

Emerging Risks of Synthetic Biology

February 28, 2012

6:00 - 8:00pm (Reception included)

The George Washington University Law School, Environmental Law Program

Burns Building, Faculty Conference Center

716 20th Street NW, 5th Floor

Washington, DC 20052

RSVP by February 23 to EmergingRisksEvent@gmail.com

Please join us for an interdisciplinary program on synthetic biology, an exciting emerging field of research and commercialization with implications for energy, health and environmental policy. Synthetic biology combines principles of engineering and information technology to create biological components and systems that do not exist in nature and to re-engineer existing ones from scratch. However, as with any emerging technological innovation, it poses some unique policy and governance challenges. The event will introduce the audience to the topic of synthetic biology and the diversity of policy-related activities surrounding it. Panelists will discuss several topics, including: 1) latest developments in publicly-funded research of synthetic biology, 2) advent of amateur “Do-It-Yourself-Biologists” in home and community labs (DIY Bio), 3) environmental concerns related to the technology, and 4) policy and regulatory challenges for emerging risks from synthetic biology, drawing from biotechnology and nanotechnology.

The event brings together students and professionals in risk, law and policy to learn about synthetic biology and the diversity of issues associated with its development, governance, and application. Following the panel discussion, the audience is invited to propose ideas for a second event related to synthetic biology and risk.

Please plan to attend the reception following the event for further engagement with the speakers and audience members.

Program Overview:

Introduction: David Rejeski, Woodrow Wilson Center

Panelists: Theresa Good, National Science Foundation; Todd Kuiken, Woodrow Wilson Center; Eric Hoffman, Friends of the Earth; Jennifer Kuzma, University of Minnesota; Lynn L. Bergeson, Bergeson & Campbell

Moderators: Genya Dana, AAAS Fellow, US Department of State; Jennifer Bowmar, George Washington University

Event Organizer:

Society for Risk Analysis, National Capitol Area Chapter

Event Co-Sponsors:

The George Washington University Law School Environmental Law Program

Society for Risk Analysis, Risk, Policy and Law Specialty Group

Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Science, Technology & Innovation Program

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Risk, Law and Technical Dialog

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6:00pm

Opening Remarks

Leroy Paddock: Associate Dean for Environmental Law Studies, GWU
Sally Kane: President, NCAC of the Society for Risk Analysis

Introduction

Overview of Synthetic Biology and Emerging Technologies

David Rejeski, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
Director, Science, Technology & Innovation Program

6:15pm

Panel Discussion and Audience Q & A

Public Funding of Synthetic Biology Research

Dr. Theresa Good, National Science Foundation

Do It Yourself (DIY) Biology & Biosecurity

Dr. Todd Kuiken, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars

Regulation and Risk Governance of Synthetic Biology

Dr. Jennifer Kuzma, Humphrey School of Public Affairs, University of Minnesota

Environmental Risks of Synthetic Biology

Mr. Eric Hoffman, Friends of the Earth

Response from Legal Perspective

Ms. Lynn L. Bergeson, Managing Principal, Bergeson & Campbell, P.C.,
Washington, D.C.

Moderated by: Dr. Genya Dana, AAAS Fellow, US Department of State

7:15pm

Audience Q & A and Dialog - Next Steps

Moderated by Ms. Jennifer Bowmar, Visiting Associate Professor, The George Washington University Law School, Environmental Law Program

7:45pm

Close - GWU Law School and SRA National Capital Area Chapter

8:00pm

Reception - Networking and Discussions with Panelists

Directions to the Event

Location: George Washington University's Burns Building
Faculty Conference Center
716 20th Street NW, 5th Floor
Washington, DC 20052

Entrance to the Burns building is on 20th Street, about half way between G and H. An elevator is located immediately inside at this entrance and can be taken to the 5th floor; stairs are also located immediately to the left upon entering the building here.

The nearest metro stops are Farragut West (use 18th Street exit; metro entrance is at corner of 18th and I) or Foggy Bottom (metro entrance is at 23rd and H).

Public parking is available at the Marvin Center underground garage, entrance is located on H Street just west of 21st. Alternatively, it may also be possible to find on-street (mostly metered) parking.