MRDDRC Newsletter – May 2007

Greetings. As a member of the Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Center (MRDDRC) we bring you regular updates on developments related to this Center. This issue will review the Cores and update you on their current level of operation. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of the services that interest you and members of your laboratory. We must prepare the non-competing renewal application for NIH by early June, and need to show strong support and usage for each of the Cores that is up and running. Several Cores will offer initial services with no charge.

Genomics and Biostatistics Core (Core B)

The Genomics and Biostatistics Core is building its technical staff. A list of services will be announced in the next newsletter, and MRDDRC investigators can expect to receive cost reductions appropriate to each service. Contact Conrad Gilliam (773-834-0840; cgilliam@bsd.uchicago.edu) for further information.

Model Organisms Core (Core C)

Mouse Genetic Services Sub-core
These services are offered via the BSD Transgenic/ES Cell Technology Mouse Core. Services include the production of transgenic mice from injection through the F1 stage, and Embryonic Stem Cell technology, from genetic targeting through blastocyst injections for chimera production and breeding. MRDD members receive a 30% discount on the services provided by this core. Contact Kathleen Millen (773-834-7795, kmillen@genetics.uchicago.edu) and Linda Degenstein (773-702-0688, ldeg@uchicago.edu) for further information.

Mouse Phenotyping Sub-core
A Digigait Imaging System was purchased early this year, has been installed in suite 11C of the GCIS animal facility, and is available for MRDD member use. Consultation to help investigators with experimental design, pilot studies, feasibility and procedural aspects, technical expertise and instrumentation for a range of sensorimotor and behavioral testing procedures, as well as training of investigators and their staff in conducting experiments and interpretation of data is now available. Contact Christopher Gomez (773-702-6390, cgomez@neurology.bsd.uchicago.edu), Devon Collins (773-702-6047, dcollins1@uchicago.edu), or Steve Crone (scrone@delphi.bsd.uchicago.edu) for further information.
Chick Embryo Services Sub-core

This facility, located in Wyler C593, offers training and oversight in chicken in ovo electroporation techniques and provides services for carrying out in ovo electroporation experiments. The Core also helps MRDD researchers identify chicken homologs of genes of interest and design expression vectors to misexpress constructs of interest or to knockdown target mRNA expression with RNAi. Contact Clifton Ragsdale (Clifton Ragsdale (773-702-9609, cliff@drugsbsd.uchicago.edu) or Miriam Domowicz (773-702-9355, mdxx@uchicago.edu) for further information.

Zebrafish Services Sub-core

The Zebrafish Services are slated to be up and running by 7/1/07. This core will offer both consultation and experimental services to allow users to investigate gene function and gene regulation in zebrafish embryos. Services will include testing gene function, and investigation of gene regulation using reporter constructs in transgenic animals. These approaches will often be complementary to analysis of homologous genes in the mouse. An in situ machine has been cost-shared by the MRDDRC for this facility. You are welcome to contact Robert Ho (773-984-8423, rkh@uchicago.edu) or Victoria Prince (773-984-2100, vprince@uchicago.edu) with any inquiries.

Neuroscience Core (Core D)

Neural Cell Culture Services

This Core has been the most active one to date. It offers a library of cell types, and a team approach provides a broad range of expertise, techniques and equipment to address the growing needs for neural cell culture. Facilities are found in two locations: Wyler C594 and Wyler C660. The initial service is free, and MRDD members receive a 15% discount on subsequent work. Contact Miriam Domowicz (773-702-9355, mdxx@uchicago.edu) or Jeremy Marks (773-702-6210, jmarks@uchicago.edu) for further information.

Gene Expression (in situ) Services

The MRDDRC has purchased a new in situ machine, which is located in Wyler C573. This Core offers a consultative and training service in whole mount and multi-color in situ hybridization technologies to members of labs who wish to automate their in situ protocol procedures. Contact Miriam Domowicz (773-702-9355, mdxx@uchicago.edu) or Clifton Ragsdale (773-702-9609, cliff@drugsbsd.uchicago.edu) for further information.

Confocal and Digital Imaging Facility

These services will be offered beginning 9/1/07 through the BSD Microscopy Core Facility. MRDD members will receive a discount to be determined. Contact Jeremy Marks (773-702-6210, jmarks@uchicago.edu) for further information.
Fall Symposium and Reception

Our next symposium will take place on Monday, October 15th, 2007, followed by a reception. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Pat Levitt, Thomas Detre Professor of Neuroscience, former Senior Editor of the Journal of Neuroscience, and Director of the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development, another of the MRDD Centers in the country. Cliff Ragsdale has agreed to coordinate this symposium.

Web Site

The Center web site for the Center is located at: http://mrddrc.bsd.uchicago.edu. If you are looking for information not available on this site, please contact Nancy Schwartz (773-702-6426, n-schwartz@uchicago.edu), Miriam Domowicz (773-702-9355, mdxx@uchicago.edu), Jeanne Corey (773-702-4722, jccorey@uchicago.edu), or any of the Core Directors.

Membership

Information for those who wish to become a member of the Center is available on the web.

Publicity

An article announcing funding of the MRDDRC was published on the front page of the Chicago Maroon on Friday, April 27th.