

Message from the Founding Director of the Discovery Systems Laboratory, Constantin Aliferis:

It is with a feeling of serious loss that I am leaving Vanderbilt University and the Discovery Systems Laboratory which I founded in 2001 and have been directing since that time until October of 2008, in order to pursue the exciting undertaking of being the Founding Director of the Center for Health Informatics and Bioinformatics at New York University. The DSL team worked hard over the years on a number of scientific goals. I wish to congratulate the lab's members for their achievements in scaling up causal discovery methods, and for developing efficient algorithms for Markov Blanket, local neighborhood discovery and Bayesian network learning. The DSL team should also be proud of their applied and theoretical work in feature selection and information retrieval, their software systems and data modeling, and finally their work in data analysis of high-throughput data. I expect that these contributions will have lasting and significant impact. I am similarly confident that the superb trainees that graduated from the Lab will become future leaders in our field.

Many brilliant collaborators, both faculty and students, with remarkable help from our staff at DBMI, shaped research efforts in DSL putting teamwork and love of science above other considerations. I am indebted to the DSL team for working with me over the years and for investing so much from themselves in a shared scientific dream. The DSL in addition would have never existed without the strong support of the Vanderbilt academic leadership. I am grateful to the leadership for opening the doors of opportunity and for their sustained trust.

New blood and new ideas are essential for progress and the DSL is not an exception to this rule. The lab now is in the hands of Subramani Mani, a friend and colleague whose research agenda is both exciting and promising. I believe that Subramani and his team have what it takes to make a difference with their work and expect that they will continue successfully the DSL tradition of pursuing research excellence.

I gladly accepted Subramani's invitation to continue being a collaborator of the DSL team. I also gladly accepted the invitation of the Department Chair Dr Masys, and the Director of Graduate Programs, Dr Gadd, to have an adjunct academic appointment with Vanderbilt's Department of Biomedical Informatics. I look forward to contributing to their efforts for better research, education, and patient care.

With best wishes for continued success,  
Constantin Aliferis,  
New York, November 19, 2008