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Center for the Study of Systems Biology To Become One of the World's Leading Clusters in Rapidly Emerging Field

ATLANTA, December 14, 2005 – One of the world's leading researchers is joining the faculty at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Jeffrey Skolnick, Ph.D., a renowned systems biologist and previously director of the Buffalo Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics at SUNY-Buffalo, will join the faculty of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech) this spring as the Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar in Computational Systems Biology.

"Computational systems biology is a foundation for the next revolution in biomedicine," said Georgia Tech Provost Jean-Lou Chameau. "Dr. Skolnick's work is a perfect fit with the outstanding research already being conducted in nanotechnology and bioengineering here at Georgia Tech. The addition of Dr. Skolnick and his team of researchers will help position Georgia Tech and the state as leaders in this important field."

Dr. Skolnick will bring with him 19 research scientists and technicians and more than \$1.5 million in federal funding, primarily from the National Institutes of Health.

"Georgia Tech and its School of Biology are doing some incredible work in cancer research," said Dr. Skolnick. "The Institute has built a collaborative environment for meaningful interdisciplinary research especially in the areas of science, computing, and engineering. The environment cuts across schools and research centers and offers opportunities to take new ideas, scientific breakthroughs, and business applications ideas from theory to practice."

According to GRA President C. Michael Cassidy, systems biology is the foundation for the next wave of advances in biomedicine.

"Dr. Skolnick is an entrepreneurial scholar whose research is critical to the future health of Georgians and Americans," said C. Michael Cassidy, president of the Georgia Research Alliance. "He has relationships with pharmaceutical and technology companies, holds three patents, has developed and licensed software to biotech companies, and has founded an early stage structural proteomics company. This is the mix of entrepreneurialism and scholarly acumen we seek in our scholars."

Systems biology is the integration of mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology with advanced, high performance computing and engineering and is focused on exploiting the vast information growing out of the sequencing of the human genome. One practical example is that as a systems biologist, Dr. Skolnick brings a different scientific approach to creating new drugs. Utilizing bioinformatics and systems biology, his method allows drug developers to reduce the number of compounds they must screen by a factor of 10. This creates cost savings and can significantly shorten the time to market for new drugs.

Dr. Skolnick and his team will be housed in the School of Biology, a unit in the College of Sciences. As a part of his hiring, the Georgia Research Alliance will provide support for new technology and lab facilities for Dr. Skolnick and his team.

About Georgia Tech

The Georgia Institute of Technology is one of the nation's premiere research universities. Ranked ninth among U.S. News & World Report's top public universities, Georgia Tech educates more than 17,000 students every year through its Colleges of Architecture, Computing, Engineering, Liberal Arts, Management and Sciences. Tech maintains a diverse campus and is among the nation's top producers of women and African-American engineers. The Institute offers research opportunities to both undergraduate and graduate students and is home to more than 100 interdisciplinary units plus the Georgia Tech Research Institute. During the 2004-2005 academic year, Georgia Tech reached \$357 million in new research award funding. The Institute also maintains an international presence with campuses in France and Singapore and partnerships throughout the world.

About the Georgia Research Alliance

A model public-private partnership between Georgia universities, business and state government, the Georgia Research Alliance helps build Georgia's technology-rich economy in three major ways: through attracting Eminent Scholars to Georgia's research universities; through improving laboratories and equipment at these research universities; and through converting research into products, services and jobs that drive the economy. To learn more about GRA, visit www.gra.org.

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