

PRESS RELEASE

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FOUR FSU PROJECTS WIN 'GAP' AWARDS TO MOVE CUTTING-EDGE RESEARCH FROM LAB TO MARKETPLACE

Researchers at Florida State University seeking to shepherd their research out of the laboratory and into the crowded commercial marketplace have a friend in the FSU Research Foundation. Since 2005, the foundation has funded a highly energetic — and competitive — grant program that supports those researchers and their extraordinary efforts.

The Grant Assistance Program, or GAP, awards those who can most clearly identify the commercial feasibility of a process, product, license or start-up company that they believe will grow from their endeavors with a commercial partner.

The GAP awards are given out twice yearly. The four projects that earned GAP funding during the most recent awards cycle (Spring 2011) are:

- **Nanobelt Biosensors:** A \$50,000 award goes to P. Bryant Chase, professor and chairman of the FSU Department of Biological Science, and Professor Peng Xiong of the Department of Physics, for the development and testing of a device that can be used to sense the presence of hepatitis C viral proteins. If the researchers are successful, their technology potentially has many other commercial applications.
- **Light-Activated Agents for Anticancer Drugs:** A \$25,000 award goes to Professor Igor Alabugin of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry to further develop a novel cancer-fighting approach that uses exposure to light to activate a powerful class of anticancer molecules. When exposed to light, these molecules can target and destroy cancer cells while leaving healthy cells unharmed. If successful, Alabugin will be much closer to developing a therapy regime that will be of great commercial interest to the cancer research industry.
- **A Novel Approach to Treating Stroke Victims:** A \$25,000 award goes to Ewa Bienkiewicz, an assistant scholar/scientist in the Department of Biomedical Sciences, for development of a therapeutic agent that can go into the body and naturalize the effect of toxic hemin release following a stroke. Hemin is a byproduct of the breakdown of hemoglobin, which occurs after a stroke. Currently there is only one approved option for stroke patients, a “clot-buster” class of drugs that must be given within three hours of a stroke. This new therapy could begin up to 24 hours following a stroke’s onset. The GAP funding will help Bienkiewicz take her current work much closer to a point where it will have commercial opportunity.
- **High Performance Flexible Batteries:** A \$12,000 award goes to Professor Richard Liang of FSU’s High Performance Materials Institute, and Jesse Smithyman, a doctoral student working under Liang, for a technology that uses carbon nanotubes as the basis for smaller, more flexible batteries that will be part of the devices they power. Liang and his fellow researchers will take the flexible battery technology through more rigid testing and evaluation and bring it closer to where it can be built into “real” products.

All GAP award recipients will be assigned a team of mentors composed of local business leaders. The groups will meet four times a year to provide expertise and assistance with product development.

“One of the most important contributions that large research universities can make is to nurture the scientific and technological expertise that our society depends on to generate commercially viable breakthroughs in medicine, computer technology, energy generation and so many other areas,” said Kirby Kemper, Florida State’s vice president for Research. “With this new round of GAP awards, we are able to support researchers who may be on the brink of bringing research break-throughs to market. “

For more information about the GAP Program at Florida State University, visit <http://www.techtransfer.fsu.edu>.

To read this article online and view associated images and a video clip featuring the award winners, visit <http://www.fsu.com/Featured-Stories/Four-FSU-projects-win-GAP-awards-to-move-cutting-edge-research-from-lab-to-marketplace>.