



**Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars**

Contact: Danielle Altman
Phone: (202) 691-4320
danielle.altman@wilsoncenter.org

News Release

**Release No. 74-09
September 22, 2009**

Synthetic Biology Project Receives Two National Science Foundation Grants

WASHINGTON—The Wilson Center’s Synthetic Biology project recently received two grants from the National Science Foundation. One will support a *Transatlantic Exploratory Workshop on the Implications of Cutting-Edge Biotechnologies for Sustainability Science and Policy*, and the other will support research on the use of on-line prediction markets to explore emerging issues in synthetic biology.

The workshop will develop an EU-U.S. trans-disciplinary research agenda for synthetic biology with a special focus on sustainability. This research agenda will go beyond the disciplinary boundaries of synthetic biology to examine the broader questions of how synthetic biology can contribute to sustainable development, and to what extent synthetic biology poses challenges to sustainability itself. “The workshop will explore a new and emerging research area at the intersection of synthetic biology, sustainability science, and the field of science, technology and society studies,” Wilson Center Public Policy Scholar Eleonore Pauwels said. The Wilson Center will collaborate with the University of Virginia on this project.

The second grant will explore the application of prediction markets—on-line markets designed to aid in the forecasting of events—to synthetic biology, an emerging area of science where a better understanding of future development and directions in the field could be of significant value to funders, policymakers, and researchers.

“Although on-line prediction markets have attracted significant interest from scholars and increasing application in corporate environments, little work has been done to apply these markets to critical issues in science and technology” said David Rejeski, director of the Synthetic Biology Project. “The NSF grant will allow us to tap into the latest research and thinking as we design, build, and test a prototype prediction market.”

Results from both projects will be available in 2010. As the projects proceed, further information will be made available on the project website: www.synbioproject.org.

About Synthetic Biology

According to the U.K. Royal Academy of Engineering, synthetic biology aims to design and engineer biologically based parts, novel devices and systems as well as redesign existing, natural biological systems.

The **Synthetic Biology Project** is an initiative of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars supported by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The Project aims to foster informed public and policy discourse concerning the advancement of synthetic biology. For more information, visit: www.synbioproject.org

The **Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars** (www.wilsoncenter.org) is the living, national memorial to President Wilson established by Congress in 1968 and headquartered in Washington, D.C. The Center establishes and maintains a neutral forum for free, open, and informed dialogue. It is a nonpartisan institution, supported by public and private funds and engaged in the study of national and international affairs.

###