

Sunesis Founder, James A. Wells, Ph.D., Joins UCSF Faculty

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South San Francisco, CA, June 27, 2005 – Sunesis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. today announced that James A. Wells, Ph.D., Sunesis founder, President and Chief Scientific Officer, is joining the faculty of the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). Dr. Wells will remain on Sunesis' Board of Directors and will serve as a consultant to the company on scientific matters, and will continue to act as Chair of Sunesis' Scientific Advisory Board. Dr. Wells has served as an adjunct professor of pharmaceutical chemistry at UCSF during his tenure at Sunesis.

"Jim is a scientific visionary, whose insights have served as a cornerstone for Sunesis' proprietary drug discovery platform," said Daniel Swisher, Sunesis' Chief Executive Officer. "We very much look forward to continuing to benefit from Jim's involvement with the company and his innovative applied research. We believe that this move presents an important opportunity to cement a closer relationship between Sunesis and UCSF. We are excited for him to continue to pursue his vision with such an esteemed institution and congratulate Jim on his new position."

At UCSF, Dr. Wells will serve as professor of pharmaceutical chemistry and professor of cellular and molecular pharmacology. Dr. Wells will also direct a new center to boost drug discovery at the California Institute for Quantitative Biomedical Research at UCSF's Mission Bay campus. In addition, he has been named the first Harry Wm. and Diana V. Hind Distinguished Professor in Pharmaceutical Sciences at UCSF. Dr. Wells plans to focus his research on the basic science and technology of discovering small molecules to important protein targets, especially those involved in cancer.

"Sunesis has transitioned to a fully integrated drug discovery and development company for which I am very proud," said Dr. Wells. "This new position with UCSF will allow me to explore more deeply the basic science and technology of small molecule discovery. In addition, leveraging my biotechnology experience, there are also tremendous opportunities to further enrich relationships between the university and the biotech community. After a long relationship with UCSF as an adjunct professor, I am very pleased to become a full-time member of the UCSF community while remaining closely affiliated with Sunesis."

About Sunesis Pharmaceuticals

Sunesis is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of novel small molecule therapeutics for oncology, inflammatory diseases and other unmet medical needs. Sunesis has built a product candidate portfolio through internal discovery and in-licensing of novel cancer therapeutics. Sunesis is advancing its product candidates through in-house research and development efforts and strategic collaborations with leading pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical companies. For further information, visit www.sunesis.com.

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Forward-Looking Statements

This press release may contain forward-looking statements that involve substantial risks and uncertainties. Sunesis may not actually achieve the plans, intentions or expectations contained in such forward-looking statements. Actual results or events could differ materially from the plans, intentions and expectations contained in such forward-looking statements. Sunesis does not assume any obligation to update any such forward-looking statements.

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