

People

Peter Staple becomes CEO of BioSeek

Peter Staple has been appointed as CEO of BioSeek (Burlingame, CA, USA), and joins the company's Board of Directors. Staple was previously at ALZA Corp (a wholly-owned operating unit of Johnson & Johnson), and was most recently Executive Vice-President, Chief Administrative Officer and General Counsel. Prior to this, Staple held senior positions at Cetus and Chiron Corp. 'As a young company, we are extremely gratified to attract someone of [Peter's] stature and capabilities,' commented Rolf Ehrhardt, President and co-founder of BioSeek. 'Peter's joining at this time provides a significant boost to help move the company rapidly forward and capitalize on our unique strengths in functional genomics and drug discovery.'

New Chief Scientific Officer at Immusol

Flossie Wong-Staal has joined Immusol (San Diego, CA, USA) on a full-time basis, becoming its Chief Scientific Officer and Vice President of Genomics. Wong-Staal was a co-founder of Immusol and maintained ties to the company, including a sabbatical from the University of California, San Diego as Vice President of Genomics. She has worked previously at the National Institutes of Health and is internationally recognized for her work on molecular virology and AIDS. Tsvi Goldenberg, Chairman and CEO of Immusol, commented: 'Flossie brings to Immusol an exceptional amount of experience and expertise in infectious disease, genomics, and drug discovery.'

John S. Abrams joins Xenerex Biosciences

John S. Abrams has been appointed as Senior Director of Antibody Technology at Xenerex Biosciences (San Diego, CA, USA), a subsidiary of AVANIR Pharmaceuticals. Previously, Abrams was Director of the Antibody Technology Division of the DNAX Research Institute (Palo Alto, CA, USA), Schering-Plough's biotechnology centre for immunology and molecular biology.

Over the past 20 years, he has gained international recognition for directing antibody development in the areas of inflammation, asthma and allergy. J. David Hansen, President and CEO of Xenerex Biosciences, said: 'Dr Abrams brings a unique blend of scientific knowledge and hands-on experience directed toward discovering and developing antibody products.'

Russell L. Allen joins Cellular Genomics

Cellular Genomics (Branford, CT, USA) has appointed Russell L. Allen to the newly created position of Senior Vice President of Corporate Development. Allen has more than 25 years experience in pharmaceutical marketing and strategic planning. He was formerly Vice President, Corporate Development and Strategic Planning for Ligand Pharmaceuticals. While with Ligand, he led the establishment of four major drug discovery strategic alliances with large pharmaceutical firms. Louis A. Matis, President and CEO of Cellular Genomics, said: 'Russ brings a strong track record of experience in establishing major drug discovery strategic alliances with pharmaceutical firms.'

New President at Aurora and leadership structure at Vertex

Michael G. Wokasch has been appointed to the expanded role of President of Aurora Biosciences (Cambridge, MA, USA), a Vertex Pharmaceuticals subsidiary. He replaces Harry Stylli, who is leaving to pursue other interests. Wokasch will continue to serve as President of PanVera Corporation, another Vertex subsidiary. 'Mike's extensive commercial and strategic experience, along with his key contributions since joining PanVera in July 2001, make him ideally suited to build on Aurora and PanVera's commercial success and broaden the customer base for their industry-leading products and capabilities', commented Joshua Boger, Chairman and CEO of Vertex Pharmaceuticals.

Three other appointments have been made recently at Vertex's San Diego site. First, Roger Tung has been appointed to

lead the expansion of their drug discovery programs. Secondly, Paul Negulescu has been named Vice President, Discovery Biology. Finally, Peter Coassin has been appointed as Vice President, Instrumentation R&D. Vicki Sato, President of Vertex, said: 'The establishment of this leadership structure reflects a new and important phase in the expansion of Vertex's drug discovery activities, in San Diego and across our global operations.'

Bill and Melinda Gates and Jerome O. Klein honoured

The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) has given awards to former Microsoft CEO Bill Gates, his wife Melinda and medical academician Jerome O. Klein. The Gates were honoured with the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Award for Humanitarian Contributions to the Health of Mankind for their financial commitment to expanding the use and development of vaccinations for children living in poverty. A donation from the couple in 1998 created the Children's Vaccine Fund, which now totals more than US\$1 billion. US Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts commented that: 'Bill and Melinda have changed the outlook in public health for the developing world and raised awareness among policymakers in the developed world that we need to address global health concerns.'

Klein, of Boston University School of Medicine (Boston, MA, USA), was given the Maxwell Finland Award for Scientific Achievement for his outstanding contribution to reducing infectious diseases in children throughout the world. He has published more than 400 papers on pediatric infectious diseases and is recognized as a world leader in the area of infections of the foetus and newborn. George H. McCracken, Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (Dallas, TX, USA) enthused: 'I can think of no physician who has had a greater impact on the management and prevention of middle ear infections, one of the most common problems of infants and children worldwide.'

*People was written by
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