

FSU: Autism Detection, Disease Biosensors To Move From Lab To Market

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TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Four innovative research projects have been awarded a total of \$158,000 by the Florida State University Research Foundation to help move their discoveries from the laboratory to the marketplace.

The projects range in scope from a web-based autism detection and treatment system to new biosensors designed to quickly and accurately detect diseases such as cancer. Selected in the latest round of awards from Florida State's biannual \$250,000 Grant Assistance Program (GAP), the awards are intended to help each project reach new milestones on their march to real-world implementation. The winners of the GAP awards are researchers or teams of researchers who can most clearly identify the commercial viability of a product, process or license that will come from their efforts.

"Our latest GAP winners present some truly unique and tremendously beneficial technologies that could have a significant impact on society," said Vice President for Research Gary K. Ostrander. "Although they are still in the proof-of-concept phase, they help prove that the GAP competition is an excellent opportunity for our researchers to pitch their product ideas and seek out funding that is not often available at this stage of development."

The research projects that received funding for the spring 2013 GAP competition are:

Amy Wetherby – Early detection and treatment of autism — \$50,000: Wetherby, a distinguished research professor of clinical sciences in the College of Medicine, has built a proven, web-based system that helps parents and medical practitioners identify autism warning signs in children at very young ages, allowing treatment to begin much sooner. Wetherby will use the GAP award to plan deployment of her system out to autism professionals throughout the country.

Jhunu Chatterjee – Quicker detection of disease using new biosensors — \$50,000: Chatterjee, an assistant scholar/scientist in the FAMU–FSU College of Engineering, is working to create new, more cost-efficient biosensors that doctors can use to detect very small, normally unnoticeable changes in the human body, leading to early detection and diagnosis of disease

and illness such as diabetes and certain cancers. Chatterjee will use the GAP award to start building the first prototypes of the new biosensor device.

Yan Li – Faster drug discovery using living tissue test environments — \$43,000: Yan Li, an assistant professor in the Department of Chemical and Biomedical Engineering, is developing a new tissue-based testing method that would enhance the ability of researchers to test the effects of pharmaceutical drugs and their ability to help treat and cure diseases. Using the GAP award, Li will be able to hire the necessary staff and purchase the equipment needed to move the project to its next stage of development.

Alan Lemmon – Better control of agricultural pests through gene mapping — \$15,000: Lemmon, an assistant professor in the Department of Scientific Computing, has developed faster, more affordable ways to map non-human genes such as insects and plants that can be used to control agricultural pests. Lemmon plans to use the GAP award to map specific genomes that would provide benefits to potential partners in the agriculture industry.

Funded since 2005, the highly competitive GAP is administered by Florida State University's Office of Intellectual Property Development and Commercialization (OIPDC). All GAP submissions are reviewed and selected by a committee of local business leaders. Winners report back to the committee nine months after receipt of the award to provide an update of their activity. Staff members from the OIPDC and GAP committee provide ongoing support to GAP participants through the pursuit of potential corporate partners, mentors and additional funding opportunities.

For more information about GAP, visit www.research.fsu.edu/foundation/gap.