

## **Co-Sponsorship of the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the International Society for Stem Cell Research**

The International Society for Stem Cell Research (ISSCR) is an independent, nonprofit organization established to promote stem cell research, to foster the exchange of information and ideas relating to stem cells and to educate the public about stem cell research and applications.

The ISSCR's annual meeting is the largest forum in the world for stem cell researchers to meet and exchange ideas. Although several organizations hold annual meetings in which adult stem cell research is highlighted, the ISSCR is the only major society with a significant focus on pluripotent human stem cells. In addition, the many committees of the society serve important functions for harmonizing clinical research, ethics and scientific protocols and for educating the public.

Last year's meeting was held in Philadelphia. 1300 abstracts were submitted and almost 2800 attended including about 320 from California. This year the meeting will be held in Barcelona in July. Numbers for total attendance, or for attendance by Californian scientists, are not known yet but the number of abstracts submitted has jumped to 1900. Clearly this is a rapidly growing meeting and, with the recent changes in the federal policies regarding human embryonic stem cells, this trend is sure to continue.

The 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting will be at the Moscone Center in San Francisco. The decision to hold it in California was due in part to the prominence of CIRM in the stem cell field and record attendance is anticipated. We expect that well over 500 will attend from California alone. Having the meeting in California provides terrific benefits to CIRM's grantees and trainees. Most obviously, the reduced travel costs mean that more will be able to attend and have the opportunity to interact with the best stem cell researchers from around the world. If the meeting were to be held outside California, the increased travel costs alone for 500 attendees could easily exceed \$250,000, much of which would have to be paid with CIRM grant funds.

As part of its planning to hold its annual meeting in San Francisco, the ISSCR invited CIRM to be the sole co-sponsor. Their motivation has been to provide CIRM a central role in planning the meeting along with a prominent presence at the meeting (see benefits below). They are also seeking financial support in the form of a cash contribution from CIRM of \$200K. In addition, CIRM has arranged for the Moscone Center to serve as the venue for the meeting and for the Rotunda at City Hall to be the site for the President's Reception at no cost to the ISSCR or CIRM. These contributions are from the City of San Francisco and indicate the value that the City places on being able to host this meeting.

The total (estimated) budget for the meeting of \$1.5M is as follows:

Annual Meeting costs:	Equipment Rental at Conference Facility	\$155,000
	Travel Expenses for Organizers and Speakers	\$150,000
	Supplies	\$5,000
	Conference Services, Publicity and Publications	\$1,058,000
	Other	<u>\$150,000</u>
	<i>Total Cost of the Annual Meeting</i>	<i>\$1,518,000</i>

Contributions from the City: (in-kind values)	Use of the Moscone Center for the Conference	\$100,000
	Use of City Hall Rotunda for President's reception	<u>\$25,000</u>
	<i>Total contribution from City</i>	<i>\$125,000</i>
Request to CIRM:	Equipment Rental at Conference Facility	-0-
	Travel Expenses for Organizers and Speakers	\$50,000
	Supplies	-0-
	Conference Services, Publicity and Publications	\$150,000
	Other	-0-
	<i>Total request to CIRM</i>	<i>\$200,000</i>

CIRM recommends that the \$200K for co-sponsorship of the ISSCR meeting be taken from privately donated funds. Currently those funds total approximately \$3.4M.

Benefits to CIRM from co-sponsorship -

- An increased number of CIRM grantees and trainees will be able to interact with top stem cell scientists from around the world. These will be unique opportunities for our scientists to stay "current" with the latest technical and conceptual advances, to have face-to-face dialogs with their peers from outside California and to arrange further interactions and collaborations.
- CIRM Science Officers and senior staff members (up to 25) will be able to register for the meeting at no cost. For them this meeting provides important opportunities to meet with grantees, to recruit members to the Grants Working Group, to work with ISSCR sub-committees and to enhance their own profiles as leaders in the stem cell field.
- CIRM will be able to plan and coordinate the main public symposium, which is a highlight of the annual meeting.
- CIRM will be acknowledged for its support on all electronic and paper materials related to the meeting, including pre-meeting announcements and the program.
- Dr Trounson will be invited to speak at the Opening Ceremonies to provide an update on CIRM's progress.
- CIRM will be acknowledged as the official hosts of the All-Attendee's mixer.
- There will be ample venues to showcase California scientists and the rich milieu for stem cell research that exists in this state.
- All of these benefits will be continuous reminders to the attendees, including the leading stem cell scientists in the world, that California drives the field and is an attractive, vibrant location for academic researchers and biotech companies. As new funding opportunities become available for stem cell research elsewhere, California cannot rest on its laurels, if it is to attract and retain the best scientists and companies. We think that conference co-sponsorship is a valuable means to enhance those efforts.

Finally, having the meeting in San Francisco will provide a significant economic benefit to the city and the state. Although it is not part of CIRM's mandate to attract scientific meetings to California, it is in the best interest of all for CIRM to help these institutions when the opportunity arises.