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UCSB Stem Cell Researchers Applaud Obama's Action

Stem cell researchers at UC Santa Barbara were pleased this morning after President Obama lifted the ban on federal funds for embryonic stem cell research.

"President Obama's action is uplifting and exciting not only for stem cell researchers, but also for patients who suffer from incurable diseases," said Dennis Clegg, chair of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology. "Lifting the federal ban on new stem cell lines and increasing the level of federal funding will boost stem cell research in the USA," said Clegg. "Finally, science is not a dirty word in the White House."

Michael Witherell, vice chancellor for research explained, "Due to timely investment by the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine over the last few years, UC Santa Barbara is in a good position to make important advances in stem cell biology and engineering. But now we need federal research funding to sustain the effort. Lifting the federal restrictions on stem cell research will allow American research universities to lead the world in this new scientific frontier."

The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) has granted UCSB's Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering more than \$8 million over the past four years, including money to build a state-of-the-art stem cell research facility, which is near completion. The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) was established with \$3 billion by voters in 2004.

The UCSB Laboratory for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering was established free of federal funding to allow research on all stem cell lines. "Even though we can now reprogram adult skin cells into multipurpose stem cells, it is far too early to abandon the use of human embryonic stem cell lines," Clegg said in a talk last year.

UCSB is positioned to make unique, significant contributions in stem cell research, with extraordinary enabling technologies in biomaterials, systems biology, nanotechnology, micro processing and bioengineering, all of which are synergistic with fundamental biomedical research efforts. Its approaches are distinct from those at California medical schools, with an emphasis on basic biological questions and engineering challenges related to stem cell research.

"Federal funding remains a critical need if we are to advance the work being done to alleviate the suffering of individuals with diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, age-related macular degeneration, and diabetes," said Clegg.

Related Links

[Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering](#)

[Video on Stem Cell Biology](#)

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