

Statewide Consortium Proposed to Propel New York State to the Forefront of Computational Biology Academic Leaders Seek Partnership with Industry at Life Sciences Summit on June 14th, 2007.

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Robert McGrath, Ph.D., Provost and Vice President for Brookhaven Laboratory Affairs at Stony Brook University, announced today a proposal by a consortium of major universities to take a coordinated approach in the development and application of computational sciences, especially computational biology, to make New York a national leader in this rapidly emerging field. Computational biology has the potential to vastly improve understanding of basic biological processes and accelerate the discovery and development of life saving drugs and diagnostics. The proposed consortium, which currently includes Stony Brook University, Brookhaven National Laboratory, Columbia University, New York University, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, University at Albany, University at Buffalo, and Cornell University, will build upon major new supercomputing systems installed at Stony Brook University/Brookhaven National Laboratory and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, as well as the world class technical expertise and resources that already exists at the member institutions.

“Our announcement today is targeted toward the bioscience industry and our desire to apply our high performance computational biology capabilities to a broad range of areas of potential commercial interest,” said Provost McGrath. “We are actively seeking industry guidance and support for the Consortium, and the Life Sciences Summit represents a great opportunity to reach out to these companies. The ultimate potential to enhance human health and capture the economic benefit of these activities in New York State is enormous.”

The IBM Blue Gene/L supercomputer provided by NYS to Stony Brook and installed at Brookhaven National Laboratory, and the rich heterogeneous computational facility – including a Blue Gene/L supercomputer and Opteron and PowerPC clusters – currently being installed at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, will have the combined potential to process over 200 trillion computations/second. Together, these systems comprise several of the most powerful supercomputers in the world available for non-classified research. “With this type of capability and the strengths in computational sciences of the consortium partners, New York will emerge at the forefront of computational biology and computational science in general,” said Shirley Strum Kenny, President of Stony Brook University.

“The use of computation in drug design will advance our understanding of important biological processes and dramatically accelerate discovery, and ultimately development, of new therapies. This has tremendous implications for both academic and industrial research programs,” said Samuel Aronson, Ph.D., Director of Brookhaven National Laboratory.

"IBM is proud to be working with these leading universities to help make New York State a center of excellence for a critical and emerging area of science and commercial research -- computational biology," said Dave Turek, vice president for deep computing at IBM. "The use of computation to analyze and simulate biological structures is advancing our understanding of invisible processes and accelerating the pace of discovery. The integrated approach of the Consortium will enhance these efforts and significantly improve the State's ability to compete in a vital area of research."

Future plans for the Consortium include the formation of a Life Science Industry Steering Committee to help guide development. “The biotechnology industry is constantly seeking faster, more efficient means of developing vital therapies, a goal that computational biology promises to accelerate. We look forward to working with the Consortium to advance this important capability, which will further position New York at the forefront of the industry,” said Nathan Tinker, Executive Director of the New York Biotechnology Association.

For more information, or to register for the event, please call 631-632.8521, or visit <http://www.biotech.sunysb.edu/edu>.

About the Summit

The Life Sciences Summit is a premier gathering of life sciences leaders and professionals focused on issues of strategic importance to the industry in the Long Island region. The Life Sciences Summit is produced by the Center for Biotechnology, a New York State Center for Advanced Technology, in cooperation with the Long Island Life Sciences Initiative, an industry trade organization representing the interests of the region's biotechnology, pharmaceutical, medical device, and personal care industries.