

## Featured Participants

**Centre for Biological Signaling Studies (BIOSS)  
University of Freiburg**

[www.bioss.uni-freiburg.de/cms/index.php](http://www.bioss.uni-freiburg.de/cms/index.php)

**Center for Integrated Protein Science in Munich (CIPSM)**

[www.cipsm.de](http://www.cipsm.de)

**German Cancer Research Center**

[www.dkfz.de/en/index.html](http://www.dkfz.de/en/index.html)

**German Federal Ministry of Research and Education**

[www.bmbf.de](http://www.bmbf.de)

**Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC)**

Berlin-Buch Member of the Helmholtz Association  
[www.mdc-berlin.de/en](http://www.mdc-berlin.de/en)

**NeuroCure Excellence Cluster**

[www.neurocure.de](http://www.neurocure.de)



Christian Rosenmund



Virginie Lecaudey

**Once nonexistent in Germany, tenured-track positions are now being created by universities as part of the wave of on-going changes brought on by the Excellence Initiative.**

be slow, have made it difficult for junior researchers to advance. Therefore, the creation of tenure-track positions reflect a major change in the system.

Last year, the TUM established the Faculty Tenure-Track System, for example, that aims to create the first 100 tenure-track professorships between now and the year 2020. The plan is to recruit young researchers who have international experience and have demonstrated recognition in their fields, such as by publishing in high-impact journals or winning early-career prizes. Researchers can be hired as assistant professors on a six-year contract that lead to a tenure evaluation.

While the Excellence Initiative has helped forge change at universities, the government's commitment to research and development in Germany isn't stopping there. Just north of Freiburg, in the city of Heidelberg, the German Cancer Research Center (Deutsches Krebsforschungszentrum or DKFZ) has been awarded government money to create additional comprehensive cancer care centers across Germany, says **Otmar Wiestler**, chairman and scientific director of the DKFZ. Last year, the DKFZ announced the launch of the German Consortium for Translational Cancer Research. DKFZ will partner with seven university hospitals to create translational centers at each university site. The consortium is a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, German Cancer Aid (Deutsche Krebshilfe), and the DKFZ. The BMBF and the participating states provided approximately €12 million for the consortium last year. The annual budget will be gradually raised to reach about €28 million by 2014. German Cancer Aid will provide additional funding upon request for defined research projects and after an evaluation.

To get the project running, DKFZ will be recruiting 21 physician scientists for full professorship positions. This is no easy task, Wiestler says. "People with medical training have lots of job options," he says. "These people are precious. It is very important to provide attractive packages." To that end, DKFZ offers competitive salaries and long-term funding, Wiestler adds.

## The North: Berlin

While Baden-Württemberg is certainly the leader in terms of cash flowing into research, Berlin can now boast claim to being the only other German city, next to Munich, to host two "elite universities." Early in 2012, Humboldt University became the second university in Berlin (after Freie University) to claim the "elite university" title. In addition to winning funding for three of its graduate schools and a strategy to strengthen its overall standing, Humboldt University's NeuroCure Cluster of Excellence won follow-on funding.

NeuroCure's aim is to boost the prominence of neuroscience research in Berlin by forging collaboration among university scientists and researchers from the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine (MDC) in Berlin Buch, the Deutsche Rheuma-Forschungszentrum (German Rheumatic Disease Research Center), and the Leibniz-Institute for Molecular Pharmacology. The interdisciplinary research projects focus on the functions of the nervous system.

"What is special about NeuroCure isn't the direction of the research but rather what we are doing with the money," says **Christian Rosenmund**, coordinator of the cluster. Universities in Germany's poorer states, such as Berlin, have been suffering from budget cuts for years (universities receive the bulk of their funding from state governments), he explains. Many professorships in Berlin have simply been left vacant. Under the previous coordinator, Dietmar Schmitz, NeuroCure spent a majority of the €5.4 million annual Excellence Initiative funding to establish new professorships and provide them with appropriate equipment, says Rosenmund. Since 2006, NeuroCure has recruited 20 new researchers. "This is unheard of," says Rosenmund, "you're lucky if you get three or four into a single department."

With the additional funds, universities are also able to offer attractive financial packages, an important factor when recruiting scientists from the U.S. where salaries are typically higher. Schmitz recruited Rosenmund in 2009 from the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, Texas, U.S. In taking the job, Rosenmund accepted a salary cut. But after seeing his budget remain flat for five years in the U.S. and having to face the constant threat of cuts, the opportunity to build something new from the ground up and better long-term funding **continued**>