PRESS RELEASE

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The Wistar Institute Strengthens AI-Driven Drug Discovery with Recruitment of Computational Biophysicist Guangfeng Zhou

Zhou integrates physics-based modeling, chemistry, biology, and AI to accelerate discovery of new therapeutic leads in the Center for Advanced Therapeutics

PHILADELPHIA — (TUESDAY, AUG. 4, 2026) —The Wistar Institute, a world leader in cancer, immunology, and infectious disease research, announces the appointment of **Guangfeng Zhou, Ph.D.**, as assistant professor in the Center for Advanced Therapeutics (CAT). Zhou develops computational methods that combine physics-based molecular modeling with artificial intelligence (AI) to predict how small molecules bind to protein targets. His work transforms atomic-level principles into practical drug-discovery platforms capable of screening ultra-large compound libraries and prioritizing therapeutic leads with greater speed and precision.

"Guangfeng brings expertise in physics-based modeling and AI, and a strong chemistry foundation to the very cutting-edge of drug discovery," said **Paul M. Lieberman, Ph.D.**, director of the Center for Advanced Therapeutics and Hilary Koprowski, M.D., Endowed Professor. "By applying physics and chemistry theories to AI, he's building computational tools that will help our scientists ultimately discover new drug compounds and make real-world impact."

Zhou's interdisciplinary research reflects an academic path spanning chemistry, biophysics and computation. He received a B.S. in Chemistry from the University of Science and Technology of China and then earned a Ph.D. in Chemistry at Temple University. In graduate school, under the mentorship of Vincent Voelz, Ph.D., he learned scientific programming and applied large-scale, dynamic molecular simulations to study how proteins fold and interact. Collaborations with experimental labs on computational, drug-discovery "side projects" sharpened his interest in therapeutic design. So, he secured a postdoctoral fellowship at the Institute for Protein Design within the Biochemistry Department at the University of Washington, where he applied his

understanding of protein interactions to develop computational methods for designing and discovering novel therapeutic molecules.

"I came to Wistar because of its strong support for early-career scientists and its highly collaborative research environment," said Zhou. "The Institute's strong research programs in cancer, immunology and infectious disease align with my goal of building a lab that serves as a collaborative hub. My drug discovery program will aim to develop generalizable methods that can be applied across these areas and across different therapeutic targets, to advance real-world drug discovery. One specific problem I want to solve is to develop AI models, guided by the principles of physics and chemistry, that can "see" a new target that's outside the model's training data and still incorporate and obey physical and chemical rules when applied to that target."