

Researchers gather for stem cell retreat

November 8 2013, by Carolyn Pennington

Scientists from across the state are gathering for a retreat at the Health Center today to present their latest findings in the field of stem cell research. Among those making presentations include researchers from UConn, Yale, Wesleyan, The Jackson Laboratory, and Pfizer pharmaceuticals.

Significant findings have been made since 2005, when the General Assembly first passed legislation committing \$100 million for stem cell research over 10 years. The initiative has helped support major scientific advances, state-of-the-art research facilities, and the creation of new jobs.

Marc Lalande, director of the UConn Stem Cell Institute, told the gathering that with the state's investment, UConn has been able to grow a successful stem cell community with over 40 labs and more than 70 investigators.

"We've been able to develop technology and increase economic development that is being spurred by [stem cell research](#)," explained Lalande, "and that is extremely important given the investment the state is making in Bioscience Connecticut."

Lalande went on to say that "induced pluripotent stem (iPS) cells revolutionized [stem cell biology](#) by allowing us to make patient specific [stem cells](#). The UConn Stem Cell Core lab manager, Leann Crandall, has made over a 100 of these stem cells lines and has sent them all over the world. So we're extremely proud of the technology we've developed

which I think is cutting edge."

Among the presenters at the retreat was Dr. Ren-He Xu, director of the UConn Stem Cell Core. He discussed "Correction of a Genetic Disease in Human Stem Cells," specifically involving his research into Marfan syndrome. Using "genetic editing" techniques, Xu is getting closer to identifying potential drug therapies that could help Marfan patients.

Provided by University of Connecticut

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