April 14th, 2003

To: All invited speakers at the recent "Reprogramming the Brain" Conference organized by The University of Texas at Dallas-The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center-Neuroscience Center at Presbyterian Hospital of Dallas.
April 10-11, Dallas, Texas

Mriganka Sur, MIT, speaker
Keith Thulborn, Univ of IL at Chicago, speaker
Torsten Wiesel, Nobel Laureate, Special Guest, President Emeritus of The Rockefeller University, speaker
William Woodfin, UT Southwestern, discussant
Eric Nestler, UT Southwestern, speaker
Roger Rosenberg, UT Southwestern, discussant
Paul Sanberg, Univ. of S. Florida, speaker
Thomas Sudhof, UT Southwestern, speaker
Roberto Cabeza, Duke University, speaker
Charles Gilbert, The Rockefeller University, speaker
David Hubel, Nobel Laureate, Special Guest, Harvard Medical School, speaker
Steven Kernie, UT Southwestern, speaker
Michael Kilgard, UT at Dallas, speaker
Steve Lomber, UT at Dallas, speaker

From: Da Hsuan Feng,
Vice President for Research and Graduate Education and Professor of Physics,
The University of Texas at Dallas

Re: Thanks

Dear colleagues:

On behalf of all my colleagues, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for coming to Dallas and delivering some of your most profound research results on brain's "plasticity" (or reprogramming, as I learned from some of the discussions in the conference. I would be truly grateful if some of you could tell me the genesis of the word "plasticity" as applied to brain research).

As a theoretical physicist, whose interests span from nuclear astrophysics to quantum chaos, I found your conference most exciting and challenging.

In one of my rare poetic moments, I mentioned to many colleagues that the frontiers of science in the 20th century dealt with the small to extremely small (molecules, atoms, nucleus, quarks…) and the large to the extremely large (solar systems, galaxies and the universe). However, in the 21st century, it is truly an irony of nature that the entity used to understand the 20th century frontiers, namely the brain, is itself not an understood

entity. It is for this reason that I believe your conference which probe deep into the brain is so profound and exciting.

I suspect that in the beginning of the 20th century (a few years before I was born), where there were more and more evidences that the microscopic world was behaving in a "weird" manner (weird according to the world of Isaac Newton). I am confident that before quantum mechanics was fully introduced as a workable dynamical theory in the 1920's, there must have been a multitude of theories, where each could explain some of the phenomena, but none can explain all. Your conference reminded me very much that there appears (at least to an amateur like me) that brain research at the moment is in the same situation. This must be a truly breathtaking and exciting time to be a brain scientist!

I am really excited to sit in the audience and absorb the information you were throwing out to the audience. As Vice President for Research and Graduate Education for UTD, I am exceedingly proud to see some of my colleagues are in the midst of this tremendously exciting profound area of research.

I hope that you can send the organizer Sandi Chapman your powerpoints so that she can put them on our web. In this way, we can inform the world that if they are interested but could not come to the conference, they could at least see the presentations on the web.

Congratulations again.

Da Hsuan Feng