THE 2017 ACR/EULAR EXCHANGE PROGRAM

The ACR/EULAR exchange program supported a visit to the University of California San Diego of 10 young European investigators to coincide with this year’s ACR annual conference. The exchange program was hosted by Professors Gary Firestein and Nunzio Bottini who put together an unforgettable series of lectures to enthuse and inspire young investigators at an early stage of their academic careers. The program itself was superbly arranged with refreshments, transfers and accommodation all taken care of by Ngozi Afulezi and her team at the ACR.

Each of the exchange program attendees had the opportunity to present their own research interests to the group and the faculty who provided constructive feedback and advice on their own developing programs of research. The exchange program provided an opportunity to develop new collaborations and friendships with investigators from across Europe and North America. After a busy program of lectures, presentations and meet the professor-style sessions, the “exchangers” took the opportunity to relax and unwind in the evening with food, music and great company. It was a highly rewarding visit and one that we’ll all remember for many years to come. EMEUNET members who might be interested in attending next year’s exchange program to Chicago should look out for updates and details on applying on the EMEUNET website.
Opinion of some participants

“The ACR/EULAR exchange program is an inspirational, hugely enjoyable and rewarding program that all young investigators should consider applying for.”  
(John Pauling, United Kingdom)

“Research, networking, mentoring, motivating and excellence are the words that best define the ACR/EULAR exchange program. Under a casual atmosphere, we had the great opportunity to interact with high renowned experts, who shared with us not only their scientific knowledge but also their thoughts on career development and professional growth. Really inspiring! Also, by presenting our own research projects, we had the chance to receive feedback from all the participants. A number of collaborations for sure will emerge after this program. And last, but not least, it was very nice to share this experience with colleagues and friends.

I thank EULAR and ACR the organization of such a productive and great initiative, and I truly recommend to all early career researchers to apply.”  
(Javier Rodriguez-Carrio, Spain)

“The ACR/EULAR exchange program with its various talks and workshops was an inspiration to think outside the box and maybe take the road less traveled. Next to hard work, finding a good mentor, a hint of luck and recognizing opportunities, various ways of dealing with roadblocks might be crucial when building your career. And above all, one should never cease to ask the important questions - this was the advice from outstanding clinicians and scientists to the attendees. During the days we spent together, personal contacts were made and collaborations initiated and in addition, we had a lot of fun. All in all, the experience was highly rewarding and young investigators should definitely consider to apply at the upcoming ACR/EULAR exchange programs.”  
(Mike Becker, Switzerland)

“The ACR/EULAR Exchange program is a unique experience, allowing participants to meet with highly renowned professors, benefit from their advices on both research and career, in a relaxed way. It is a huge opportunity to network, meet new friends, foster further collaborations and share your research with other young investigators and well-established professors. During this one day and a half workshop, brilliantly led by Professors Gary Firestein and Nunzio Bottini and their team, we attended amazing and inspiring lectures. If you are a young investigator, I would highly recommend you to apply for such a great and rewarding program.”  
(Aurélie Najm, France).

“A motivating, inspiring and rewarding experience which I trust will shape my future career plans. Hearing the ‘personal take’ of highly inspirational and successful people and the ‘ups and downs’ of their journey to success has been particularly moving at times. I feel truly lucky to have participated in this program and will cherish this experience for life.”  
(Elena Nikiphorou, United Kingdom)

“A fantastic programme to get inspired about research and learn from shared expertise. A great opportunity to network with each other and the faculty, as well as gain advice about your career trajectory from leaders in the field. Very grateful for a wonderful experience and would thoroughly recommend other early career researchers to apply for this great initiative.”  
(Meghna Jani, United Kingdom)