

# Stem cell research blooms at Yale and in Connecticut

Yale UniversityYale University

Eight years ago, Dr. Diane Krause was one of only two scientists at the Yale School of Medicine whose work was specifically focused on stem cells.

Today, more than 70 Yale faculty members are involved in some form of stem cell research, which since 2007 has been supported at Yale by more than \$230 million in state and federal grants and funding foundations. Yale stem cell researchers have published 472 papers exploring a host of medical and scientific questions, from the origins of leukemia to the molecular basis of hair growth.

“This field has grown more quickly than any of us could have envisioned,” said Krause, professor of laboratory medicine, cell biology, and pathology, and since 2006 associate director of the Yale Stem Cell Center.

On Wednesday April 3, Krause will join more than 430 registrants and Governor Dannel Malloy in celebrating Connecticut’s successful discoveries at the 2013 StemConn scientific symposium at the Omni Hotel in New Haven. Held every other year, the gathering will be the largest since the conference began in 2007 — an outgrowth of the establishment in 2005 of the Connecticut Stem Cell Research program by the state legislature.

The success of stem cell research at Yale, as well as the University of Connecticut and Wesleyan University, is directly attributable to the program’s \$100 million in grants promised to state researchers over 10 years.

“The state’s contribution has been critical to this growth and continues to be,” Krause said. “Every dollar the state has contributed has led to \$4 more dollars in additional research funding.”

The existence of the fund was a major factor in the recruitment internationally renowned stem cell biologist Haifan Lin to head the Yale Stem Cell Center. Members of the center have submitted over 130 patent applications and 26 intellectual property licenses.

The research funding program, created in response to a ban on federal funding for research using embryonic stem cells by President George W. Bush, has taken on even more importance now that scientists have discovered how to create pluripotent stem cells from an individual’s own cells, notes Krause. The breakthrough holds the promised of individualized “patient-specific” therapy for a host of diseases.

The funding has also helped to recruit and jumpstart the careers of young scientists

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at Yale such as Jun Lu, whose work on how blood cells regenerate promises to help patients to better tolerate chemotherapy, and Valerie Horsley, whose work with skin stem cells has applications for wound healing and even hair growth. Scientists at Yale are researching the use of stem cells for treating diabetes and Parkinson's disease; repairing spinal cord injuries; building blood vessels to treat congenital heart defects; creating living, growing blood vessels from scratch; and even rebuilding a heart.

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