

# SOUTHWESTERN NEWS

Media Contact: Morgan Lyons  
(214) 648-3404  
or E-Mail: mlyons@mednet.swmed.edu

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY FUNDS GENOME RESEARCH CENTER AT UT SOUTHWESTERN

DALLAS — September 12, 1996 — UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas is expanding its work on the Human Genome Project with funding from the U.S. Department of Energy to create a World Wide Web database and use a new technology to study human genes. The new project will help scientists around the world map human genes more rapidly and more accurately.

This project will complement the work of UT Southwestern researchers investigating the human genome. Dr. Glen Evans, director of UT Southwestern's Genome Science and Technology Center (GESTEC), is project director. The GESTEC at UT Southwestern is funded by the National Institutes of Health.

The NIH and the Energy Department lead and fund the U.S. portion of the Human Genome Project, which is the international effort to locate and understand the more than 100,000 human genes.

"This is one of the first large-scale fundings of genome research by the Department of Energy outside of its national laboratories," Evans said. "It's not a grant. It is a close interaction with the DOE that may even involve having its scientists on our site to help with research."

Evans and his UT Southwestern colleagues, along with collaborators at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, N.Y., and Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, proposed to the Energy Department a 10-year, \$10 million cooperative project.

The department awarded \$1.2 million for a one-year pilot study, which will be based at UT Southwestern. After that, the department will decide whether to continue funding the project. Evans has had a DOE research grant for technology development since 1988.

One goal of the project is to generate another World Wide Web database that is

(MORE)

## GENOME PROJECT — 2

accessible to all investigators. It would consist of sequence fragments of genes at known locations on the human genome. Researchers use the public databases to look for known gene sequences and compare them to discoveries made in their own labs.

The second goal is to use a new technology, a type of gene clone known as a P1 artificial chromosome (PAC), that allows researchers to study the human genome more rapidly and accurately. "This resource should be useful to investigators building maps for sequencing the entire genome as well as smaller groups interested in specific regions," Evans said.

"The genome project has been highly successful, but completing the entire human genome by the target year of 2003 will require substantial new developments in sequencing technology, strategies and resources," said Evans, director of the Eugene McDermott Center for Human Growth and Development and holder of the Eugene McDermott Distinguished Chair for the Study of Human Growth and Development. "This collaboration should go a long way toward meeting those needs."

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