



History of LIAI

The La Jolla Institute for Allergy and Immunology was established in 1988 by a coalition of leaders from academia and industry, including Makoto Nonaka, M.D., Ph.D., the Institute's founding president, Kimishige Ishizaka, M.D., Ph.D., the Institute's first scientific director, and senior executives of Kirin Brewery Company, Ltd. of Japan. These leaders envisioned a unique and dynamic partnership between basic science and applied research, one that would lead to breakthroughs in the understanding of the immune system and improvements in human health. Kirin, through its wholly-owned U.S. subsidiary, Gemini Science, provided the necessary financial support to establish the Institute.

The Institute was formed with strong ties to major academic and medical centers, including the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) and The Scripps Research Institute. LIAI's first Board of Directors included Gerard Burrow, Ph.D., past dean of UCSD's School of Medicine. Burrow developed an affiliation between LIAI and UCSD Medical Center that provides for joint research activities, consultation and training in the fields of allergy and immunology. Frank Dixon, M.D., who was recruited to The Scripps Research Institute in 1961 and became its first director, was a founding board member of LIAI and served as chairman of the Institute's Board of Directors for 13 years.

The Institute began its laboratory operations in 1989 with the arrival of two pioneering immunologists, Kimishige Ishizaka and Teruko Ishizaka from Johns Hopkins University. The Ishizaka's received worldwide recognition in 1966 for their discovery of the IgE (immunoglobulin E) protein, a molecule that induces allergic reactions in the human body. In 1991 Kimishige Ishizaka was appointed president/scientific director of the Institute and served in this role until his retirement in 1995. Under his leadership, LIAI quickly established a worldwide reputation for research excellence.

Howard Grey, M.D., joined LIAI in 1995, succeeding Ishizaka as president/scientific director. The following year, LIAI moved from its initial location on Torrey Pines Road in La Jolla to a newly designed and constructed facility on Science Center Drive on the Torrey Pines Mesa. During the next several years, Grey led the Institute through a period of growth that included the recruitment of prominent faculty members and the formation of a program to accelerate the commercial development of LIAI's research and drug discovery plans. During Grey's tenure, the Institute more than doubled in size, achieved significant scientific advances and further established itself as a leader in immunologic research.

Since its inception, LIAI has benefited from strong leadership. Today, the Institute is led by Mitchell Kronenberg, Ph.D., who was appointed as president/scientific director in 2003 upon Grey's retirement. Dr. Kronenberg led the Institute's relocation in 2006 to a new, state-of-the-art facility in the Science Research Park at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD). The larger, expertly designed facility allows LIAI scientists to significantly expand their research efforts against many debilitating diseases of the immune system. While retaining its financial independence and identity, LIAI is the first to locate in the Research Park, which is designed to encourage collaboration between LIAI's preeminent immunology researchers and UCSD's renowned clinicians and faculty. The concentration of such immense biomedical expertise in one location is expected to fuel research discoveries and lead to faster translation of LIAI's research findings into patient treatments and cures. The Institute continues to be guided by a distinguished Board of Directors and Scientific Advisory Board.

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