



# UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I SYSTEM

## ANNUAL REPORT

REPORT TO THE 2006 LEGISLATURE

Report on the Feasibility of Stem  
Cell Research for Hawai'i

SCR 200, SLH 2005

December 2005

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On the Feasibility of Stem Cell Research for Hawai'i

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In May 2005, the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai'i (RCUH) was asked to assist the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa with a study and recommendations relating to stem cell research for Hawai'i requested in Senate Concurrent Resolution 200 from the 2005 legislative session.

The Legislature's request for a feasibility study encouraging human embryonic stem cell research in Hawai'i as outlined in Senate Concurrent Resolution 200 was discussed at some length with faculty and with members of the Hawai'i Life Science Council. Everyone saw the tremendous potential for human embryonic stem cell research to advance medical treatment for a whole host of diseases and health conditions. However, the consensus seemed to be that Hawai'i has no comparative advantage in this field, and it would cost tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars to develop a human embryonic stem cell research program.

After discussion with legislators, RCUH was asked to continue to pursue the study and consultation process. Drs. Saturo Izutsu and Steve Ward convened a meeting of faculty members and researchers in the Institute for Biogenesis Research at the John A. Burns School of Medicine with expertise that might be applied in human embryonic stem cell research. Those active in stem cell research indicated that they were already occupied with research on mouse stem cells. Participants in the meeting concluded that it might be useful to brief members of the Legislature on areas of research for which there was considerable expertise and comparative advantage but that were under-funded include infectious diseases.

Faculty and people in the life sciences industry believe that there are health science fields for which Hawai'i has a strong comparative advantage. These are identified in the Life Science Industry Road Map developed for the

Hawai'i Life Science Council. The Life Science Council, the John A. Burns School of Medicine, and the Cancer Research Center of Hawai'i could be asked to provide a briefing for the Legislature on the tremendous opportunities for life science research and improving health care in Hawai'i.

The Hawai'i Institute for Public Affairs (HIPA) provided a proposal for conducting the kind of feasibility study and consultative process called for in SCR 200 indicating that such a study would cost \$61,000. Funds for the study were not appropriated by the Legislature and the University does not have the resources to fund such a study.