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### University of Hawaii

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## UH to Partner with Honolulu-Based BioXene on R&D to Develop Novel Nano-Scale Molecular Biosensors

The University of Hawaii and BioXene (Nanogenetech, Inc.) are teaming up on a collaborative research project to develop a new type of nano-scale molecular biosensor that could significantly improve rapid detection of Avian Influenza H5N1 (Bird Flu) infection and other biological targets. Under the terms of the partnership, UH and BioXene will co-fund research and development of a patent-pending technology invented by Dr. Winston Su of the Molecular Biosciences and Bioengineering Department. BioXene recently licensed the technology from UH's Office of Technology Transfer and Economic Development.

UH's funding for the project comes through the Accelerated Research Commercialization (ARC) grant program, which was created by the University Connections program. UH awarded \$57,578 of ARC grant funding, which BioXene is matching with \$71,654 of cash and in-kind funding.

The research project will attempt to develop innovative nano-scale proteins as self-reporting optical transducers, capable of detecting a broad range of substances in a quick and simple process using standard, inexpensive equipment. BioXene founder and CEO Victor Wong believes that the technology holds great promise. 'We are excited about the potential for this technology to serve as the platform for a wide variety of sensing reagent products. The ARC project will greatly advance the development of our core technology and support BioXene's goal of having a commercial product by the end of 2006. The technology has the potential to significantly reduce the time and effort needed to identify target compounds in solution, which would make it particularly useful in the global effort to contain rapid spreading pandemic viruses such as Avian Influenza and SARS. We also intend to apply the technology to develop biosensing reagents for the life science research market.'

Dr. Su, a biochemical engineer, is a co-inventor of two other UH patent-pending technologies. His research interests include plant molecular farming and biosensor protein engineering. 'We believe our sensor technology offers a unique and superior alternative to current molecular detection techniques, such as ELISA, especially in terms of speed and assay simplicity,' said Dr. Su. 'The technology is also highly versatile and can be tailored for many different applications. It's exciting to explore the commercialization potential of our technology and contribute to the advancement of the local emerging biotech industry.'

University Connections' ARC grant program has funded four other R&D projects with local technology companies, including two other biotech projects. 'The ARC program is particularly important to the development of Hawaii's bioscience industry', said University Connections Director Keith Mattson. 'These companies have to invest lots of money in early stage R&D, and the ARC grant helps them stretch their budgets while leveraging the University's talent and lab facilities. In turn, UH gets a commercialization partner to move promising technologies into the market place.'

More information about the ARC grant is at [www.connections.hawaii.edu](http://www.connections.hawaii.edu)