

UCSD Among California Institutions to Receive Stem Cell Training Grant Funds

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The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) announced today that \$12.1 million has been provided to 16 California non-profit institutions, including the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), to train the next generation of stem cell researchers. They are the first grants awarded by the California stem cell agency.

Last September, UCSD was one of the institutions approved for funding by CIRM's governing board, the Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee (ICOC), to support training grants in stem cell research. At that time, UCSD was awarded \$3.6 million over three years for funding of a "stem cell boot camp." However, CIRM funding could not be awarded, due to litigation impeding the State's ability to sell approved General Obligation bonds.

Today's announcement provides UCSD with \$1.2 million for the first year of this project. Funding for the grants was drawn from the sale of \$14 million of bond anticipation notes (BANs) to six California philanthropic entities. The California Stem Cell Research and Cures Finance Committee approved the BANs this past week.

The UCSD training program, under the direction of Lawrence Goldstein, Ph.D., professor of cellular and molecular medicine at UCSD School of Medicine, will provide interdisciplinary training in stem cell biology and medicine for 16 scientists-six doctoral students, four postdoctoral fellows and six clinical fellows-enrolled at UCSD's School of Medicine, Division of Biological Sciences, Skaggs School of Pharmaceutical Sciences or Jacob's School of Engineering.

"Our goal is to train a cadre of young scientists and clinicians who can apply their background - in fields ranging from biology and chemistry to materials science and engineering - to basic stem cell research, potentially leading to the development of new approaches to understanding and treating human diseases," said Goldstein. "We appreciate the support to begin training the next generation of stem cell scientists," said UCSD Chancellor Marye Anne Fox. "This will enable California's academic, research and biotechnology communities to continue providing leadership in the development of future therapies for devastating human diseases."

Robert Klein, chairman of the ICOC, called it an exhilarating day for the scientists, patients and the millions of Californians who support stem cell research. "CIRM was created to fund science in the service of therapies, and today we're making our first grants - an investment in human capital that will train the next generation of scientists," said Klein. "Today patients can celebrate, because the flow of funds has started to the physicians and scientists who have dedicated their lives to this pioneering field that holds such promise for reducing human suffering."

"For patients with chronic illness or injury, this training program is an important signal of hope to come from California," said patient advocate and ICOC board member Jonathan Shestack. "The rising tide of knowledge from stem cell science will lift all those suffering with chronic conditions."

UCSD recently joined with the Burnham Institute for Medical Research, the Salk Institute and The Scripps Research Institute in announcing a proposed San Diego Consortium for Regenerative Medicine (SDCRM).

Each of the SDCRM institutions will receive funding for their training programs as a result of today's CIRM announcement. In a joint statement, the SDCRM members said: "This initiative will enable our institutions to develop a foundation of talented researchers who will work together as part of the SDCRM to further the understanding, and potentially the treatment, of human disease. While our proposals were submitted and will be funded separately, collaboration is the hallmark of San Diego 's research community. As this funding becomes available, we are committed to working together to develop and conduct joint research and training programs in one of today's most promising areas of science."

CIRM was established in 2004 with the passage of the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The institute is responsible for disbursing \$3 billion in State funds for stem cell research to California universities and research institutions over the next ten years, and is overseen and governed by the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee (ICOC). For more information, please visit CIRM's Web site at www.cirm.ca.gov.

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