UC Santa Barbara scientists have joined with colleagues from seven regenerative medicine institutes in the Los Angeles region to form a new consortium that will share resources and maximize the impact of funding from the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM).

“This regional partnership will provide valuable resources and expertise that will accelerate stem cell research at UC Santa Barbara and help develop novel therapies for unmet medical needs,” said biology professor Dennis Clegg, who holds the Wilcox Family Chair in BioMedicine, and is founder and co-director of UCSB’s Center for Biology and Stem Cell Engineering.

“The goal of this consortium is to create a hub for innovation that propels stem cell science from the laboratory to the bedside,” said Clive Svendsen, executive director of the Cedars-Sinai Board of Governors Regenerative Medicine Institute and the Kerry and Simone Vickar Family Foundation Distinguished Chair in Regenerative Medicine, who initiated this new collaboration.
Regenerative medicine uses both gene therapy and stem cell technologies to regenerate tissues within the body to potentially treat a number of diseases, including some that have previously been deemed incurable.

More than 100 people, including the directors of major stem cell institutions, attended a recent three-day summit. The organizations agreed to work collaboratively to accelerate novel regenerative medicine therapies.

Summit attendees also included leaders of CIRM, which was created through a voter-approved ballot measure signed into law in 2004. CIRM distributes funding for regenerative medicine-related studies.

The group discussed collaborating on stem cell and gene therapy manufacturing programs, educational courses, core services to support the science, scientific innovations, and new regenerative medicine clinical trials.

The following CIRM-funded organizations are part of the new stem cell consortium:

- UC Santa Barbara Center for Stem Cell Biology and Engineering
- Cedars-Sinai Board of Governors Regenerative Medicine Institute
- Eli and Edythe Broad Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at the University of Southern California
- University of California, Riverside, Stem Cell Center
- University of California, Irvine, Sue and Bill Gross Stem Cell Research Center
- UCLA Broad Stem Cell Research Center
- City of Hope
- California Institute of Technology

Representatives from these partnering organizations plan to convene annually to discuss collaborative projects and accelerate regenerative medicine projects in California.

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About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.