



Paul Gilna, Ph.D.

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Dr. Paul Gilna is the director of the BioEnergy Science Center (BESC) at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. As the BESC Director, Dr. Gilna leads a multi-institutional Department of Energy-funded research organization with 18 partners working together on performing basic and applied science dedicated to improving yields of biofuels by focusing on the fundamental understanding and elimination of biomass recalcitrance. This multidisciplinary research encompasses the biological, chemical, physical, and computational sciences, as well as mathematics and engineering.

Dr. Gilna's career has been spent at the intersection of computation and biology. After receiving his Ph.D. in pharmacology from University College Dublin, Gilna focused his research on the field of molecular biology. Papers summarizing his postdoctoral work on cloning and sequencing of human estrogen and progesterone receptors became the basis of genetic testing for predisposition to breast cancer. Gilna shifted his work to focus on the field of computation biology, taking a position at GenBank, the collection of publicly available gene sequences then managed out of Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). At GenBank, Gilna set up computational tools and annotated genetic-sequence databases, and was instrumental in developing the now widely accepted requirement that authors of journal articles submit gene sequences to GenBank in exchange for an accession number printed with the article. Gilna remained with GenBank until it transferred to the National Institutes of Health. He then took a position as a Program Director at the National Science Foundation's Division of Biological Infrastructure, spending two years there before returning to LANL.

Before coming to ORNL and BESC, Gilna was the Executive Director at the Community Cyberinfrastructure for Advanced Marine Microbial Ecology Research and Analysis project (CAMERA), a program funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation devoted to creating a community data resource focused on enabling microbial ecology research using next generation genomics technologies.

Gilna is a former Director of the Department of Energy's Joint Genome Institute (JGI) operations at LANL, has served in the management role of Group Leader of Genomic Science and Computational Biology at LANL and has also served as Division Director of LANL's Bioscience Division. He has served as editor of the journal DNA Sequence and Genomics, and has served on grant and project review panels for the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the Office of Naval Research as well as a number of international review panels in the European Union. Gilna is currently a member of the Board of Directors of Leidos Biomedical Research, Inc. (formerly SAIC-Frederick, Inc.) and is also a member of the Novo Nordisk Foundation Research Cluster Advisory Panel (ReCAP).