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International Graduate School in Molecular Medicine Ulm | Biannual Report 2011

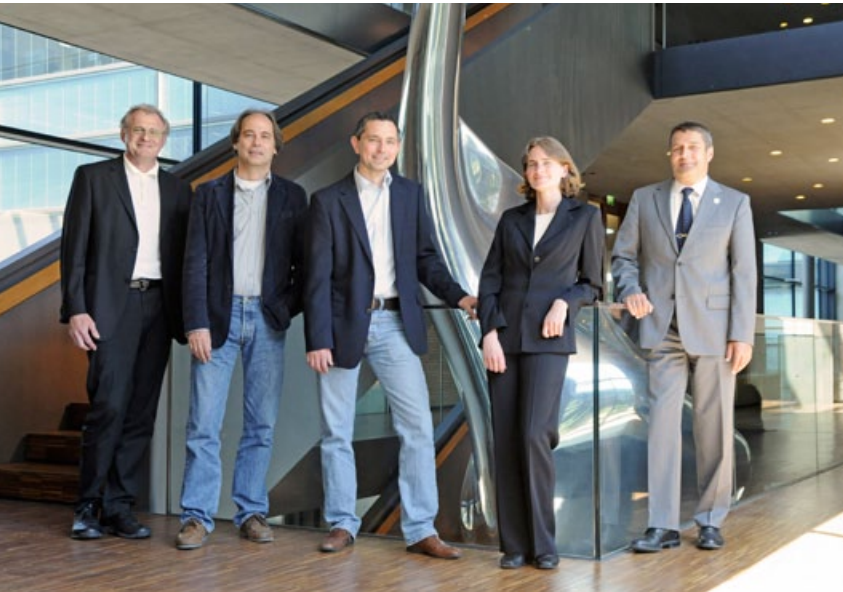
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Welcome to the information brochure of the International Graduate School in Molecular Medicine Ulm!

This is the second biannual report published by the International Graduate School in Molecular Medicine Ulm. Since the publication of our first report, our Graduate School has developed tremendously. The number of students we look after in our PhD program has increased to well above 100 and the structured program *Experimental Medicine*, which was set up by the Medical Faculty of Ulm University to improve the general framework and the quality of the theses of medical students, was fully integrated into the Graduate School. Currently, 35 students participate yearly in the program *Experimental Medicine*. These students are extremely successful as can be seen in their final grade, and the number and quality of papers they publish.

We have also substantially strengthened our international network. For instance, among our initiatives we have established double degrees with the University of Padua, Italy, in addition to several student exchange programs and common PhD projects with the BioCenter Oulu, Finland, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA, and the Tongji Medical College of Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China. A new cooperation agreement was signed with the OXION Initiative, Oxford University, UK, in 2011, which allows joint training activities in the field of ion channels and channelopathies. We are particularly proud of gaining Prof. Dr. Hiromitsu Nakauchi from Tokyo University, Japan, as a guest professor. Prof. Nakauchi is a well-known expert in the field of adult stem cell biology and his guest professorship will last up to five years. In addition to participating in the training activities, he has established a junior group at the Graduate School.

Current scientific developments at Ulm University have resulted in the profile of our Research Training Groups being sharply focused. For instance, aging and age-related diseases have become one of the major research areas adopted by several research networks such as the DFG-funded Clinical Research Unit: *KFO 142, Molecular and Cellular Mechanisms of Aging*, and the BMBF-funded network: *Gerontosys: Systems Biology of Aging (SyStar)*. The application for the new DFG-funded Research Training Group: *Cellular and Molecular Mechanisms of Aging (CEMMA)* has successfully passed the first review step, while a promising initiative for a DFG-funded Collaborative Research Center dealing with age-related diseases has also been started. It has therefore been

necessary to include respective training activities into the Research Training Group: *Development and Degeneration*. Moreover, as a result of acquiring the Graduate College of Pharmaceutical Biotechnology, which is funded by the state of Baden-Württemberg, and the Carl-Zeiss-Foundation project: *Infection Biology of Human Macrophages*, a new Research Training Group entitled *Host-Microbe Interactions* was established in 2011.

Finally, the Board of Directors welcomes two new members: Prof. Dr. Peter Bäuerle, Vice-President of Science at Ulm University and Head of the Institute of Organic Chemistry II; and Prof. Dr. Tanja Weil, Head of the Institute of Organic Chemistry III. Prof. Bäuerle has replaced Prof. Dürre as the representative of the Presidium of Ulm University on the Board of Directors of the Graduate School. We would like to use this opportunity to thank Prof. Dürre for his enthusiastic support of the Graduate School over the years. Following the amendment of our administrative regulations, Prof. Weil was newly appointed as an additional member on the Board of Directors in order to strengthen the participation of the Faculty of Natural Sciences within the Graduate School.

What then will be the main tasks for the near future? 2011/2012 will clearly be dominated by our efforts to renew our external funding through the *Excellence Initiative of the German federal and state governments*. One particular focus will be on the establishment of training activities for postdocs and young group leaders. This will be of particular importance in preparing these young researchers for a university career.

We hope that you enjoy reading our brochure and would like to express our thanks to Bettina Braun and Julia Kutzenberger who both run our Coordination Office. Without their enthusiastic and engaged efforts, our Graduate School would not be the success it has become.

On behalf of the Board of Directors

Prof. Dr. Michael Kühl
Chairman

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