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# LSU Computational Biologist Recognized Among Nation's Top Junior Faculty

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BATON ROUGE – Oak Ridge Associated Universities, a consortium of doctoral-granting academic institutions, announced that Assistant Professor Michal Brylinski of LSU's Department of Biological Sciences and the Center for Computation and Technology, or CCT, is among the recipients of its annual Ralph E. Powe Junior Faculty Enhancement Award.

The Powe Award recognizes exceptional academic work by university junior faculty within several disciplines: engineering or applied science; life sciences; mathematics and computer science; physical sciences; and policy, management or education. The award confers a $5,000 grant, matched by the member institution, designed to enhance the recipient's professional growth in the early stages of his or her career.

"Recruitment and recognition of high achieving faculty are important in moving LSU to the top rank of America's research universities," said Kalliat T. Valsaraj, associate vice chancellor of LSU Office of Research & Economic Development. "The Ralph E. Powe award marks Dr. Brylinski as firmly in that category."

Brylinski conducts research in the area of computational biology at LSU. His group is interested in the development of novel tools for the modeling and analysis of biological networks using computational systems biology, with applications in emerging areas of contemporary life sciences such as the study of multiple drug-drug interactions and the development of more selective and safer therapeutics.

"As a consequence of major advances in genome sequencing technologies, many research projects are shifting from the study of single molecules to the proteome-wide investigation of molecular interactions and biological processes," Brylinski said. "Because there is a large number of interacting molecules and the interaction patterns are highly complicated, the analysis of biological systems and their emergent properties is often strongly supported by computational approaches.

Brylinski hopes that the Ralph E. Powe award will help his group develop a research program at LSU focusing on the modeling of biological networks using structure-oriented approaches.

"We hope it will ultimately provide a very comprehensive picture of complex biological systems at the fundamental level of molecular interactions, with potentially important biomedical applications," said Brylinski.

As a 2012 Powe Award winner, Brylinski will also be developing a new course in computational biology that serves the missions of both the Department of Biological Sciences and the CCT to expand computational biology at LSU as an interdisciplinary and quickly developing area of modern biological research.

"Successful research in computational systems biology requires a hybrid environment at the interface of biological and computer sciences," Brylinski said. "I was very happy to join LSU with a joint appointment between the Department of Biological Sciences and the Center for Computation & Technology. I found that both academic units provide an exciting and stimulating environment for researchers interested in computational life sciences and uniquely position research groups to approach problems that would be rather difficult to challenge in a more traditional setting. This really changes the way research projects are developed and accomplished."

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