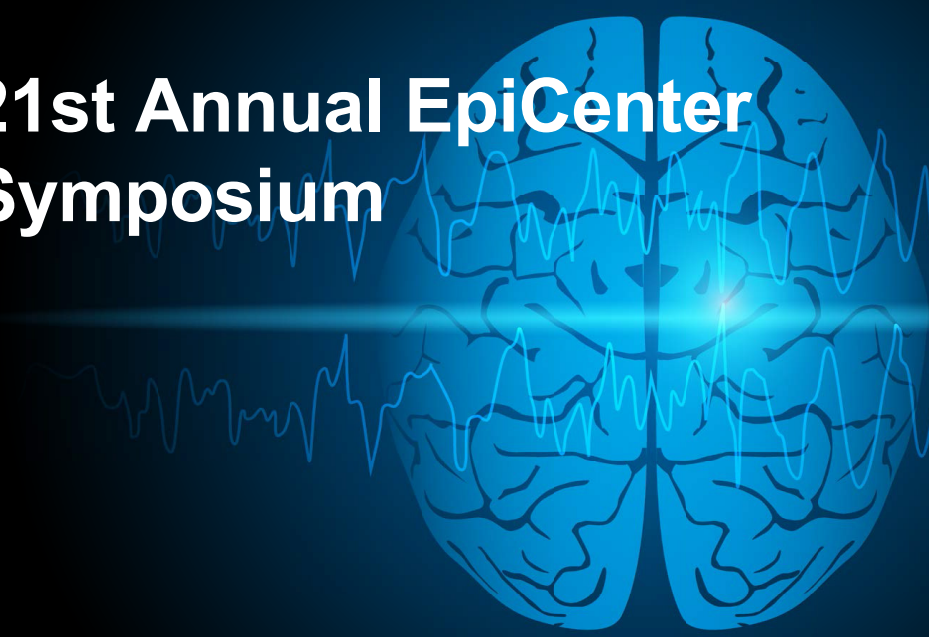


**UCI** Epilepsy  
Research Center

# 21st Annual EpiCenter Symposium



Celebrating 20 years of epilepsy research  
training at UCI

**May 22, 2024**

Sue Gross Auditorium

# stay CURIOUS

**UCI** Epilepsy  
Research Center

a cure will require new ideas

## Welcome to the EpiCenter

*We're glad you're here*

### THE EPILEPSY RESEARCH CENTER

exists to train the next generation of neuroscientists and to overcome epilepsy and other unsolved brain diseases through exemplary research.

### Connect with us

Online: [www.epilepsyresearch.uci.edu](http://www.epilepsyresearch.uci.edu)

Email: [epilepsy@uci.edu](mailto:epilepsy@uci.edu)

Twitter: [@UCI\\_EpiCenter](https://twitter.com/UCI_EpiCenter)

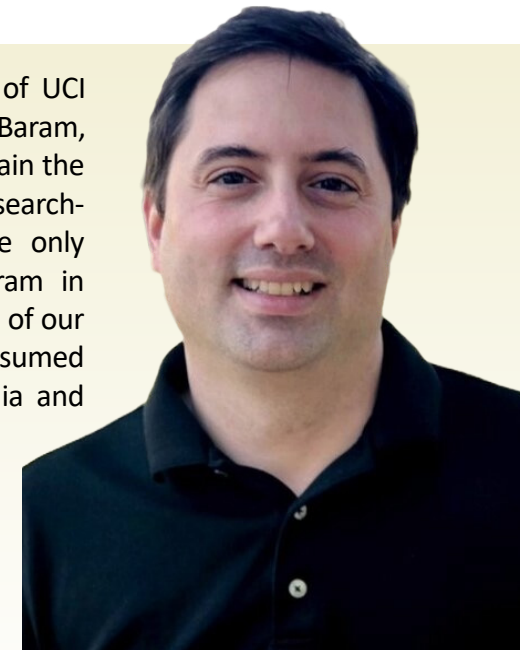
### our motivation



**65 million** people in the world live with epilepsy. It is the fourth most common brain disorder and the most common in children.

## from the **DIRECTOR**

“Twenty years ago, a group of UCI faculty, led by Dr. Tallie Z Baram, obtained funding from NIH to train the next generation of epilepsy researchers. UCI is now home to the only NIH-funded T32 training program in epilepsy research. We are proud of our program alumni. Many have assumed leadership positions in academia and the private sector across the US and now mentor their own trainees, expanding exponentially the impact of our program on the future of the epilepsy research workforce.



## MEET OUR CURRENT T32 TRAINEES

### T32 Training Program in Epilepsy Research

Program directors: Tallie Z Baram, MD, PhD; Robert Hunt, PhD



**Julian Quintanilla, PhD**  
Postdoc, Gall / Lynch labs

Julian is investigating hippocampal circuit dysfunction in genetic and acquired models of epilepsy.



**Jasmine Chavez**  
Graduate Student, Gall / Lynch labs

Jasmine is investigating the role of early age exposure to intranasal oxytocin in alleviating the incidence of seizures in a Fragile X syndrome mouse model.



**Gerardo Sandoval**  
Graduate Student, Diaz Alonso lab

Gerardo is studying AMPA receptor plasticity and the role of SYNGAP1 in hippocampal excitability.



**Aby Flores**  
Graduate Student, Lur lab

Aby is working to identify links between stress, memory and epilepsy at the circuit and neuronal level.

## in the SPOTLIGHT



### Top teams

**#1** UCI EpiCenter  
\$1205

### Top fundraisers

**#4** Alexa Tierno  
\$300

### Team captain

Brittney Boubliil, PhD

### News from recent T32 alumni

Congratulations

**A**lexa Tierno (2022-23) was invited to give an investigator workshop talk at the 2024 American Epilepsy Society meeting on Dec 6 - 10 in Los Angeles.



**J**en Yonan (2019-21) won a prestigious A.P. Giannini Foundation Postdoctoral Fellowship for her work on PTEN and mTOR pathway regulation.



**M**ulatwa Haile (2019-21) won a highly competitive UC - HSI DDI President's Pre-Professoriate Fellowship Award to complete her graduate studies.



Scan the QR code to learn more about the T32 program in epilepsy research at UCI



## Right at Home – on Campus

The EpiCenter has been selected as one of 12 high-impact research programs that will be located in the new Falling Leaves Foundation Medical Innovation Building. The facility will provide state-of-the-art research space to advance basic, translational and clinical research at UCI. All programmatic spaces will be arranged and designed in order to support cross-disciplinary collaboration while enhancing research synergies.

## schedule

ABOUT THE KEYNOTE  
SPEAKER

# TRACY DIXON-SALAZAR PHD

**Dr. Tracy Dixon-Salazar** is a neuroscientist, geneticist and patient advocate. Her desire to get her Ph.D. was inspired by her daughter, Savannah, who developed intractable seizures at the age of 2, which evolved into Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome (LGS) by the age of 5. She completed her Ph.D. and postdoctoral work at UC San Diego, and it was during her research tenure, and after 16 years of watching daily, unrelenting seizures in her child, that she uncovered the driver of her daughter's illness and identified a novel precision therapy that improved her child's life. She now serves as the Executive Director at the LGS Foundation.



- 9:00 AM** **Welcome**  
Robert Hunt, PhD  
David King-Stephens, MD
- 9:05 AM** **Kevin Beier, PhD**  
Think positively: novel mechanisms of modulating synaptic plasticity and implications for brain disease
- 9:35 AM** **Mona Sazgar, MD**  
Recent advancements in treating patients with epilepsy
- 10:05 AM** **Aliza Le, PhD**  
Of mice and women: sex differences in synaptic plasticity and memory
- 10:25 AM** **Spencer Brinker, PhD**  
Focused ultrasound brain modulation in epilepsy
- 10:55 AM** **Break**
- 11:05 AM** **Laura Ewell, PhD**  
Mechanisms of impaired spatial memory in temporal lobe epilepsy
- 11:35 AM** **Kurt Qing, MD, PhD**  
Intracranial studies in people living with refractory epilepsy
- 12:05 PM** **Aby Flores**  
Adrenergic mechanisms of stress-induced disruption of persistent cortical activity
- 12:20 PM** **Gerardo Sandoval**  
The VGCC auxiliary subunit  $\alpha 2\delta 1$  modulates synaptic plasticity, spatial memory and seizure susceptibility
- 12:35 PM** **Lunch**  
Outside on the first floor patio
- 1:40 PM** **Robert Hunt, PhD**  
Update on EpiCenter & T32 training program
- 2:00 PM** **KEYNOTE | Tracy Dixon-Salazar, PhD**  
Executive Director, Lennox-Gastaut Syndrome Foundation  
Developmental and epileptic encephalopathies: a personal and scientific perspective

## Session I

## Session II

[www.lgsfoundation.org](http://www.lgsfoundation.org)

by the  
**NUMBERS**

The EpiCenter is the leading academic research center dedicated exclusively to epilepsy research.

**10,450**  
square feet

**RESEARCH SPACE**  
in the new FLMIB

~**\$17**  
million

**ANNUAL FUNDING**  
for epilepsy-related research

**52**  
trainees

**T32 FELLOWSHIPS**  
for advanced training in epilepsy

**THE EPICENTER  
APPROACH**

**DISCOVER | Translate new discoveries into cures**

At UCI, we are taking full advantage of a technical revolution in neuroscience as we devise new ways to understand, prevent and ultimately cure epilepsy.

**INSPIRE | Leaders of tomorrow**

Future leaders in epilepsy research are educated at the UCI EpiCenter where they acquire the skills, knowledge and support necessary to launch a successful career in neuroscience and medicine.

**EXAPND | Our reach to share advances**

EpiCenter investigators engage the local and global epilepsy communities to work together in shaping the future of epilepsy research and treatment.

Meeting notes

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**UCI** Epilepsy  
Research Center

[epilepsyresearch.uci.edu](http://epilepsyresearch.uci.edu)