

Klosterneuburg, September 4, 2013

## **Mendel Medal to IST Austria Professor Nick Barton**

**Leopoldina awards Mendel Medal to evolutionary geneticist Nick Barton: “Significant contribution to the further development of Darwin’s insights” • IST Austria president Thomas Henzinger salutes Barton as “pioneer”**

The German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina awards the Mendel Medal to Nicholas H. Barton. The Academy thus honors the researcher’s preeminent scientific work in the field of population genetics. The Mendel Medal will be awarded as part of the opening ceremony of the Leopoldina’s annual meeting on Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, in Halle (Saale), Germany.

President Thomas Henzinger congratulated Barton on this distinction: “Nick has always been a pioneer be it in his scientific work or as our first professor at IST Austria. I salute this outstanding researcher and look forward to further pioneering achievements.”

Prof Dr Nicholas H Barton (born 1955) is one of the world’s leading scientists in the field of evolutionary population genetics. His work is regarded as a significant contribution to the further development of Charles Darwin’s 150 year-old insights into evolutionary mechanisms. Barton’s research significantly contributes to our understanding of how species adapt and split into new species. To explore these processes, Barton – among other topics – studies the spatial subdivision of populations. In particular, he is interested in the boundary regions between different populations, in which their genetic material hybridizes and mixes. In his newest findings, the researcher showed how selection effects and population structure can be detected in DNA samples. Here, the many interactions between large numbers of genes are of particular interest. They influence how species arise, and how populations react to selection. Nicholas H. Barton has received several awards for his scientific achievements, including the Darwin-Wallace Medal of the Linnean Society of London and the Darwin Medal of the Royal Society of London. Since 2008, Barton is Professor at the Institute of Science and Technology Austria in Klosterneuburg, near Vienna.

The Mendel Medal was endowed in 1965 in honor of Gregor Mendel, the founding father of genetics. With this distinction, the Leopoldina honors pioneering achievements in the fields of general or molecular biology or genetics. Previous recipients of the award include biophysicist and Nobel laureate Max Delbrück (1967) and the behavioral scientist Jane Goodall (1987).

The German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina brings together the expertise of some 1,500 distinguished scientists to bear on questions of social and political relevance, publishing unbiased and timely scientific opinions. The Leopoldina represents the German scientific community in international committees and pursues the advancement of science for the benefit of humankind and for a better future.

Caption: Portraits and Group picture of Barton with PhD student Simon Aeschbacher and postdoc Jitka Polechova / © IST Austria. Free use and distribution of images in context of IST Austria

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**IST Austria**

The Institute of Science and Technology (IST Austria) is a PhD granting research institution located in Klosterneuburg, 18 km from the center of Vienna, Austria. Inaugurated in 2009, the Institute is dedicated to basic research in the natural and mathematical sciences. The Institute employs professors on a tenure-track system, postdoctoral fellows, and doctoral students at its international graduate school. While dedicated to the principle of curiosity-driven research, the Institute owns the rights to all scientific discoveries and is committed to promote their use. The first president of IST Austria is Thomas A. Henzinger, a leading computer scientist and former professor of the University of California, Berkeley, and the EPFL in Lausanne, Switzerland. [www.ist.ac.at](http://www.ist.ac.at)