Roadmap for the State Key Laboratory of Respiratory Disease

Sharing views on the establishment of the State Key Laboratory of Respiratory Disease (SKLRD), its focus on discovery and innovation, and its plans to attract talented researchers to grow into a world-class laboratory.

Nanshan Zhong, director of SKLRD, professor at Guangzhou Medical University (GMU), academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering

Ling Chen, executive vice director of SKLRD, professor at GMU, distinguished research fellow of Guangzhou Institute of Biomedicine and Health (GIBH), Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS)

Zhong: Respiratory diseases are among the top three causes of death in China. The situation may worsen with the growing number of smokers and increasing air pollution. We need to better understand disease mechanisms and find better ways to prevent and treat these diseases. I was director of the Guangzhou Institute of Respiratory Disease (GIRD) of GMU during the SARS outbreak in 2003. With my colleagues, I led efforts to prevent and control the disease in Guangdong province. Our work gained national recognition and made the public aware of the importance of researching respiratory diseases. Hence, in 2005, I initiated a collaboration with GIBH to build a high-level joint laboratory of respiratory diseases. In 2007, we received approval and support from the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology to establish a state-level key laboratory, which is the only national key laboratory for respiratory diseases.

Chen: The collaboration between GIRD-GMU and GIBH-CAS was a great success. It combines doing basic research with solving clinical needs. Within five years, we’ve developed into a leading research centre for respiratory diseases that integrates medical research, education and patient care.

Zhong: We aim to improve people’s quality of life by advancing the prevention and treatment of respiratory diseases. We are studying the epidemiology and its influencing factors to identify disease mechanisms and find new treatment and prevention modalities for respiratory diseases. Our research mainly focuses on emerging respiratory infectious diseases, bronchial asthma and chronic cough, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases (COPD) and lung cancer. Sharing the public’s concern about air pollution in China, we are also studying the impact of PM2.5 pollution on respiratory health.

Chen: We are keen to address unmet medical needs and focus more on translational research, striving to apply basic research discoveries to effectively prevent and treat respiratory diseases. Since 2010, we have conducted more than 400 national, provincial and local research projects, have received around 130 patents, and have gained numerous awards for scientific and technological advances. In 2015 alone, SKLRD published 175 SCI papers. Some of the research represented leading advances in respiratory medicine, such as new etiology and management of COPD, a new mechanism and treatment for asthma, visualization of influenza virus infection in living mice, and new diagnostics for respiratory diseases.

Zhong: Talented scholars and experts play a key role in advancing our research. We have about 40 principal investigators and are looking to expand the team to 60 in the next three years. With generous research funding, well-established research platforms, advanced equipment and, most importantly, a culture of innovation, we’ve already recruited distinguished young scholars and experienced experts from home and abroad. This spring, we will expand our laboratory space to a newly renovated building in central Guangzhou. The Guangzhou Respiratory Centre, which will be Asia’s largest, and likely the largest of its kind in the world, is being constructed. We invite highly talented scientists of all levels to join our endeavour to develop SKLRD into a world-leading research centre of respiratory diseases.

State Key Laboratory of Respiratory Disease, China (Guangzhou)

Seeking Talents to Lead Respiratory Research

Research disciplines: Focus on respiratory diseases and immunology, including but not limited to, respiratory infections and immunology, lung stem cell and regeneration, lung injury, COPD, asthma, lung cancer, allergy and bioinformatics with a focus on respiratory diseases.

Positions: Professor, associate professor, assistant professor.

Compensation package: Highly competitive salaries including housing subsidies, along with generous start-up funds.

Qualifications: Successful candidates must possess a PhD or MD degree and have publications in internationally peer-reviewed journals in past 5 years. Preference will be given to those with a strong background and successful experience in respiratory-or immunology-related basic research.

Applicants should send a curriculum vitae, a one-page research proposal, PDF reprints of five representative publications to sklrddirector@gird.cn and taochen@gird.cn.

Online job link: http://www.nature.com/naturejobs/science/jobs/577841