



UMBI
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
BIOTECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE

NEWS

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**U.S. Department of Energy Announces Genome Sequencing
UMBI Researcher's Work in Chestnut Blight Virus Recognized**

College Park, MD—Today Jim Bristow, Deputy Director of the U.S. Department of Energy Joint Genomic Institute (DOE JGI) announced that sequencing of the chestnut blight fungus genome requested by a consortium of international researchers led by Donald Nuss, Ph.D. of the Center for Biosystems Research (CBR) will be performed at the Community Sequencing Program of the Joint Genomic Institute.

“This selection is a significant achievement,” said UMBI President Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera, Ph.D. “The Department of Energy program only selects projects with the highest merit.” An outside peer-review committee selected Nuss’ project from an undisclosed number of applications.

“A little more than 100 years ago, some 4 billion American chestnut trees were killed by chestnut blight fungus, devastating the ecology of the U.S. mid-Atlantic forests and devastating portions of the economy based on hardwood forestry. My team and I use a naturally occurring virus of the chestnut blight fungus to promote biological control of the blight and to understand the molecular basis of fungal diseases,” stated Nuss. “By sequencing the genome of the blight fungus, we can search for more vulnerabilities to fight this pathogen.”

The Department of Energy program provides high-throughput sequencing and computational analysis unavailable at most research institutions.

“UMBI has an excellent record of leveraging the funds entrusted to us by the state and donors,” commented Hunter-Cevera. “Dr. Nuss’ success in partnering with the U.S. Department of Energy to use the most cutting edge resources is a great example of UMBI’s creativity in fulfilling our mission of research; education and workforce development; and economic development.”

The DOE JGI, supported by the DOE Office of Science, unites the expertise of five national laboratories, Lawrence Berkeley, Lawrence Livermore, Los Alamos, Oak Ridge, and Pacific Northwest, along with the Stanford Human Genome Center to advance genomics in support of the DOE mission related to clean energy generation and environmental characterization and clean-up. DOE JGI’s Walnut Creek, California, Production Genomics Facility provides integrated high-throughput sequencing and computational analysis that enable systems-based scientific approaches to these challenges. Additional information about DOE JGI can be found at:

<http://www.jgi.doe.gov>.

One of five centers forming UMBI and established in 1987, CBR is located in the Plant Sciences Building on the campus of the University of Maryland, College Park. CBR facilities include the University System of Maryland's primary DNA Sequencing Facility and a DNA microarray production and analysis core facility.

With research centers in Baltimore, Rockville, and College Park, the University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute is the newest of 13 institutions forming the University System of Maryland. UMBI has 85 ladder-ranked faculty and a 2006 budget of \$60 million. Celebrating the institution's 20th year of service to Maryland and the world, UMBI is led by microbiologist and former biotechnology executive Dr. Jennie C. Hunter-Cevera. For more information visit www.umbi.umd.edu.

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