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OIST Principal Investigator Dr. Noriyuki Satoh to receive the 2010 Edwin Grant Conklin Medal

Okinawa, Japan, July 5, 2010 — Dr. Noriyuki Satoh, Principal Investigator of the Marine Genomics Unit at the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (OIST), has been selected as this year's recipient of the Edwin Grant Conklin Medal awarded by the American Society for Developmental Biology (SDB). The SDB recognized Dr. Satoh for his revitalization of the study of the developmental biology of simple animals known as ascidians, the field that Conklin himself originally galvanized in 1905. Dr Satoh applied modern methods of molecular analysis to this classical system, identifying the mechanism of a molecular clock regulating the timing of development in the egg, describing the evolutionary relationships between various ascidians and other animals, and decoding the genome of *Ciona*, a model ascidian. He will become the first Japanese scientist to receive the medal. The award ceremony will take place during the upcoming 69th Annual SDB Meeting August 5-9, 2010, in New Mexico, U.S.A., which will be held jointly with the Japanese Society of Developmental Biologists.

In 2002, Dr. Satoh's research group successfully sequenced the genome of the marine chordate, *Ciona intestinalis*. Dr. Satoh became the first Japanese scientist to receive an Alexander Kowalevsky medal in 2005, which is awarded to scientists for achievements in comparative and evolutionary embryology. In 2008, his group, together with 17 other research institutions in Japan and overseas, decoded the genome of another key animal, the lancelet *Branchiostoma floridae*. More recently, Dr. Satoh has extended his studies to other marine animals, such as the corals that abound in the marine environment around Okinawa.

The Edwin Grant Conklin Medal was inaugurated in 1995 by the SDB in honor of Edwin Grant Conklin (November 24, 1863 – November 20, 1952), an American biologist and zoologist known for his notable research on the embryonic development of marine animals. The SDB gives the award yearly to recognize a developmental biologist who has made and is continuing to make extraordinary research contributions to the field, and who is also an excellent mentor who has helped train the next generation of outstanding scientists. The SDB is a non-profit professional society founded in 1939 to promote the advancement of the field of developmental biology. It has nearly 2,000 members from all over the world.

The Marine Genomics Unit, led by Dr. Noriyuki Satoh, aims to elucidate the network of interactions of animal genes that regulate early development and responses to the environment, and study their evolution. After receiving a Ph.D. from the University of Tokyo in 1974, Dr. Satoh taught at Kyoto University's Department of Zoology as a lecturer and as an associate professor, before becoming a professor in 1994. Currently the president of the Zoological Society of Japan, Dr. Satoh has served as editor-in-chief of *Zoological Science* (1997-1999) as well as editor of *Development Genes and Evolution* since 1994.

<Dr. Satoh's Unit Website> <http://www.irp.oist.jp/satoh/>



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