

**Contacts**

**Publisher:** Fabien Savenay  
**Editor:** Paul Smaglik  
**Sales Director:** Ben Crowe

**US Head Office, New York**

345 Park Avenue South, 10th Floor,  
 New York, NY 10010-1707  
 Tel +1 800 989 7718  
 Fax +1 800 989 7103  
 e-mail: [naturejobs@natureny.com](mailto:naturejobs@natureny.com)

**US Sales Director:** Ben Crowe

**US Sales Manager:** Peyton Mason

**US Advertising Coordinator:**

Corrisa Salzman

**Classified Sales Representatives:**

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**East USA/ NIH:** Peter Bless

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**Corporate Advertising:** Peyton Mason

**East USA/ East Canada/**

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**San Francisco Office**

**Classified Sales Representative:**

Michael Listek

**West USA/ West Canada**

225 Bush Street, Suite 1453

San Francisco, CA 94104

Tel +1 415 781 3803

Fax +1 415 781 3805

e-mail: [m.listek@naturest.com](mailto:m.listek@naturest.com)

**European Head Office, London**

The Macmillan Building, 4 Crinan Street,

London N1 9XW, UK

Tel +44 (0) 20 7843 4961

Fax +44 (0) 20 7843 4996

e-mail: [naturejobs@nature.com](mailto:naturejobs@nature.com)

**Group European Manager:**

Leonie Weiss (4954)

**European Manager:**

Nevin Bayoumi (4978)

**Production Manager:** Billie Franklin

To send films and materials use

London address above.

Tel +44 (0) 20 7843 4814

Fax +44 (0) 20 7843 4996

e-mail: [naturejobs@nature.com](mailto:naturejobs@nature.com)

**International Advertising**

**Coordinator:** Laura Pearson (4977)

**Naturejobs web development:**

Tom Hancock

**Naturejobs online production:**

Ben Lund

**European Satellite Offices**

**France/ Belgium:**

Christine Niox-Chateau

e-mail: [c.nioxchateau@nature.com](mailto:c.nioxchateau@nature.com)

**Germany/ Austria/ Switzerland:**

Patrick Phelan/ Kate Turner

e-mails: [p.phelan@nature.com](mailto:p.phelan@nature.com)

[k.turner@nature.com](mailto:k.turner@nature.com)

**Japan Head Office, Tokyo**

MG Ichigaya Building (5F),

19-1 Haraikatamachi,

Shinjuku-ku,

Tokyo 162-0841

Tel +81 3 3267 8751

Fax +81 3 3267 8746

e-mail: [k.cowan@naturejp.com](mailto:k.cowan@naturejp.com)

**Japan Manager:** Kate Cowan

## Mergers and acquisitions

The marriage of cell biology and developmental biology is resulting in new scientific methods. In the process, it is also creating new institutes, perhaps most notably in Dresden, where the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics (MPI-CBG) recently opened its doors.

Developmental biologists have generally concentrated on problems such as finding and understanding the genes that tell a young organism to sprout a wing rather than a leg. Cell biologists, for their part, have examined biomechanical processes such as cellular division and adhesion. Now, new technology and an increasingly integrationist approach to science are bringing the two fields together (see News Feature, page 244).

The MPI-CBG is one of the main institutes leading that approach (see *Naturejobs* this issue, pages 4–5). The institute's proponents are building up not just a new institute, but an entire biotech region on the emerging field's foundation. Apart from the MPI-CBG, the region will host a centre for biotech start-ups and an institute for computational biology. This construction has required the centres' leaders to marshal resources from the government, academia, industry and philanthropy. Ideally, as the science develops, fledgling companies and institutions built around it will expand, meaning more jobs.

Taking a leadership approach in a new field isn't easy. Expectations can run high — especially when the new frontiers are being bolstered by funds from both the public and private sectors. But the risks may be worth taking. Judging from the activity springing up around the Dresden institute, merging two disciplines can create net gains — both scientifically and economically.

**Paul Smaglik**  
*Naturejobs* editor



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