Nobel Laureate Baltimore to Return After 2 Years on Rockefeller Faculty

By Lakshmana Rao

Two years ago, David Baltimore '61 resigned his post as director of the Whitehead Institute after years of acrimony controversy about research fraud. At the time, few would have believed that the embattled biology researcher with a Nobel prize under his belt would return. But Baltimore is coming back. He has been appointed a professor of biology at MIT and will return to the Institute in the spring of 1994.

Baltimore is currently a professor of biology at Rockefeller University, where he also served as president until last December. He stepped down from that position when he lost faculty support because of his role in the fraudulent data that was published in the journal Cell in 1986.

Although Baltimore was not accused of committing fraud himself, he was criticized for shrugging off repeated warnings that his collaborator on the paper, Thereza Imanishi-Kari, who was then a post-doctoral student under him, had fabricated some of her data.

MIT started talks with Robert J. Birgeneau, dean of science, and that MIT initiated the dialogue to get Baltimore back to MIT when he announced his resignation as the president of Rockefeller. Baltimore held no standing position at MIT when he left for Rockefeller.

"This is effectively a new appointment," Birgeneau said.

Focus on AIDS research

Baltimore's return to MIT will coincide with the inauguration of the new biology building scheduled to take place in the early spring of 1994. Baltimore will be allocated space in the new building to pursue his research on AIDS research. He will also be teaching undergraduate and graduate courses at MIT.

Birgeneau said that AIDS research is a major focus of the biology department at MIT and there are several professors working on different aspects of the problem.

"Baltimore's arrival will increase the effectiveness of our program significantly," he added.

"I am looking forward to my return to MIT," Baltimore said. He plans to continue to work on Rockefeller Faculty.

David Baltimore '61 will return to the department of Biology in the spring of 1994. Baltimore, Page 11