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Thursday | March 23, 2006

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## Georgia Tech Adds IBM Supercomputer for Drug Development Research

Special To LTW

ATLANTA – Georgia Tech's brand-new Center for the Study of Systems Biology, which recently hired a widely respected lead scientist and a team of researchers, is also adding one of the world's fastest supercomputers to its arsenal.

The Center is using \$8.5 million in grants to fund the supercomputer cluster from IBM. It will be used for new drug research, including possible treatments for cancer.

Georgia Tech recently launched the Center and hired Jeffrey Skolnick to lead it. His title is Georgia Research Alliance Eminent Scholar in Computational Systems Biology. Skolnick, PhD, a systems biologist, served previously as director of the Buffalo Center of Excellence in Bioinformatics at SUNY-Buffalo. Nineteen researchers and scientists who worked with Skolnick were also hired.

"By using IBM technology for our research, we can significantly shorten the time to market for new drugs," Skolnick said in a statement. "Systems biology integrates mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology with advanced, high performance computing and engineering. Bioinformatics and systems biology allow us to utilize the vast information growing out of the sequencing of the human genome, enabling drug developers to reduce the number of compounds they must screen by a factor of 10."

The supercomputer is built around IBM BladeCenter systems. It is a cluster built around 1,000 nodes powered by AMD Opteron dual-core processors and is capable of performing more than 8.5 trillion calculations per second. That capacity would make the supercomputer the 41st fastest in the world, based on rankings from The Top 500 Supercomputer web site.



Dr. Skolnick

"Only the most technologically savvy universities are able to compete in the field of drug discovery and bioinformatics," said Mike Cassidy, president and CEO of the Georgia Research Alliance. "Georgia Tech's focus on top-of-the-line technology and research facilities and the attraction of Dr. Jeff Skolnick and other world-class scholars will raise its presence in this competitive market and attract some of the nation's brightest students to join our research team to advance medicines that will improve the well-being of people everywhere."

BellSouth will provide hosting services for the supercomputer.

The cluster will run on Red Hat Linux 4 and Scientific Linux.

Skolnick was hired in December.

"Computational systems biology is a foundation for the next revolution in biomedicine," said Georgia Tech Provost Jean-Lou Chameau at that time. "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."

Georgia Tech: [www.gatech.edu](http://www.gatech.edu)

For more information about Skolnick and the new center, see: [www.gatech.edu/news-room/release.php?id=721](http://www.gatech.edu/news-room/release.php?id=721)

Posted: 02/08/2006 01:01 PM

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