



Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars

EVENT & WEBCAST INVITATION

RSVP: nano@wilsoncenter.org

October 27, 2008

Synthetic Biology: Coming Up Fast!

WASHINGTON – Synthetic biology is being touted by scientists and venture capitalists as “the next big thing.” Researchers claim to be on the brink of creating artificial life in a laboratory and making the world’s first synthetic microbes. The first blockbuster synbio drug—an affordable cure for malaria—is expected on the market by 2010. And a whole new biofuels industry spawned by synthetic biologists that promises to conquer the globe’s energy problems seems just around the corner.

But will the promises and pitfalls of synthetic biology catch governments, ethicists, biosafety and biosecurity experts, and the public by surprise? Denise Caruso, former *New York Times* columnist and longtime analyst of technology-based issues and industries, will explore this question with the Center for American Progress’s Rick Weiss. Caruso is the author of *Intervention: Confronting the Real Risks of Genetic Engineering and Life on a Biotech Planet* (2006). Weiss recently left *The Washington Post* after a distinguished career as one of the country’s foremost science journalists.

Synthetic biology is an emerging area of research that uses advanced science and engineering to make or redesign living organisms, such as bacteria, so that they can carry out specific functions. The Rathenau Instituut describes the field as the convergence of molecular biology, information technology and nanotechnology, leading to the systematic design of biological systems.

This program is being jointly sponsored by the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies and the Center for American Progress.

To attend the event, RSVP to nano@wilsoncenter.org. No RSVP is required to view the Web cast.

*** Webcast LIVE at www.wilsoncenter.org ***

What: Synthetic Biology: Coming Up Fast!

When: Friday, November 14, 2008, 12:30 – 1:30 PM
(Light lunch available in 6th Floor Board Room prior to the event at 11:45 a.m.)

Who: Denise Caruso, Executive Director & Chair, Hybrid Vigor Institute
Rick Weiss, Senior Fellow, Center for American Progress, Moderator
David Rejeski, Director, Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies, Introduction



**Woodrow Wilson
International
Center
for Scholars**

Where: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 6th Floor Auditorium, in the Ronald Reagan Building at 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC. For directions see: <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/directions>

The **Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies** was launched in 2005 by the **Wilson Center** and **The Pew Charitable Trusts**. It is a partnership dedicated to helping business, governments, and the public anticipate and manage the possible health and environmental implications of nanotechnology. To learn more about the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies, visit www.nanotechproject.org.

Founded in 2003, the **Center for American Progress** is a think tank dedicated to improving the lives of Americans through ideas and action firmly rooted in the economic and political realities of the 21st century (www.americanprogress.org).

Media planning to cover the event should contact Colin Finan at (202) 691-4321 or at colin.finan@wilsoncenter.org.