

PHILANTHROPY

Broad Gives \$400 Million More to Cambridge Institute

The billionaire founder of a 10-year experiment in team science begun at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University has decided halfway through that it's working so well it should be made permanent. Last week, Los Angeles businessman Eli Broad announced a \$400 million gift that will allow the Broad Institute, already a genomics research powerhouse, to become a self-sustaining entity. "I think we've all agreed it's been a resounding success," Broad told reporters.

Broad donated \$100 million in 2003 to create the institute after visiting Eric Lander's huge lab at the MIT-affiliated Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research as it was winding up its part in sequencing the human genome. The new institute's mission was to move genomics into the clinic (*Science*, 20 June 2003, p. 1856). It was set up administratively as part of MIT, with Lander and three other scientific stars from

MIT and Harvard as its founding faculty. It has since attracted another \$100 million from Broad and \$100 million from the Stanley Medical Research Institute for research on the genetics of psychiatric diseases.

Broad Institute researchers have played prominent roles in projects such as the HapMap, which studied human genetic

diversity; a consortium to develop RNAi research tools; and a search for mutations in human cancers. The \$150-million-a-year institute now has about 1100 full- and part-time permanent staff and 118 affiliated faculty members. Lander says its two strengths are strong technology and a structure that allows it to "self-assemble" teams from MIT and Harvard, including its 17 affiliated hospitals. "It is a really good, innovative model," says Bruce Stillman, president of Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York.

Broad's latest gift will allow the institute to have something it has never had—an endowment. "[It] will secure the permanency of the institute," says Broad, who hopes other gifts will raise the pot to \$1 billion. Although the institute will still be governed by a board drawn from MIT and Harvard, its standalone status will give it greater flexibility in paying its scientists, staffers say.

—JOCELYN KAISER



Proof of concept. Billionaire Eli Broad discusses his latest gift to the Broad Institute, directed by Eric Lander (left).

U.S. ELECTION

McCain, Obama Present Their Wars on Cancer

With the U.S. presidential election less than 2 months away, both candidates explained last week how their Administrations would combat cancer. Appearing on a celebrity-studded television fundraiser, Stand Up 2 Cancer, that aired on 5 September, Republican John McCain and Democrat Barack Obama advocated somewhat different strategies but agreed on the need for better access to early detection technologies and more preventive care.

McCain's statement highlights legislation he supported in 2001 to improve access to clinical trials and, last year, to fund research on the environmental risk factors of breast cancer, a bill Obama endorsed as well. McCain also referred to his past support for doubling the National Institutes of Health (NIH) budget over 6 years,

adding that "as President, [I] will make sure that our researchers have necessary funding to defeat cancer once and for all."

Obama offered a denser, arguably more detailed plan, which included doubling the budget for cancer research in 5 years,

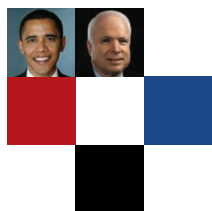
mainly through the National Cancer Institute, and boosting from about 4% to 10% the number of adults with cancer participating in clinical trials. He also said he would provide "additional funding for research on rare cancers and those without effective treatment options" and for the study of genetic factors driving cancer and outcomes.

"He's been hearing from scientists ... who have told him that we're stagnating" because of a flat NIH budget, says Neera Tanden, an Obama domestic policy adviser. Tanden adds that "there's no reason to

assume" NIH, which enjoyed a rapid doubling of its budget in the late 1990s, would suffer a second crash landing of the kind it's experiencing today if its budget again rose dramatically. Tyler Jacks, director of the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, says he applauds McCain's pledge to better coordinate public and privately funded research because foundations and individuals have greatly increased their spending on cancer. But he found it "a little odd" that McCain emphasized past legislation rather than looking ahead.

Richard Marchase, president of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in Bethesda, Maryland, welcomes the willingness of both candidates to consider boosting the science research budget. But he cautions that "we're going to have much better results if we have a broader base than just cancer funding." Focusing too heavily on one disease, he says, could blunt the impact of "serendipity" in the lab.

—JENNIFER COUZIN



Science and the 2008 Campaign