

People

Two heads for one at AstraZeneca

AstraZeneca (<http://www.astrazeneca.com>) has announced the appointment of Martin Nicklasson to the position of Executive Vice-President, Development, and Jan Lundberg as Executive Vice-President, Discovery Research. These appointments follow the planned retirement of Claes Wilhelmsson as Director of AstraZeneca. Tom McKillop, Chief Executive of AstraZeneca, praised Wilhelmsson's contribution to the success of AstraZeneca, commenting: 'His leadership has been critical to the creation of a vibrant R&D organization that we believe ranks with the best in the industry.'

Nicklasson joined Astra in 1978 and has previously held the position of Head of Gastro-intestinal Franchise, and then Executive Vice-President of the group at the company. His new position will give him responsibility for global drug development across AstraZeneca. Meanwhile, Lundberg joined Astra AB in 1996 as Head of Preclinical Affairs and then moved to the position of Head of Global Discovery at AstraZeneca. He will now be responsible for all global discovery programmes.

New CEO for OGS

Oxford Glycosciences (OGS; <http://www.ogs.com>) has appointed David Ebsworth as their new CEO; he will follow Michaela Kranda who stood down on 11 July 2002. Ebsworth joins the company from Bayer AG where he was Head of the Worldwide Pharmaceutical Business Group, which has sales of €5 billion and 20,000 employees. He has previously held a number of positions in the company, including President of Bayer Pharmaceutical Division in North America. In 2001, he received the Global Citizen Award from the School of Diplomacy and International Relations at Seton Hall University.

On the appointment, Kranda commented: 'David Ebsworth is exactly the kind of senior pharma executive we were seeking to lead the Company forward in its drive to develop and commercialize the drug discovery opportunities arising from our proteomics and glycobiology expertise.' Kirk Raab, OGS' Chairman added that: 'We are delighted to appoint a candidate of David's calibre... He brings

extensive knowledge of the pharmaceutical industry at the highest international level and his expertise will be invaluable to OGS as we move ahead with our pipeline.'

Head of Global R&D set to retire from Pfizer

John F. Niblack, Head of Pfizer Global R&D (PGRD; <http://www.pfizer.com>) will retire on 1 September 2002. Under Niblack, Pfizer's research operation has grown to a US\$5.3 billion operation that includes 160 projects in development and more than 300 projects in discovery research in 19 therapeutic areas. Hank Kinnell, Chief Executive of Pfizer, commented: 'Through his scientific leadership, John has made countless contributions to Pfizer's success over three decades...I thank him for his dedicated service.' Niblack managed the late-phase development and regulatory filings for many of the industry's most successful medicines, including Zolof, Diflucan and Viagra.

Pfizer also revealed a new organizational structure to enable the company to fulfil its aim of becoming the most consistently productive R&D organization in the industry. Peter Corr will become Senior Vice-President of Science and Technology, and will have overall responsibility for PGRD, as well as licensing and development and science policy functions. John LaMattina has been named Vice-President, Pfizer, Executive Vice-President of PGRD and President of Worldwide Research and Technology Alliances. Joe Feczko will become Vice-President, Pfizer, Executive Vice-President of PGRD and President of Worldwide Development, a new position that will bring together all of the company's major drug development activities.

Geert Wenes appointed at the National Center for Genome Resources

The National Center for Genome Resources (NCGR; <http://www.ncgr.org>) has appointed Geert Wenes as Program Leader of Bioinformatics. Wenes has spent much of his career in high-performance computing and has held senior positions at Cray Research (where he won a Top 100 R&D Award for developing a novel, parallel reservoir simulator application), IBM Corporation Servers

Group, and subsequently IBM Life Sciences Division.

William Beavis, Chief Scientific Officer at NCGR, said, 'Geert brings us technical expertise as well as knowledge of the bioinformatic needs in academic, government and commercial markets. He is especially well known among the computational research institutes in New Mexico, which are widely recognized as the world's leaders in high performance computing.'

Astex announces new Vice-President of Biology

Neil Thompson has been appointed as Vice-President, Biology, at Astex Technology (<http://www.astex-technology.com>), the structure-based drug discovery company. Thompson joins Astex from GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), where he was Director of the Immunology Platform and was responsible for specialist cellular and molecular immunology employed in the drug development process. He has been a leader of several drug discovery projects for drug candidate progression in a variety of therapeutic areas at GSK. Harren Jhoti, co-founder and Chief Scientific Officer of Astex commented that: '[Thompson's] breadth of knowledge and experience in the biology of drug discovery will further strengthen our team. His leadership in the areas of lead optimization against key signal transduction targets, such as kinases, will ensure continued success in our internal drug discovery programs.'

Prestigious award for Gleevec researcher

Nick Lydon has been awarded the Charles F. Kettering Prize in recognition of his central role in the discovery and development of Gleevec, a drug that has shown spectacular results in the treatment of chronic myelogenous leukaemia (CML) and is now also showing efficacy against some stomach cancers. Lydon developed the drug while at Novartis, Switzerland (<http://www.novartis.com>). He will receive a silver medal and will share a cheque for US\$250,000 with Brian Druker, the clinician who first showed the efficacy of Gleevec in CML.

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