

processing power in excess of the top ten supercomputers in the world combined, commented Patrick Gelsinger, Chief Technology Officer at Intel. The program, which acts in a similar way to a screensaver but runs constantly, automatically sends results back to Stanford and requests new data when ready. 'This computing power makes it possible to do simulations that were only dreamed of before,' said Vijay Pande, Project Director and Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Stanford University.

Funds for new biomedical research networks

Universities in Arkansas and Idaho have recently each received three-year grants of US\$6 million from the National Institutes of Health (NIH; Bethesda, MD, USA) to set up Biomedical Research Infrastructure Networks (BRIN). The University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (Little Rock, AR, USA), the University of Arkansas (Fayetteville, AR, USA) and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (Little Rock, AR, USA) will use their grant to enhance the research opportunities for professors and students that exist in the state. The grants will also be used to stimulate more scientists to apply for Federal grant proposals, and to enhance their expertise in bioinformatics, genomics, proteomics and digital microscopy.

'We have an untapped potential of students who attend colleges with few laboratories and research facilities,' says

Donald Bobitt, Associate Dean at the Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas and Director of Recruitment and Mentoring for BRIN. 'If we can educate a group of people at the graduate level, we will be able to attract biomedical research opportunities to the State,' he said.

In Idaho, the BRIN will include the University of Idaho (Moscow, ID, USA), Idaho State University (Pocatello, ID, USA) and Boise State University (Boise, ID, USA). As in Arkansas, the network will aim to rapidly share biomedical data produced by cooperating scientists by establishing a bioinformatics network across the three universities, to expand their current expertise in genetic sequencing and microarray analysis, and to provide new educational facilities at all three institutions.

Novel antidepressants poised for battle with generic drugs

The success of new antidepressant agents over generic products will be determined by whether they can treat a broader base of patients, whether they have a clean side-effect profile, and whether they have a faster action, concludes a recent Decision Resources (Waltham, MA, USA) report entitled *Competitive Landscape*. The report, which studies the effects of patent expiry on the antidepressant market, says that primary care physicians do not expect all users of antidepressants to switch to

generic alternatives such as fluoxetine (for Prozac). Some branded selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), such as Pfizer's Zoloft, are expected to be affected much more. Physicians were also unlikely to prescribe generic fluoxetine if a patient had a good record with another SSRI.

Eli Lilly (Indianapolis, IN, USA) is to combat the US patent expiry of fluoxetine by marketing Prozac-weekly, a once-a-week version. Reformulated SSRIs will also be marketed by Lundbeck (Copenhagen, Denmark) and Forest Laboratories (New York, NY, USA), which co-market citalopram (Celexa), Elan (Dublin, Ireland) and Solvay (Brussels, Belgium), which co-markets fluvoxamine (Luvox) and GlaxoSmithKline (London, UK), which market paroxetine (Paxil). Another way Eli Lilly plans to preserve revenue is by marketing a serotonin and norepinephrine reuptake inhibitor (SNRI), duloxetine. American Home Products (Madison, NJ, USA; with another SNRI venlafaxine) and Sepracor (Marlborough, MA, USA; which has a triple-acting neurotransmitter uptake blocker) believe that targeting more than one receptor will provide increasingly important alternatives to SSRIs.

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People

Awards

'Best of Biotech' awards

James Thomson and Carl B. Feldbaum were the recipients of two key awards at the 'Best of Biotech 2001' awards during the biotech CEO-only *14th Annual Biotech Meeting* recently in Laguna Niguel.

Thomson was awarded the '2001 Scientific Contribution Inductee to the Biotech Hall of Fame' for his team's accomplishments in isolating and culturing human embryonic stem cells at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1998.

Meanwhile, Feldbaum was awarded the '2001 Individual Inductee into the Biotech Hall of Fame' for his leadership of the Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO), engendering strong relationships with the

White House, US Congress and US federal regulatory agencies. Before his position at BIO, Feldbaum was Chief of Staff to Senator Arlen Specter, and has held a number of positions such as President of Palomar Corporation, Assistant to the US Secretary of Energy, and Inspector General for Defense Intelligence in the US Department of Defense.

Other recipients of awards included Novartis' Gleevec (imatinib mesylate) for 'Best New Approved Therapeutic Product', Human Genome Sciences for 'Most Important Financing of the Year', CuraGen/Bayer for 'Most Creative and Significant Strategic Alliance Deal' and

IDEC Pharmaceuticals for '2001 Company Inductee into the Biotech Hall of Fame'. The meeting also paid tribute to Lisa J. Raines (Genzyme) who lost her life on 11 September 2001 in the crash of American Airlines Flight 77. The conference was hosted by Burrill & Co. and Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers.

Appointments

Thomas Koestler moves from Novartis to Pharmacia

Thomas Koestler has recently been appointed Senior Vice-President and Head of Regulatory Affairs at Pharmacia Corporation (Peapack, NJ, USA). Koestler was previously Senior Vice-President and Global Head of Regulatory Affairs at Novartis Pharmaceutical Corporation and has more than 20 years of experience in the pharma industry. He is also a member of several scientific and professional associations including the Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists, the Drug Information Association, and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) where he recently chaired the Regulatory Affairs Coordinating Committee.

Immunex announces two key appointments

Immunex Corporation (Seattle, WA, USA) recently announced the promotions of Thomas O. Daniel to Senior Vice-President of Discovery Research and Kendall Mohler to Vice-President of Biological Sciences. Daniel's new role will involve overseeing and integrating molecular discovery with preclinical therapeutic development, as well as leading the biology and molecular biology groups. Meanwhile, Mohler's new role involves ensuring coordination between the company's preclinical pipeline research and clinical and marketing efforts.

Previously, Daniel was Vice-President of Oncology and Vascular Biology at the company. Before this, he was Director of the Vanderbilt University Center for Vascular Biology and Professor of Medicine and Cell Biology. Meanwhile, Mohler comes to the job from being Senior Director of the immunology department, having joined Immunex in 1989.

New Executive VP, R&D at Biogen

Biogen (Cambridge, MA, USA) has announced the promotion of Burt Adelman to the position of Executive Vice-President, R&D from being Vice-President of Medical Research. Adelman joined Biogen in 1991 as Director of Medical Research and has since assumed a number of positions overseeing preclinical development, medical operations and regulatory affairs for the company. Before joining Biogen, Adelman was Associate Professor of Medicine at the Medical College of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University and has also been an Instructor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Ranald Sutherland joins GeneProt

Ranald Sutherland has joined GeneProt (North Brunswick, NJ, USA) as Vice-President, Business Development to bring to the company 20 years of experience of business-to-business negotiation activities and relationship building. Previously, Sutherland was Vice-President, Business Development for F. Hoffman-La Roche. He also spent ten years at Abbott Laboratories where he led licensing and acquisition projects in the USA, Europe and Japan. Cedric Loiret-Bernal said: 'Ranald's many years of in-depth planning and development experience and his strong international business relationships will contribute directly to the effectiveness and success of our pursuit of new partnerships with leading pharmaceutical and biotech companies.'

New CCO for Diversys

Diversys (Cambridge, MA, USA) has announced the appointment of Pamela Hay as Chief Commercial Officer. Hay was previously Senior Vice-Director of Corporate Development and Strategic Opportunities at Dyax Corporation. She has also worked as Corporate Counsel for Biogen and General Counsel for T Cell Sciences (now Avant Immunotherapeutics). Robert Connelly, CEO of Diversys said: 'I believe there is no one in the industry with a better combination of patent strategy and deal-making experience, and thus the capability to fully exploit our technologies. Hay will be responsible for the commercialization of Diversys' protein repertoire and engineering

technologies for therapeutic, diagnostic and research use.

Two key appointments at Xencor

Xencor (Monrovia, CA, USA) has announced the appointment of Stephen K. Doberstein as Vice-President, Chemical Biology and Robert E. Pacifici as Vice-President, Discovery Technologies. Doberstein was previously at Exelixis where he held a variety of positions including Director of Pharmaceutical Target Research and Director of Cell Genetics. Meanwhile, Pacifici joins the company from Amgen where he was Director of Research Information and Automation Technologies and played a key role in the creation of the company's automation and screening groups.

Bassil Dahiyat, President and CEO of Xencor said: 'Dr Doberstein's knowledge in functional genomics and drug discovery coupled with his business development experience will be essential in expanding and leading our therapeutic area and target identification and validation programs.' He continues: 'Dr Pacifici's expertise in high-throughput screening, assay development and protein discovery will be invaluable in leading our protein optimization efforts.'

All change at Celsion

Spencer Volk has announced his retirement from the position of President and CEO and member of the Board of Directors of Celsion (Columbia, MD, USA). Augustine Cheung, founder and Chief Scientific Officer of the company, has therefore, stepped down from Chairman of the Board to take up the position of CEO. Meanwhile, Max Link, a current director for the company and past CEO of Sandoz Pharma, has been appointed as the new Chairman. Volk commented that: 'The company recognizes that it must focus on the development of its fledgling cancer treatment business and recruit management with appropriate industry experience. I have decided to step aside now that the company is positioned to begin commercialization of its BPH [benign prostatic hyperplasia] business.'

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