

Active Centers of Excellence in Genomic Science Awards

Center for Synthetic Regulatory Genomics

RM1 HG009491

Jef D. Boeke

New York University Langone Health

The Center for Synthetic Regulatory Genomics (SyRGe) is tasked with development and application of revolutionary technology for making dramatic, coordinated changes to extensive gene loci, which will enable broad investigation of the function of regulatory sequences and foster translational applications to biotechnology, personalized medicine and gene therapy. Specifically, we will (i) design and synthesize over 1000 >100kbp constructs probing regulatory function at a carefully selected set of genes; (ii) develop a pipeline for their single-copy integration at any desired site genome-wide; (iii) survey libraries for effects on gene expression, chromatin features, and nuclear architecture; and (iv) develop global computational models to predict regulatory effects of sequence variation on gene expression. The Center will dramatically supersede present and predicted technologies for manipulation and assessment of regulatory genome function. This Center also incorporates a unique and highly successful outreach program whereby undergraduates from diverse backgrounds play a crucial role in genome assembly, as well as a new Fellows program to expose researchers and students from other fields to transformative new technology and facilitate its promulgation throughout the larger human genetics and genomics communities.

Center Web Site: [The Center for Synthetic Regulatory Genomics](#)

Center for Personal Dynamic Regulomes

RM1 HG007735

Howard Chang

Stanford University

Tens of thousands of human genomes have been sequenced, but the central challenge is their interpretation. A comprehensive set of regulatory events across a genome—the regulome—is needed to make full use of genomic information, but is currently out of reach for most clinical applications and biological systems. The Center will develop technologies that greatly increase the sensitivity, speed, and comprehensiveness of understanding genome regulation. We will develop new technologies to interrogate the transactions between the genome and regulatory

factors, such as proteins and noncoding RNAs from single cells, and integrate variations in DNA sequences and chromatin states over time and across individuals. Novel molecular engineering and biosensor strategies are deployed to encapsulate the desired complex DNA transformations into the probe system, such that the probe system can be directly used on very small human clinical samples and capture genome-wide information in one or two steps. These technologies will be applied to clinical samples with genomic aberrations to exercise their robustness, and reveal for the first time epigenomic dynamics of human diseases during progression and treatment. These technologies will be broadly applicable to many biomedical investigations, and the Center will disseminate the technologies via training and diverse means.

Center Web Site: [Center for Personal Dynamic Regulomes](#)

Center for Genomically Engineered Organs

RM1 HG008525

George M. Church

Harvard Medical School

The Center for Genomically Engineered Organs (CGEO) will combine cutting edge genomics, genome editing technology, and tissue engineering methods to develop improved models of complex tissues. These tissues will be producible in laboratories from reprogrammed or genetically modified stem or other cells, will contain multiple cell types and vasculatures representative of natural (healthy or diseased) tissues, and will be characterized deeply at a molecular level and for overall tissue architecture. Such model tissues will greatly expedite biomedical progress by providing researchers a way to conduct preliminary tests of theories about normal and disease biology quickly and inexpensively in their laboratories before they have to move on to costly and potentially invasive experiments on animals or humans. To build the capacity to generate such models, CGEO will develop methods for comprehensively analyzing tissues in situ at a molecular level, by acquiring high-throughput RNA expression, protein expression, and epigenomic data from each of the tissue's individual cells that retains information about the locations of these molecules in the cells. CGEO will develop and use these methods to characterize model tissues important to neurobiology that will be built from neurons of different types derived from human induced pluripotent stem cells and grown into cerebral organoids. Vascularizing these organoids, and perfusing them so as to provide them nutrients and eliminate wastes, will enable them to grow into larger and more mature forms than achieved to date, and thus improve their ability to model natural tissues. In situ molecular data obtained from these neurons and organoids will be compared with data from comparable natural tissues to assess and improve their representativeness. CGEO is a collaboration of four laboratories in the Boston area with combined expertise in advanced genomic and proteomic technology, genome engineering, stem cell technology, epigenetics, super-resolution microscopy, and tissue engineering. The CGEO team comprises Professors George Church (Principal Investigator) and Chao-Ting Wu (both from Harvard Medical School), Ed Boyden (MIT), and Jennifer Lewis (Wyss Institute at Harvard).

Center Web Site: [Center for Genomically Engineered Organs](#)

Center for Genome Editing and Recording

RM1 HG009490

Jennifer Doudna

University of California, Berkeley

*The ability to understand normal and pathologic functions of the human genome and to translate that knowledge into effective therapies depends critically on determining how encoded genetic information confers phenotype. Recent advances in DNA sequencing and bioinformatics have provided vast quantities of genomic data that, in principle, hold the keys to advances in preventive medicine and therapeutic intervention. However, realizing the promise of personalized medicine will require accurate interrogation and manipulation of DNA sequences *in situ* at a scale and level of accuracy not currently available. The Center for Genome Editing and Recording (CGER) will address these challenges by creating technologies to detect, alter and record the sequence and output of the genome in individual cells and tissues. Building on the CRISPR-Cas9 genome engineering technology harnessed from bacteria, CGER will couple the RNA-guided DNA cleavage activity of the Cas9 enzyme to strategies for enhancing DNA sequence replacement using homology-directed double-strand break repair. In parallel, CGER will conjugate Cas9 to DNA "base editing" domains to enable accurate introduction or correction of point mutations without double-stranded DNA cleavage. Using cell-based assays, CGER researchers will interrogate specific disease-associated loci in human cells to provide new biological insights and uncover new therapeutic targets. Together, these approaches will enable the creation of any desired sequence alteration at any locus with high specificity and efficiency, with profound implications for both genome science and practical therapeutic intervention. To complement this suite of genome-manipulation technologies, CGER will also develop a high-throughput pipeline for testing the functional gene expression impacts of sequence variants responsible for human disease. This pipeline will identify and illuminate the relationships between human genome sequence variations, target gene expression and interactions with other genes. Finally, CGER will create new methods for permanently recording cell state changes in DNA so that they can be read out in a single-cell RNA-seq format. This development of molecular cell recorders will focus primarily on an evolving lineage tracer that, by enabling the generation of fate maps at unprecedented resolutions, holds the promise to revolutionize studies of normal development and disease progression.*

Center for the Multiplexed Assessment Of Phenotype

RM1 HG010461

Stanley Fields, Douglas Fowler

University of Washington

To date, millions of human genetic variants have been found, many in the coding or regulatory sequence of genes. However, for only a tiny fraction of these variants do we understand how the expression or function of the encoded product is affected. As a consequence, the promise of sequencing human genomes to understand human phenotypes - especially the risk for many diseases with genetic components - has gone largely unfulfilled. What is needed are facile, high-throughput methods for generating libraries of human cells bearing mutant sequence elements and for assessing these libraries to determine each variant's effect on molecular and cellular phenotypes. Thus, the Center for the Multiplexed Assessment of Phenotype, based largely in the University of Washington's Department of Genome Sciences, proposes to develop highly generalizable, reproducible and scalable technologies to generate, and assess the functional impact of, variants in human genes. In the first specific aim, the Center will establish two workhorse methods of mutagenesis to produce variants: saturation editing of genes at their endogenous loci in the human genome, and in vitro generation of variant libraries that are recombined into safe harbor sites. In the second specific aim, the Center will develop approaches to explore the impact of mutations in noncoding regions on versions of genes that have been minimized - pared down to partially remove intronic sequence but still capable of providing essential activity. Further, it will develop mass spectrometry methods to analyze variation in coding sequences for its effect on protein abundance, stability, interactions, turnover and aggregation. In the third specific aim, the Center will assess variant effects on cell morphology, behavior and internal organization by using a novel, microscopy- based phenotyping technology, and on global transcription by developing a massively parallel single-cell mRNA profiling method. Center-developed technologies will be piloted on a set of human genes with disease relevance, enabling comparisons between each variant's functional effects and the effects of known pathogenic or benign variants. This effort will inform the use in the clinic of the large-scale functional data the Center's technologies will generate. Additionally, variants will be assessed under different conditions, such as in multiple cell lines, in combination with another mutation, or in the presence of a drug. The Center will also train early career experimentalists, clinical geneticists and data scientists to obtain and use large-scale functional data. This training will include internships in Center laboratories for one to three months, and apprenticeships for one to two years. These close interactions will generate medically- and biologically-relevant results and reveal the best paths for translating the vast amounts of Center-generated functional data for clinical use. Through these new technologies and their dissemination to the broader clinical community, the Center will advance the promise of the Human Genome Project by interpreting the vast landscape of human genetic variation.

Center for Sub-Cellular Genomics

RM1 HG010023

Junhyong Kim

University of Pennsylvania

A cell is a highly complex system with distributed molecular physiologies in structured sub-cellular compartments whose interplay with the nuclear genome determine the functional characteristics of the cell. A classic example of distributed genomic processes is found in neurons. Learning and memory requires modulation of individual synapses through RNA localization, localized translation, and localized metabolites such as those from dendritic mitochondria. Dendrites of neurons integrate distributed synaptic signals into both electrical and nuclear transcriptional response. Dysfunction of these distributed genomic functions in neurons can result in a broad spectrum of neuropsychiatric diseases such as bipolar and depressive disorders, autism, among others. Understanding complex genomic interactions within a single cell requires new technologies: we need nano-scale ability to make genome-wide measurements at highly localized compartments and to effect highly localized functional genomic manipulations, especially in live tissues. To address this need, we propose to establish a Center for Sub-Cellular Genomics using neurons as model systems. The center will develop new optical and nanotechnology approaches to isolate sub-cellular scale components for genomic, metabolomics, and lipidomic analyses. The center will also develop new mass spectrometry methods, molecular biology methods, and informatics models to create a platform technology for sub-cellular genomics.

Center Website: [Center for Sub-Cellular Genomics](#)

Center for Dynamic RNA Epitranscriptomes

RM1 HG008935

Chuan He

University of Chicago

RNA modifications are ubiquitous in biology and present in all classes of cellular RNAs including eukaryotic messenger and long non-coding RNA. A large fraction of mammalian mRNA/lncRNA modifications are also known to be reversible, highly dynamic, and occur in cell type and cell state dependent manner. The dynamic RNA epitranscriptomes, those involving N6-methyladenosine (m6A) in particular, are known to regulate many cellular activities including mRNA splicing, export, cytoplasmic localization, stability, translation activity, microRNA processing, immune tolerance, and to impact cellular processes including proliferation, development, circadian rhythm, and embryonic stem cell differentiation. Consider m6A in mRNA/lncRNA as an example, dedicated writers, erasers, and readers exist in human cells to orchestrate an additional layer of complex post-transcriptional gene expression regulation. Emerging new functions of RNA modifications are expected to follow, with significant implications on many aspects of human health and disease. Despite high potentials and promises, current epitranscriptome studies are significantly hampered by the lack of technologies that enable quantitative mapping of any type of mRNA/lncRNA modifications at high resolution and high sensitivity. This proposal will develop new methods that target mRNA/lncRNA modifications, such as m6A, N1-methyladenosine (m1A), 5-methylcytosine (m5C), and 2'O-methyls (Nm) for high throughput sequencing at single-base resolution and suitable for low input RNA isolated from just hundreds to thousands of cells. New bioinformatics tools will be

developed in order to facilitate data analysis. The general approaches proposed can be broadly applied to sequence RNA modifications in other RNA species including more abundant ribosomal RNA, transfer RNA, snRNA, and snoRNA as well as miRNA and piRNA. We will apply the newly developed methods to obtain base-resolution maps of RNA modifications in order to associate with human diseases, and to proof-of-principle studies in neurobiology. Our proposed research will establish high-throughput, high-resolution, and high-sensitivity methods for epitranscriptome research in all biological areas.

Center Website: [Center for Dynamic RNA Epitranscriptomes](#)

Center for Cell Circuits

P50 HG006193

Aviv Regev

The Broad Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts

Systematic reconstruction of genetic and molecular circuits in mammalian cells remains a significant, largescale and unsolved challenge in genomics. The urgency to address it is underscored by the sizeable number of GWAS-derived disease genes whose functions remain largely obscure, limiting our progress towards biological understanding and therapeutic intervention. Recent advances in probing and manipulating cellular circuits on a genomic scale open the way for the development of a systematic method for circuit reconstruction. Here, we propose a Center for Cell Circuits to develop the reagents, technologies, algorithms, protocols and strategies needed to reconstruct molecular circuits. Our preliminary studies chart an initial path towards a universal strategy, which we will fully implement by developing a broad and integrated experimental and computational toolkit. We will develop methods for comprehensive profiling, genetic perturbations and mesoscale monitoring of diverse circuit layers (Aim 1). In parallel, we will develop a computational framework to analyze profiles, derive provisional models, use them to determine targets for perturbation and monitoring, and evaluate, refine and validate circuits based on those experiments (Aim 2). We will develop, test and refine this strategy in the context of two distinct and complementary mammalian circuits. First, we will produce an integrated, multi-layer circuit of the transcriptional response to pathogens in dendritic cells (Aim 3) as an example of an acute environmental response. Second, we will reconstruct the circuit of chromatin factors and non-coding RNAs that control chromatin organization and gene expression in mouse embryonic stem cells (Aim 4) as an example of the circuitry underlying stable cell states. These detailed datasets and models will reveal general principles of circuit organization, provide a resource for scientists in these two important fields, and allow computational biologists to test and develop algorithms. We will broadly disseminate our tools and methods to the community, enabling researchers to dissect any cell circuit of interest at unprecedented detail. Our work will open the way for reconstructing cellular circuits in human disease and individuals, to improve the accuracy of both diagnosis and treatment.

Center for Photogenomics

RM1 HG007743

John A. Stamatoyannopoulos

The Altius Institute

The Center for Photogenomics will develop revolutionary technologies that enable the direct visualization and functional profiling of human regulatory regions in intact cells, and leverage the extraordinary information content of regulatory regions to pioneer novel biological and translational applications. The Center will (1) develop technologies to simultaneously visualize and localize regulatory regions on individual chromatin templates within intact cell nuclei; (2) develop approaches to enable activity-based profiling of regulatory regions; (3) pioneer structural, functional and integrative applications of photogenomics using novel super-resolution imaging techniques; and (4) lay the foundation for translation of photogenomic techniques to the modern clinical diagnostic laboratory, and to the analysis of cells within the context of their native tissue environments. In parallel, the Center will create a strong multi-disciplinary post-doctoral program with the aim of training, mentoring, and developing a new breed of researcher with expertise in both functional genomics and advanced imaging techniques and analysis. The Center will also employ innovative outreach programs to empower diverse researchers and pre-doctoral students with photogenomic technologies and approaches.

Previous Centers of Excellence in Genomic Science (CEGS) Awards

Below is a list of previous Centers of Excellence in Genomic Science (CEGS) grant awards. Grant numbers link to the NIH RePORT system, where abstracts, other information about the awards and resulting publications are included.

While active CEGS have their own institutional websites, some are not maintained once the grant ends. If a website still exists, it will be linked from the project title.

P50MH106933

**Neuropsychiatric Genome-Scale and RDOC Individualized Domains (N-GRID)
Kohane, Isaac
Harvard Medical School**

P50HG004233

**Genomic Analysis of Network Perturbations Human Disease
Vidal, Marc
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Boston**

P50HG002351

**Center for the Study of Natural
Genetic Variation Olson, Maynard
V.
University of Washington**

P50HG002357

**Analysis of Human Genome Using
Integrated Technologies Snyder, Michael
P.
Yale University / Stanford University**

P50HG002360

**CEGS: Microscale Life
Sciences Center Meldrum,
Deirdre R.
University of Washington / Arizona State University-Tempe Campus**

P50HG002370

**Center for Genomic Experimentation
and Computation Brent, Roger
VTT/MSI Molecular Sciences Institute**

P50HG002568

**Genomic Basis of
Vertebrate Diversity Talbot,
William S. / Kingsley, David
M. Stanford University**

P50HG002790

***Implications of Haplotype Structure in the
Human Genome Waterman, Michael S. /
Tavaré, Simon
University of Southern California***

P50HG002806

***Genomic Approaches to Neuronal
Diversity and Plasticity Ju, Jingyue
Columbia University Health Sciences***

P50HG003170

***Molecular and Genomic
Imaging Center Church,
George M.
Harvard Medical School***

P50HG003233

***Center for the Epigenetics of Common
Human Disease Feinberg, Andrew P.
Johns Hopkins University***

P50HG004071

***Center for in Toto Genomic Analysis of
Vertebrate Development Bronner-Fraser,
Marianne / Fraser, Scott E.
California Institute of Technology***

P50HG004952

***Wisconsin Center of Excellence in
Genomics Science Olivier, Michael
Medical College of Wisconsin / Texas Biomedical Research Institute***

P50HG005550

***Causal Transcriptional Consequences of
Human Genetic Variation Church, George M.
Harvard Medical School***

P50MH090338 / P50HG006582

***An Interdisciplinary Program for Systems Genomics
of Complex Behaviors Pardo-Manuel de Villena,
Fernando
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill***

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