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UC Berkeley and Stanford University launch joint stem cell research institute
*Siebel Stem Cell Institute established with \$10.5 million grant
to fund groundbreaking work in regenerative medicine*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berkeley — Two leaders in biomedical research – the University of California, Berkeley, and Stanford University School of Medicine – will join forces in a new stem cell initiative that will catalyze research and serve as a magnet for scholars from around the world. The Siebel Stem Cell Institute, established by the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Foundation, is a joint initiative between the Berkeley Stem Cell Center and the Stanford Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine Institute, two of the world's leading institutions at the forefront of biomedical science.

The new consortium will bring together the top physician-scientists, biologists, chemists, engineers and computer scientists to study stem cells – master cells from which all specialized cells and tissues are derived. The goal is to target the root causes of today's most devastating diseases and translate discoveries into new therapies.

The joint institute is funded by a \$9 million gift from the Siebel Foundation, which will leverage the vast expertise of UC Berkeley and Stanford to advance stem cell research to new, critical stages. In addition, \$1.5 million from the Siebel Foundation and an equal match from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation will establish at UC Berkeley the Thomas and Stacey Siebel Distinguished Chair in Stem Cell Research, bringing the total commitment from all these gifts to \$12 million. The Siebel Distinguished Chair will enable UC Berkeley to recruit world-class faculty in stem cell biology, cancer and related research areas.

Programs at the Siebel Institute will build on a foundation of leading-edge research by both

- more -

universities in this promising new field, work that holds the potential of reversing the effects of human diseases that include diabetes, Alzheimer's disease and Parkinson's disease.

At UC Berkeley, scientists are investigating molecular mechanisms that regulate gene expression and differentiation of stem cells into specialized tissues such as skeletal muscle and cells of the immune system. This pioneering work is being conducted through the coordinated efforts of biologists, bioengineers and chemists.

At the Stanford University School of Medicine, institute scientists are leaders in research on blood-forming stem cells, embryonic stem cells and cancer stem cells. One of Stanford's many strengths is translating basic science into clinically useful solutions.

The Siebel Stem Cell Institute will spur the formation of cooperative research groups at both universities. These research teams will interact regularly with faculty and students from other stem cell groups at Stanford and UC Berkeley. Stanford, for example, plans to set aside laboratory space in its planned stem cell facility for researchers from UC Berkeley who may spend a month or a sabbatical year working with Stanford scientists. A reciprocal arrangement is also planned at UC Berkeley.

"This gift provides the all-important key to bring our scientists together in exciting, more synergistic ways," said Robert Tjian, director of the Berkeley Stem Cell Center, who will lead the UC Berkeley component of the consortium.

"This gift from the Siebel Foundation is an exciting and catalyzing event not only because it will allow our two universities to work together on various challenges of mutual interest, but also allow us to attract the best international scholars," said Tjian, who also is a UC Berkeley professor of biochemistry and molecular biology and a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator.

Dr. Irving Weissman, director of the Stanford Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine Institute, will lead the Stanford component of the consortium. He envisions that the Siebel gift will support the kind of interactive collaboration that is needed to speed advances in the field.

For instance, he said, UC Berkeley has developed a method for tracking chemical nanoparticles that

could be harnessed by Stanford researchers, whose study of cancer stem cells is one of Stanford's areas of expertise.

"If you could find a way to get the nanoparticle into the cancer stem cell, you could track its movement in the body," said Weissman, the Virginia & D.K. Ludwig Professor for Clinical Investigation in Cancer Research at Stanford. "This is the kind of exciting collaboration that can now take place."

"Collaboration of this type between California's two top-ranking universities not only pushes research forward in exciting directions, it creates a powerful magnet for new scientific talent," said Ed Penhoet, a well-respected leader in biotechnology and higher education, who serves as vice chair of the Independent Citizens Oversight Committee of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM).

The Berkeley Stem Cell Center is a partnership that includes scientists and policy makers at UC Berkeley, the Children's Hospital Oakland Research Institute and Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

The Stanford Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine Institute is a multidisciplinary, university-wide effort that brings together life, physical and engineering sciences with leaders in business, law and education, in conjunction with Stanford Hospital & Clinics and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

The Siebel Foundation – a nonprofit, public benefit corporation – was established as a private foundation in 1996. Its mission is to support projects and organizations that work to improve the quality of life, environment and education of its community members.

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NOTE: For further information from Stanford University School of Medicine, contact Ruthann Richter at (650) 725-8047.

LINKS: Visit Berkeley Stem Cell Center Web site at: <http://stemcellcenter.berkeley.edu/>. View the Stanford Stem Cell Biology and Regenerative Medicine Institute Web site at: <http://stemcell.stanford.edu/>. More information about The Siebel Foundation is available at: <http://www.siebelfoundation.org>.