Stanford



Martha S. Cyert

Dr. Nancy Chang Professor Biology

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Bio

BIO

Dr. Martha Cyert directs a research lab that studies Ca2+-dependent signal transduction, focusing on calcineurin, the highly conserved Ca2+/calmodulin-regulated protein phosphatase that plays critical roles in muscle, immune and neural cells. Dr. Cyert pioneered studies of yeast calcineurin, where her work elucidated conserved aspects of substrate recognition and mechanisms by which the signaling network evolves. Her studies on human calcineurin uncovered the mechanism by which immunosuppressant drugs, FK506 and cyclosporine A, inhibit this enzyme. More recently, her lab established the human calcineurin signaling network, using both experimental and computational approaches, which uncovered many new functions and substrates for calcineurin, including a conserved role in regulating nuclear transport via the nuclear pore complex. Professor Cyert is also an active educator. She received the Stanford Biosciences Excellence in Mentoring award, developed an innovative, inquiry-based, introductory laboratory course for undergraduates that examines p53, and initiated a summer transition program for incoming freshman from under resourced schools. She directed an NIH-funded graduate training program in Cell and Molecular Biology (2009-2019), and was an instructor for Cell Biology workshops in Ghana that were sponsored by the ASCB. Her administrative roles include serving as Senior Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education from 2010-13, and Associate Chair of the Biology department (2014-2020), where she is now Chair. Dr. Cyert is a member of the Stanford Cardiovascular and Bio-X Institutes and plays leadership roles at the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (ASBMB). She has been awarded fellowships from the American Cancer Society, the Life Sciences Research Foundation and the Lucille P. Markey Charitable Trust, and was named by Stanford University as a Terman Fellow, a Gabilan Fellow, and as the Thomas W. and Susan B. Ford University Fellow in Undergraduate Education.

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- Professor, Biology
- Member, Bio-X
- Member, Cardiovascular Institute
- Faculty Fellow, Sarafan ChEM-H

ADMINISTRATIVE APPOINTMENTS

- Chair, Department of Biology, (2020- present)
- Associate Chair, Department of Biology, (2014-2020)
- Senior Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, Stanfiord University, (2010-2013)

• Director, Graduate training program in Cell and Molecular Biology, Stanford Unviersity, (2009-2019)

HONORS AND AWARDS

- Excellence in Mentoring and Service Award, Stanford Biosciences (2015)
- Gabilan Fellow, Stanford University (2014-present)
- Thomas W. and Susan B. Ford University Fellow in Undergraduate Education, Stanford University (2012-present)
- Dean's Award for Outstanding Teaching, Stanford University (2004)
- Terman Fellow, Stanford University (2000)
- Scholar, Lucille P. Markey Charitable Trust (1997)

BOARDS, ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Conference Co-organizer, ASBMB 2022 meeting (2021 present)
- Conference Organizer, FASEB SRC on Protein Phosphatases (2018 2018)
- Editorial Board, Open Biology (2017 present)
- Public Affairs Advisory Council, Ameican Society for Biochemisty and Molecular Biology (2015 present)
- Advisory Board, Leland Scholars Program, Stanford University (2014 present)
- Organizer, Protein Phosphatases FASEB condference (2014 present)
- Editorial Board, Molecular and Cellular Biology (2009 present)
- Leadership Council, BioX (2004 present)
- Organizer, International Symposium Calcium Binding Proteins (2002 present)

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

- Postdoctoral Fellow, University of California, Berkeley, Biochemistry (1992)
- Ph D., UCSF, Genetics (1988)
- A.B., Harvard University, Biochemistry (1980)

COMMUNITY AND INTERNATIONAL WORK

African Regional Workshops on the Cell Biology of Infectious Pathogens, Ghana

LINKS

- Cyert Lab website: https://www.cyertlab.com/
- Profile on Research gate: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Martha_Cyert/

Research & Scholarship

CURRENT RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY INTERESTS

1. MAPPING THE HUMAN CALCINEURIN PHOSPHATASE SIGNALING NETWORK THROUGH GLOBAL IDENTIFICATION OF SHORT LINEAR MOTIFS THAT MEDIATE SUBSTRATE RECOGNITION.

Systems-level analyses of phosphorylation-based signaling networks has transformed our understanding of kinase function, but knowledge of phosphatase signaling has lagged behind, primarily because global approaches to identify phosphatase substrates are lacking. Calcineurin, the conserved Ca2+/calmodulin-dependent protein phosphatase and target of immunosuppressants, FK506 and Cyclosporin A, is ubiquitously expressed, and critically regulates Ca2+-dependent processes in the immune system, heart, and brain. However, in the literature only ~70 substrates are attributed to calcineurin. Systematic identification of calcineurin targets is now feasible due to insights into its conserved mechanism of substrate recognition. Calcineurin acts on phosphosites with little primary sequence similarity; thus specificity is not encoded within regions contiguous to the phosphosite. Rather, the enzyme binds to short linear motifs (SLiMs), "PxIxIT" and "LxVP", which can occur hundreds of

residues away from dephosphorylation sites. CsA, FK506 and the viral A238L protein inhibit calcineurin by blocking SLiM binding to conserved surfaces on the enzyme. SLiMs are a growing class of sequences that localize within intrinsically disordered regions, i.e. flexible protein domains that lack a defined structure. SLiMs mediate most protein-protein interactions in cells and evolve rapidly to mediate rewiring of signaling networks, including that of calcineurin. However, degenerate sequences and low affinities for their target domains make SLiMs challenging to identify. We are using novel experimental and computational approaches to identify calcineurin-binding SLiMs systematically in the human proteome. Calcineurin-binding sequences of the PxIxIT and LxVP types were identified from the human proteome using phage display, and this large collection of sequences allowed us to develop robust strategies to identify these SLiMs in silico. Also, using proximity-dependent biotinylation we identified calcineurin proximal proteins at the centrosome and nuclear pore complex (NPC). These systematic approaches led us to identify conserved regulation of NPC proteins and nuclear transport by calcineurin, and we are continuing to discover global functions for this phosphatase in humans.

2. FUNCTIONAL STUDIES OF HUMAN CNA#1 SPLICE VARIANT

Calcineurin is tightly controlled by Ca2+ and calmodulin, which activate the enzyme by relieving auto-inhibition of the active site, and revealing a critical binding pocket for "LxVP" substrate motifs. We are studying a conserved splice variant of the human CNA# gene, CNA#1, which promotes cardiac regeneration in vivo. CNA#1 has distinct enzymatic properties, and associates with membranes via conserved sites of palmitoylation in its C-terminus. Functional studies are identifying and characterizing unique protein partners for CNA#1 and its substrates in cardiovascular and endocrine signaling. Specifically, our studies establish roles for CNA#1 in regulating phosphoinositide signaling during activation of G-protein couple receptors (GPCRs).

Teaching

COURSES

2023-24

• Introduction to Laboratory Research in Cell and Molecular Biology: BIO 45 (Aut, Win)

2022-23

• Introduction to Laboratory Research in Cell and Molecular Biology: BIO 45 (Aut, Win)

2021-22

• Introduction to Laboratory Research in Cell and Molecular Biology: BIO 45 (Aut, Win)

2020-21

- Introduction to Laboratory Research in Cell and Molecular Biology: BIO 45 (Aut, Win)
- Problem solving in infectious disease: BIO 60 (Sum)

STANFORD ADVISEES

Doctoral Dissertation Reader (AC)

Cecelia Brown, Rebecca Chan, Jacob Kim, Korbin Kleczko, Rachel Ng, Alex Van Elgort

Postdoctoral Faculty Sponsor

William King, Sneha Roy, Richard Smith

Doctoral Dissertation Advisor (AC)

Devin Bradburn

Doctoral (Program)

Devin Bradburn

GRADUATE AND FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AFFILIATIONS

• Biology (School of Humanities and Sciences) (Phd Program)

• Cancer Biology (Phd Program)

Publications

PUBLICATIONS

- Calcineurin associates with centrosomes and regulates cilia length maintenance. *Journal of cell science* Tsekitsidou, E., Wong, C. J., Ulengin-Talkish, I., Barth, A. I., Stearns, T., Gingras, A. C., Wang, J. T., Cyert, M. S. 2023
- A cellular atlas of calcineurin signaling. *Biochimica et biophysica acta. Molecular cell research* Ulengin-Talkish, I., Cyert, M. S. 2022: 119366
- Palmitoylation Targets the Calcineurin Phosphatase to the Phosphatidylinositol 4-kinase Complex at the Plasma Membrane. FASEB journal : official publication of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology Cyert, M., Ulengin-Talkish, I., Parson, M. A., Jenkins, M. L., Roy, J., Shih, A. Z., St-Denis, N., Gulyas, G., Balla, T., Gingras, A., Varnai, P., Conibear, E., Burke, et al

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• Palmitoylation targets the calcineurin phosphatase to the phosphatidylinositol 4-kinase complex at the plasma membrane. *Nature communications* Ulengin-Talkish, I., Parson, M. A., Jenkins, M. L., Roy, J., Shih, A. Z., St-Denis, N., Gulyas, G., Balla, T., Gingras, A., Varnai, P., Conibear, E., Burke, J. E., Cyert, et al

2021; 12 (1): 6064

- A Calcineurin-hoxb13 Axis Regulates Growth Mode of Mammalian Cardiomyocytes Ngoc Uyen Nhi Nguyen, Canseco, D. C., Xiao, F., Nakada, Y., Li, S., Lam, N. T., Muralidhar, S., Savla, J. J., Hill, J. A., Wang, Z., Ahmed, M. S., Hubbi, M., Menendez-Montes, I., et al LIPPINCOTT WILLIAMS & WILKINS.2020
- Uncovering The Unique Functions And Regulation Of The Palmitoylated Calcineurin Isoform, CN beta 1 Ulengin-Talkish, I., Bond, R., St-Denis, N., Gingras, A., Shih, A., Conibear, E., Balla, T., Varnai, P., Cyert, M. WILEY.2020
- Systematic discovery of Short Linear Motifs decodes calcineurin phosphatase signaling

Wigington, C. P., Roy, J., et al Molecular Cell. 2020

• Identifying New Substrates and Functions for an Old Enzyme: Calcineurin. Cold Spring Harbor perspectives in biology

Roy, J., Cyert, M. S. 2019

• Quantitative mapping of protein-peptide affinity landscapes using spectrally encoded beads. *eLife*

Nguyen, H. Q., Roy, J., Harink, B., Damle, N. P., Latorraca, N. R., Baxter, B. C., Brower, K., Longwell, S. A., Kortemme, T., Thorn, K. S., Cyert, M. S., Fordyce, P. M.

- 2019; 8
- The unique C terminus of the calcineurin isoform CNA beta 1 confers non-canonical regulation of enzyme activity by Ca2+ and calmodulin *JOURNAL OF BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY* Bond, R., Ly, N., Cyert, M. S.

2017; 292 (40): 16709–21

- Short linear motifs ex nihilo evolution of protein regulation CELL COMMUNICATION AND SIGNALING Davey, N. E., Cyert, M. S., Moses, A. M. 2015; 13
- MRBLE-pep Measurements Reveal Accurate Binding Affinities for B56, a PP2A Regulatory Subunit. ACS measurement science Au Hein, J. B., Cyert, M. S., Fordyce, P. M. 2021; 1 (2): 56-64

- Cell Biology: Deciphering the ABCs of SLiMs inG1-CDK Signaling. *Current biology : CB* Roy, J., Cyert, M. S. 2020; 30 (22): R1382–R1385
- Protocol for Peptide Synthesis on Spectrally Encoded Beads for MRBLE-pep Assays *BIO-PROTOCOL* Hein, J. B., Nguyen, H. Q., Cyert, M., Fordyce, P. M. 2020; 10 (13)
- Protocol for Peptide Synthesis on Spectrally Encoded Beads for MRBLE-pep Assays. *Bio-protocol* Hein, J. B., Nguyen, H. Q., Cyert, M., Fordyce, P. M. 2020; 10 (13): e3669
- Uncovering Novel Substrates and Functions for the Calcineurin Phosphatase in Human Cells Wigington, C. P., Roy, J., Damle, N. P., El Cho, S., Davey, N., Ivarsson, Y., Wong, C., Gingras, A., Cyert, M. S. FEDERATION AMER SOC EXP BIOL.2017
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- Using Yeast to Determine the Functional Consequences of Mutations in the Human p53 Tumor Suppressor Gene: An Introductory Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience in Molecular and Cell Biology *BIOCHEMISTRY AND MOLECULAR BIOLOGY EDUCATION* Hekmat-Scafe, D. S., Brownell, S. E., Seawell, P. C., Malladi, S., Imam, J. F., Singla, V., Bradon, N., Cyert, M. S., Stearns, T. 2017; 45 (2): 161-178
- Using yeast to determine the functional consequences of mutations in the human p53 tumor suppressor gene: An introductory course-based undergraduate research experience in molecular and cell biology. *Biochemistry and molecular biology education* Hekmat-Scafe, D. S., Brownell, S. E., Seawell, P. C., Malladi, S., Imam, J. F., Singla, V., Bradon, N., Cyert, M. S., Stearns, T. 2016

• Hcm1 integrates signals from Cdk1 and calcineurin to control cell proliferation *MOLECULAR BIOLOGY OF THE CELL* Arsenault, H. E., Roy, J., Mapa, C. E., Cyert, M. S., Benanti, J. A. 2015; 26 (20): 3570-3577

• A high-enrollment course-based undergraduate research experience improves student conceptions of scientific thinking and ability to interpret data. *CBE* life sciences education

Brownell, S. E., Hekmat-Scafe, D. S., Singla, V., Chandler Seawell, P., Conklin Imam, J. F., Eddy, S. L., Stearns, T., Cyert, M. S. 2015; 14 (2)

• A High-Enrollment Course-Based Undergraduate Research Experience Improves Student Conceptions of Scientific Thinking and Ability to Interpret Data CBE-LIFE SCIENCES EDUCATION

Brownell, S. E., Hekmat-Scafe, D. S., Singla, V., Seawell, P. C., Imam, J. F., Eddy, S. L., Stearns, T., Cyert, M. S. 2015; 14 (2)

- Calcineurin regulates the yeast synaptojanin Inp53/Sjl3 during membrane stress. *Molecular biology of the cell* Guiney, E. L., Goldman, A. R., Elias, J. E., Cyert, M. S. 2015; 26 (4): 769-785
- The Calcineurin Signaling Network Evolves via Conserved Kinase-Phosphatase Modules that Transcend Substrate Identity. *Molecular cell* Goldman, A., Roy, J., Bodenmiller, B., Wanka, S., Landry, C. R., Aebersold, R., Cyert, M. S. 2014; 55 (3): 422-435
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- A Calcineurin-dependent Switch Controls the Trafficking Function of a-Arrestin Aly1/Art6. *journal of biological chemistry* O'Donnell, A. F., Huang, L., Thorner, J., Cyert, M. S. 2013; 288 (33): 24063-24080
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- Hph1 and Hph2 Are Novel Components of the Sec63/Sec62 Posttranslational Translocation Complex That Aid in Vacuolar Proton ATPase Biogenesis EUKARYOTIC CELL

Pina, F. J., O'Donnell, A. F., Pagant, S., Piao, H. L., Miller, J. P., Fields, S., Miller, E. A., Cyert, M. S. 2011; 10 (1): 63-71

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- A conserved docking site modulates substrate affinity for calcineurin, signaling output, and in vivo function *MOLECULAR CELL* Roy, J., Li, H., Hogan, P. G., Cyert, M. S. 2007; 25 (6): 889-901
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Bultynck, G., Heath, V. L., Majeed, A. P., Galan, J., Haguenauer-Tsapis, R., Cyert, M. S. 2006; 26 (12): 4729-4745

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- Mapping pathways and phenotypes by systematic gene overexpression *MOLECULAR CELL* Sopko, R., Huang, D. Q., Preston, N., Chua, G., Papp, B., Kafadar, K., Snyder, M., Oliver, S. G., Cyert, M., Hughes, T. R., Boone, C., Andrews, B. 2006; 21 (3): 319-330
- Genomic and proteomic comparisons between bacterial and archaeal genomes and related comparisons with the yeast and fly genomes *PROCEEDINGS* OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Karlin, S., Brocchieri, L., Campbell, A., Cyert, M., Mrazek, J. 2005; 102 (20): 7309-7314

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Denis, V., Cyert, M. S. 2005; 4 (1): 36-45

- Integration of stress responses: Modulation of calcineurin signaling in Saccharomyces cerevisiae by protein kinase A *EUKARYOTIC CELL* Kafadar, K. A., Cyert, M. S. 2004; 3 (5): 1147-1153
- Hph1p and Hph2p, novel components of calcineurin-mediated stress responses in Saccharomyces cerevisiae EUKARYOTIC CELL

Heath, V. L., Shaw, S. L., Roy, S., Cyert, M. S. 2004; 3 (3): 695-704

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- Identification and characterization of novel calcineurin substrates. Heath, V. L., Burrows-Brown, N., Cyert, M. S. JOHN WILEY & SONS LTD.2003: S196
- Genome-wide analysis of gene expression regulated by the calcineurin/Crz1p signaling pathway in Saccharomyces cerevisiae JOURNAL OF BIOLOGICAL CHEMISTRY

Yoshimoto, H., Saltsman, K., Gasch, A. P., Li, H. X., Ogawa, N., Botstein, D., Brown, P. O., Cyert, M. S. 2002; 277 (34): 31079-31088

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• Genetic analysis of calmodulin and its targets in Saccharomyces cerevisiae ANNUAL REVIEW OF GENETICS Cyert, M. S.

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Williams, K. E., Cyert, M. S. AMER SOC CELL BIOLOGY.2000: 246A–246A

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- An essential role of the yeast pheromone-induced Ca2+ signal is to activate calcineurin *MOLECULAR BIOLOGY OF THE CELL* Withee, J. L., Mulholland, J., Jeng, R., Cyert, M. S. 1997; 8 (2): 263-277
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