

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
REGENTS COMMUNICATION  
ACTION REQUEST

Subject: Department Naming

Action

Requested: Authorization to rename Department of Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics

Proposed

Name: Gilbert S. Omenn Department of Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics

Background:

Gilbert S. Omenn, M.D., Ph.D., and Martha A. Darling have made a gift of \$25 million to the Medical School's Department of Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics. The funds will help recruit the top minds in the field, support cutting-edge research, and train the world's next leaders in computational medicine.

In recognition of this gift, we recommend naming the department in honor of Omenn, who has been engaged in U-M's development of computational medicine and bioinformatics since becoming the first executive vice president for medical affairs 25 years ago. With this naming, the department would become the first named department at U-M and one of the first named medical school basic science departments in the nation.

Computational medicine, artificial intelligence (AI) and bioinformatics are being used to expand our understanding of life, enhance health, and transform healthcare. The field leverages mathematics and computers to accelerate biomedical discovery and translational research, with the aim of using data to ultimately develop personalized therapies for disease. With the burgeoning use of generative and classical AI and machine learning within biomedical research, the department is actively exploring the capacity for these new technologies to change scientific paradigms.

The Omenn-Darling gift will be used for strategic investments to further develop the department in this field and enhance its national reputation, including the establishment of the Michael A. Savageau Department Chair of Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics and an associated endowed fund. The funds will also enable the department to establish up to five endowed research professorships.

Additional portions of the gift will be used to encourage and strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration to advance AI-driven research initiatives; to recruit and retain faculty; to acquire, maintain and enhance advanced technology; and to support the department's

educational mission. This includes recruiting highly qualified students and trainees, providing fellowships to deserving students, building pipeline programs at the undergraduate and high school levels, establishing remote learning and training programs, and developing collaborative interdisciplinary experiential learning opportunities, both internally and with industry.

Gilbert Omenn and Martha Darling have lived their lives contributing to advancements that impact the world and the people in it. Omenn was recruited in 1997 to be the first executive vice president for medical affairs and CEO of the University of Michigan Health System, and Darling retired from her senior position in The Boeing Company, becoming deeply engaged in community leadership in Ann Arbor. Omenn and Darling are generous and purpose-driven philanthropists, supporting a wide range of causes and institutions. They have given more than \$27 million to U-M, including to the Medical School, the Ford School of Public Policy, the University Musical Society, and the University of Michigan Livingston Awards for journalists. They also have made consequential contributions to Reed College, the Hastings Center, and the Omenn-Darling Bioengineering Institute at Princeton University.

They are very active in university affairs. Darling serves on the board of the Ford School for Public Policy and previously the University Musical Society, along with many other cultural and community boards. Omenn chairs several U-M committees and is director of the U-M Center for Computational Medicine & Bioinformatics, investigator in the U-M component of the national study of the ProteoGenomics of Cancers, and leader of many global scientific organizations. He is director of several biotech companies, the Hastings Center, Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel, Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle, Institute for Bioengineering at Princeton, Department of Biomedical Informatics at Harvard, and the Emerging Leaders Program at the National Academy of Medicine.

In recognition of Gilbert Omenn's and Martha Darling's exceptional generosity to U-M and this significant commitment, we recommend that the Board of Regents approve the naming of the Gilbert S. Omenn Department of Computational Medicine and Bioinformatics, effective immediately.

Respectfully submitted,



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Marschall Runge  
Executive Vice President of Medical Affairs  
CEO, Michigan Medicine



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Thomas A. Baird  
Vice President for Development

October 2024

