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Engineering, biology, science meet in new collaborative program

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DALLAS — Oct. 26, 2006 — The three UT System campuses in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area have opened a new chapter of cooperation in the biomedical sciences, with collaborative grant programs for joint research projects and a series of biological and engineering symposiums.

The series of events, dubbed UT Metroplex Days, is free and will feature events at UT Southwestern Medical Center on Nov. 29, UT Dallas on Dec. 4 and UT Arlington on Dec. 11. A Virtual Day will be held Dec. 6.

"Biomedical engineering is a fast-growing and highly competitive field today. Its mission is to bring biomedical sciences and engineering to bear on real medical problems," said [Dr. Donald Hilgemann](#), professor of physiology at UT Southwestern and organizer of the event. "We have no choice but to work in a more collaborative and productive way together. I think it's absolutely key to the future of our institutions and biotechnology growth in Dallas-Fort Worth."

The symposiums are designed to create opportunities for biological scientists and engineers in the Metroplex to get to know one another and foster collaborations, including outreach to industry and the private sector. Registrants are encouraged to present posters on research topics, with a special emphasis on nanomedicine, imaging and biotechnology. Other topics of interest include genomics, computational biology and bioinformatics, biomaterials and tissue engineering, robotics, and medical electronics.

The deadline to register for the symposiums is Nov. 15. The event schedule and registration information is on the Web at: www.utmetroplexdays.org.

University leaders are hoping that bilateral grants for up to \$100,000 per year for joint projects between teams of researchers from the three institutions will provide a synergistic spark to trailblazing discoveries.

"The grant program provides seed funds for high-impact, interdisciplinary, collaborative research projects," said [Dr. Alfred Gilman](#), executive vice president for academic affairs, provost and dean of UT Southwestern Medical School, and director of the Cecil H. and Ida Green Comprehensive Center for Molecular, Computational and Systems Biology. "The goal is to stimulate locally more research at the interfaces between biology and biomedical sciences and chemistry, physics, engineering, computer science and mathematics."

To be considered for the grants, the research not only must be collaborative but also possess the capacity to have great influence on the relevant science or the practice of medicine. It also should be able to attract external funding for additional work from conventional sources, if feasible, Dr. Gilman said. UT Southwestern faculty members interested in applying should contact the dean's office.

The teamwork of researchers from the three UT campuses in the Metroplex will take advantage of the world-renowned biomedical research at UT Southwestern and the expertise in mathematics, computer science, chemistry, physics and engineering at UTD and UTA, said [Dr. Peter Antich](#), professor of radiology at UT Southwestern.

Those collaborations are expected to result in scientific discovery for applications in medicine and industry. One promising field, for example, is nanomedicine, which involves the use of man-made systems at the molecular scale for curing disease or repairing damaged tissues, said Dr. Antich, chair of the graduate program in biomedical engineering.

UT Metroplex Days

Nov. 29

Site: UT Southwestern**Focus:** Biological engineering.**Speaker:** Doug Lauffenburger, Ph.D.,
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

- Dec. 4 **Site:** UT Arlington
Focus: Bioimaging, genomics and bioinformatics
Speaker: Winfried Denk, Ph.D., Max Planck Institute
- Dec. 6 **Virtual Day**
Lectures and interactive discussions will be broadcast on all three campuses.
Speakers: Bob Langer, Sc.D., MIT.
W. Mark Saltzman, Ph.D., Yale University
- Dec. 11 **Site:** UT Dallas
Focus: Nanomedicine
Speaker: Shuming Nie, Ph.D., Georgia Tech University

Registration is free. The registration deadline is Nov. 15. The event schedule and registration information is on the Web at: www.utmetroplexdays.org.

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