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Sonia Jain Named Interim Associate Dean of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health

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La Jolla, CA: On June 1, 2021, [Sonia Jain, PhD](#), Professor of Biostatistics at UC San Diego, and Co-Director of the Biostatistics and Modeling Core of the San Diego Center for AIDS Research (SD CFAR), was appointed Interim Associate Dean of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in the [UC San Diego Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Human Longevity Science](#) (HWSPH).

“Equity, justice and inclusion are foundational for our School,” says [Cheryl Anderson, PhD, MPH, MS](#), Professor of Epidemiology, HWSPH Founding Dean, and [2020 recipient of UC San Diego’s Inclusive Excellence Award](#). “Over the last year, with racial and ethnic tension rising across the nation, we learned it was not enough to provide [anti-racism training](#) for our team members. We needed to inculcate an awareness of justice, equity, diversity and inclusion across all education levels, work experience, and degree programs. The appointment of Dr. Jain as Interim Associate Dean will ensure these essential values are communicated with rigor, honesty, and kindness.”

In a field formerly dominated by men, Dr. Jain has excelled in every measure of success, having achieved her tenure and full professorship in 2014, just 12 years after obtaining her doctorate. Not one to take her success for granted, Dr. Jain is paying it forward as a dedicated career and research advisor to early career investigators, postdoctoral scholars, undergraduate and graduate students. She is also a certified mentor via the Center for Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER). She sees her new role as Interim Associate Dean as another opportunity to use her experience to benefit others. “This position is a tremendous honor for me,” says Dr. Jain. “My goal is to ensure that faculty, students, and staff members throughout the School of Public Health feel safe, respected, and included.”

Soon after arriving at UC San Diego in 2002, Dr. Jain distinguished herself as a highly versatile and collaborative scientist. She contributed to an enormous variety of research disciplines, including HIV, substance use disorders, Alzheimer’s Disease, Kawasaki Disease, psychology, psychiatry, oncology, and traumatic brain injury. She quickly began collaborating with SD CFAR scientists and first published with this group in 2006. Since then, Dr. Jain has contributed her expertise to a number of studies, grant proposals, and publications related to HIV testing, treatment, prevention, pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and the effects of alcohol and other substances on HIV transmission risk.

Starting in 2015, Dr. Jain became an essential member of the SD CFAR’s O-K Review Team, for which she evaluates the statistical sections of up to a dozen NIH grant proposals annually. She also participates on a variety of NIH study sections and has served as Director of Biostatistics for the [California Collaborative Treatment Group \(CCTG\)](#) and the [Preventing Injecting by Modifying Existing Responses \(PRIMER\)](#) study, both of which maintain an HIV focus.

Since 2012, Dr. Jain has co-directed the biostatistical units of two SD CFAR research cores, beginning with the Clinical Investigation and Biostatistics Core, and since 2017, the Biostatistics and Modeling (BAM) Core. Her BAM Core co-director, mathematical modeler [Natasha Martin, DPhil](#), and associate director, biostatistician [Victor DeGruttola, ScD](#), as well as staff biostatisticians and modelers, form a cooperative team that serves a variety of researchers throughout the San Diego region, from undergraduates to senior scientists.

“Sonia truly practices what she preaches. She is one of the most collaborative scientists I’ve ever met,” said Dr. Martin, who, in addition to co-directing the Biostatistics and Modeling Core, is also the lead mathematical modeler in UC San Diego’s [Return to Learn](#) COVID-19 program. “She values every contribution and considers every challenge with equanimity and fairness.”

As the HWSPH was being established in 2019, Dr. Jain was invited to join the School, where she contributes to a variety of clinical trials, adaptive clinical trial designs, Bayesian biostatistics, high-dimensional data analysis, and statistical genomics, as well as teaching responsibilities. Virtually all scientists need statistical experts to analyze their research. As a result, Dr. Jain and her colleagues are already familiar with the six degree programs, 50 funded research groups, and 100 faculty members who comprise the HWSPH. This global perspective will certainly inform Dr. Jain’s philosophy and policies as she steps into her new role.

Davey Smith, MD, MAS, co-director of the SD CFAR and Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases and Global Public Health at UC San Diego, echoes Drs. Anderson and Martin’s assessments of Dr. Jain. “I cannot think of a better person for this important job.”

For more information about the UC San Diego Herbert Wertheim School of Public Health and Longevity Science, please visit <https://hwsph.ucsd.edu/>.

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About the San Diego Center for AIDS Research: The San Diego Center for AIDS Research (SD CFAR) is one of 17 NIH-funded academic centers providing administrative and shared research support to synergistically enhance and coordinate high-quality HIV/AIDS research projects at academic institutions across the U.S. The SD CFAR supports multidisciplinary research to end the HIV epidemic and is recognized as a Tier 3 Center at the highest quality of research and funding. For more information, please visit <https://bit.ly/2ZgM76C>.