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GOVERNOR, MAJORITY LEADER AND SPEAKER ANNOUNCE $2 MILLION IN BIOTECH RESEARCH AWARDS

Targeted Funding Will Help Attract, Retain Promising Early Career Scientists

Governor George E. Pataki, Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno and Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver today announced $2 million in awards designed to recognize and support outstanding scientists and engineers who, early in their careers, show potential for leadership and scientific discovery in the field of biotechnology.

"These grants will support the world-class research being performed by some of the best young minds at New York's colleges and universities and will complement our other high-tech economic development initiatives such as our Centers of Excellence program," said Governor Pataki. "In addition, this support will help to further secure New York's role as an international leader in high-tech and biotechnology research and economic development.

"As we continue with our comprehensive plan to create a high technology economy, we will ensure that our best and brightest young minds have every opportunity to secure a good paying, high-tech job and can build their future right here in New York State," Governor Pataki added. "And with every such step we take, we move closer toward our goal of creating one million new jobs by the end of the decade."

Senate Majority Leader Joseph L. Bruno said, "New York State is at the forefront of emerging high-tech and biotech innovations. As we continue to ensure New York's place as a national and global leader in these fields, it is critically important to recognize and reward the best and brightest young minds who support the research and development initiatives that continue to keep New York State competitive. We want to provide every opportunity for our most promising scientists and engineers to stay right here in New York State."

Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver said, "This is a smart investment in the backbone of New York State's emerging biotechnology industry, our renowned scientific research centers, colleges and universities. Not only are they key to improving the state's economy and establishing high-paying employment opportunities, but even more importantly, these New York institutions will develop products and services that will improve the quality of life for people here and around the world."

The James D. Watson Investigator initiative is part of the $225 million Generating Employment through New York State Science (Gen*NY*sis) program, which was created to maximize the potential of the world-class life sciences research being conducted at New York's public, not-for-profit and private academic research institutions. The program complements New York's comprehensive efforts to make the Empire State an international leader in high-tech and biotechnology-related research and economic development.

Russell W. Bessette, M.D., Executive Director of the New York State Office of Science, Technology and Academic Research (NYSTAR), said, "The awards being announced today will encourage these early career biotechnology scientists to stay and conduct their critically important research here in New York State. In doing so, these scientists will be positioned to make the important advancements in biotechnology that will lead to the State's future economic growth."

The purpose of the Watson program is to assist New York State's leading research institutions in recognizing, retaining and professionally developing early career scientists who demonstrate leadership potential at the frontier of knowledge in the life sciences and conduct research that is anticipated to enhance economic development in the State.

The program supports NYSTAR's other programs to spur technology-based research and economic

development in New York State; promote national and international research collaboration and innovation; better leverage the State's research expertise and funding for investments from the federal government, foundations, businesses, and others; acquire venture capital funding.

The following institutions and researchers were awarded $200,000 grants:

Institution:	**Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research**
Researcher:	Derek Tan, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To produce an organic molecule library of compounds to develop a drug treatment for prostate cancer.
Institution:	**Stony Brook University, State University of New York**
Researcher:	Robert Rizzo, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To use computational drug discovery of small molecules to treat HIV.
Institution:	**Columbia University**
Researcher:	Laura Kaufman, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To develop three-dimensional gels that mimic the extracellular matrix to study glioblastoma, an invasion cancer.
Institution:	**Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute**
Researcher:	Chunyu Wang, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To conduct high resolution NMR studies to determine the pathology of Alzheimer's Disease.
Institution:	**Cornell University**
Researcher:	Brian Kirby, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To develop practical, high-throughput microfluidic devices that facilitate protein production and analysis, via combinatorial exploration of protein refolding conditions and low-sample-volume HPLC separations.
Institution:	**New York University**
Researcher:	Yingkai Zhang, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To develop an innovative computational strategy for the rational design of biocatalysts.
Institution:	**University at Buffalo, State University of New York**
Researcher:	David Watson, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To use metallic and semiconducting nanowires arrays for the electrical and optical detection of biomolecules.
Institution:	**University of Rochester**
Researcher:	Timothy Machonkin, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To use directed evolution techniques to improve the ability of an enzyme for bioremediation of toxic phenols.
Institution:	**Binghamton University, State University of New York**
Researcher:	Craig Laramee, Ph.D.

Proposal:	To develop a protein profile chip for polycystic ovary syndrome diagnostics and real-time monitoring of chemotherapy patients.

Institution:	**Alfred University**
Researcher:	Lisa Flick, Ph.D.
Proposal:	To develop a standardized panel of tests to assess the biocompatibility of various orthapaedic and dental implants.

Candidates for a grant from this program must have been awarded a doctoral degree and have less than five-years experience since being awarded their doctoral degree. Only one award could be made per institution. An independent peer review panel comprised of life science and enabling sciences experts reviewed the applications. The applicants funded were chosen based on the best science and the best likelihood of economic success.

Governor Pataki and the Legislature have advanced several major initiatives to expand high technology and biotechnology business and job-creation opportunities in New York. The Governor's Centers of Excellence initiative, along with Strategically Targeted Academic Research (STAR) Centers and Advanced Research Centers (ARCs), focus on critical emerging technologies that are expected to become major high-tech growth areas. Each Center is designed to complement other specialized academic centers in a seamless network of high-tech research and economic development.

Since 1995, the State has fostered the growth of New York's high-tech and biotech industries by supporting the investment of more than $1 billion in the State's technology business sector and its world-class research laboratories and academic centers.