FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUTISM SCIENCE FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES
NEW SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

NEW YORK, NY (July 16, 2018) – The Autism Science Foundation (ASF), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to catalyzing innovative autism research, today announced the appointment of Guoping Feng, PhD, of MIT, Stephan Sanders, PhD, BMBS, of UC San Francisco, and Robert T. Schultz, PhD, of Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia to its Scientific Advisory Board (SAB). As members of the SAB, the scientists will help inform and guide ASF’s strategy in identifying the most important research to support in order to improve the lives of those living with autism.

Drs. Feng, Sanders and Schultz join this distinguished group of scientists from diverse areas of research with an emphasis on autism. The full list of members can be found here: https://autismsciencefoundation.org/about-asf/scientific-advisory-board/. These esteemed scientists help shape the scientific direction of ASF by advising on the top research projects to be funded by ASF each year, consulting on important initiatives such as the Autism Sisters Project, and helping to identify and develop new scientific opportunities which will help all families and individuals with ASD.

“These three esteemed researchers have exceptional track records of work that has significantly advanced autism science, and also have been exceptional mentors to many early-career scientists,” said Alycia Halladay, Chief Science Officer of the Autism Science Foundation. “Their collective range of expertise, insight and contributions to the autism community make them ideal additional to our scientific advisory board, and we are truly honored by their enthusiasm for helping to advance the mission of ASF.”

Guoping Feng, PhD holds the Poitras Professorship of Neuroscience in the McGovern Institute for Brain Research, Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). He is also an Institute Member and Director of Model Systems and Neurobiology at Stanley Center for Psychiatric Research at Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. Dr. Feng studies the development and function of synapses and their disruption in brain disorders using molecular genetics combined with behavioral and electrophysiological methods. He has developed many genetic tools for probing the function of synapses and circuits in the living brain. He also hopes to create new and more realistic animal models of human psychiatric disorders that can be used to discover new therapies for these
conditions. Originally from Zhejiang Province in China, Dr. Feng received his PhD from SUNY Buffalo and was a faculty member at Duke University before moving to MIT. He has won numerous awards, including the Beckman Young Investigator Award (2002), the McKnight Neuroscience of Brain Disorders Award (2006), the Hartwell Individual Biomedical Research Award (2006), and the Gill Young Investigator Award (2012).

**Stephan Sanders, PhD, BMBS** is an Assistant Professor in Psychiatry at the University of California, San Francisco. Dr. Sander's research focuses on using genomics and bioinformatics to understand the etiology of human disease, especially ASD. Using genomic methods, his work has helped characterize the role of de novo mutation in the etiology of ASD and identified multiple ASD risk loci including duplications of the 7q11.23 William’s Syndrome region and mutations in the sodium channel gene SCN2A. His work on the integration of CNV and exome data across multiple ASD cohorts recently identified 71 ASD risk loci. In addition, he worked as part of a group that integrated spatiotemporal gene expression data from the human brain with these ASD-associated genes. This approach has implicated deep layer glutamatergic neurons in the frontal cortex during mid-fetal development in the causation of ASD. Dr. Sanders trained as a pediatric physician in the UK before beginning a research career in genomics and bioinformatics with a PhD and postdoctoral research position at Yale.

**Robert T. Schultz, PhD** is the Director of the Center for Autism Research at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) and the RAC Endowed Professor of Psychology at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Schultz’s research addresses the basic mechanisms that support social communication, social cognition, and reward mechanisms that might underlie social learning. Much of his work has involved using MRI to understand brain mechanisms and to create biomarkers that predict who has ASD, who will develop the disorder, and who will respond well to different interventions. More recently, he has developed a technology and innovation lab to exploit advances in perceptual computing in order to develop more granular, efficient, and scalable measures of quantitative traits. Dr. Schultz is also a site PI for the Infant Brain Imaging Study, a multisite research collaboration with the goal to understand the timing and pattern of brain development in very young children with autism. Previously, Dr. Schultz was the Harris Endowed Associate Professor of Child Psychiatry, Yale School of Medicine. He received his PhD in Clinical Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin, with an emphasis on neuropsychology and behavioral genetics.

**About the Autism Science Foundation:**
The Autism Science Foundation (ASF) is a 501(c)(3) public charity. Its mission is to support autism research by providing funding to scientists and organizations conducting autism research. ASF also provides information about autism to the general public and serves to increase awareness of autism spectrum disorders and the needs of individuals and families affected by autism. To learn more about the Autism Science Foundation or to make a donation, visit [www.autismsciencefoundation.org](http://www.autismsciencefoundation.org).

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