Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Strategic Alliance Formed to Advance Tissue Engineering Research and Development

Universities from Massachusetts, Northern Ireland and Finland Focused on Collaboration and Innovation

(WASHINGTON, DC) – June 29, 2011 - Acknowledging that collaboration benefits the advancement of research and development, Massachusetts Senate President Therese Murray was joined today by an international contingent of higher education and economic development officials representing Northern Ireland, Finland and Massachusetts in announcing a strategic alliance that will focus on tissue engineering. The alliance was initiated in discussions which took place during the Northern Ireland Massachusetts Connection (NIMAC) trade mission to Finland this past April.

The strategic alliance will join the tissue engineering research efforts of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, University of Tampere (Finland), Tampere Institute of Biosciences and Medical Technology (Finland), VTT the Technical Research Center of Finland, University of Ulster (Northern Ireland) and Queens University of Belfast (Northern Ireland).

“This collaboration between Massachusetts, Northern Ireland and Finland will encourage and advance research which will lead to groundbreaking discovery and economic development,” said Senate President Therese Murray. “Through NIMAC and under the leadership of University of Massachusetts Dartmouth we have been able formalize the necessary connections in order for this Strategic Alliance to be formed. These kinds of opportunities are exactly why we started NIMAC and what allows us to not only highlight the Commonwealth internationally, but provide untapped avenues for future economic development efforts.”

NI Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster said, "Queen's University and the University of Ulster participating in this key international collaboration in Tissue Engineering is a great achievement for NIMAC. Set up initially to strengthen business and research relationships between Northern Ireland and Massachusetts, NIMAC now includes Finland. It is a fitting development therefore that this Tissue Engineering collaboration has resulted directly from the NIMAC trade mission to Finland in April, which was supported by delegates from Massachusetts and Northern Ireland.”

The alliance, which will be witnessed by Murray, the Massachusetts Life Science Center and Invest Northern Ireland, allows the various institutions to develop international exchange and cooperative research projects which will include regenerative biology, biomaterials, tissue engineering, biomedical gels, and nanofibrous scaffolds. The agreement also lays the foundation to jointly pursue research funding from both U.S. and European funding sources as a way to

advance the research and discovery as well as move toward economic development opportunities.

“Massachusetts is home to world leading tissue engineering and manufacturing companies, such as Organogenesis, as well as academic institutions that are advancing the science of tissue engineering, such as UMass-Dartmouth, ” said Susan-Windham Bannister, President & CEO of the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, the agency charged with implementing the state’s ten-year, $1 billion Life Sciences Initiative. “This collaboration among three of the world’s leading regions for life sciences research and commercialization will accelerate the promise of important new advancements in patient care across the globe.”

The Northern Ireland Massachusetts Connection was created in 2009 between Massachusetts and Northern Ireland. In 2010 Finland joined NIMAC. Together, through this unofficial organization, Massachusetts, Northern Ireland, and Finland are working together to identify opportunities for collaboration and economic opportunity in the areas of life sciences and connected health.

NIMAC will hold meetings in Boston in late October.

A copy of the strategic alliance is attached below

Whereas, the Northern Ireland Massachusetts Connection (NIMAC) is a group dedicated to advancing business, research and clinical collaborations between Massachusetts, Northern Ireland and Europe; and

Whereas, the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth is a public university actively engaged in personalized teaching and innovative research, and acting as an intellectual catalyst for regional and global economic, social, and cultural development; and

Whereas, the University of Tampere (UTA) is a culturally-committed higher education institution in Finland with a multifaceted research and education profile focused on helping people and societies to improve their health, cultural, social and economic well-being, and is represented through the joint institute TIBMeT; and

Whereas, the Tampere University of Technology (TUT) is an international university of technology at the leading edge of scientific research and a significant national and international pioneer in the development of innovative technology and is represented through the joint institute TIBMeT ; and

Whereas, the Tampere Insitute of Biosciences and Medical Technology (TIBMeT), is a joint institute of TUT and UTA and is an interdisciplinary, internationally high standard research and education institute, operating on the interface of biomedicine and technology to create new innovations and businesses; and

Whereas,the University of Ulster is a university with a national and international reputation for excellence, innovation and regional engagement that makes a major contribution to the economic, social and cultural development of Northern Ireland; and

Whereas, the Queen's University of Belfast is an international university with a portfolio of research strength and collaborations including bio-technology at the leading edge of scientific research and a significant national and international pioneer in the development of innovative technology; and

Whereas, Invest Northen Ireland is a regional business development agency within the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment with a role to grow the local economy by supporting new and existing businesses to compete internationally; and

Whereas, the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland is a globally networked multi-technological contract research organization.

Now Therefore, the "Parties" as described above agree to launch this strategic alliance to explore mutual interests in education, research, technology development and business development. The purpose of this strategic alliance is to strengthen mutually beneficial relationships among public and private academic, research and commercial institutions in Massachusetts, Northern Ireland and Finland.

With an initial focus in the life science and medical technology clusters, the "Parties" seek to establish a long term collaboration, involving researchers, faculty, students, and corporate partners in ways that generate and sustain strategic investments in people, knowledge and ideas in Massachusetts, Northern Ireland, and Finland and that generate globally significant impacts.

The Parties identified herein agree to the following collaborations that are hereby established upon executiion of this strategic alliance:

1. The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, the University of Tampere, the Tampere University of Technology, the University of Ulster, the Queen's University Belfast, and the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, agree:

A. to jointly establish an international exchange and industry-science relationship initiative to perform joint research, as well as to invest in technology-based ventures related to the Finnish "Human Spare Parts" project involving undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff of our partner institutions, in accordance with a general framework of understanding; and

B. to develop cooperative research projects including, but not limited to regenerative biology, biomaterials, tissue engineering, biomedical gels, nanofibrous scaffolds; and

C. to jointly pursue research funding opportunities available from targeted organizations such as the *European Regional Development Fund*, *the European Commission's Seventh Frameworks Programme*, *Tekes*, and other appropriate European and American funding sources; and

D. Implement the "Scope of Work" described in Attachment "A".

2. The Northern Ireland Massachusetts Connection, Invest Northern Ireland, , and the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center are witnesses to this alliance but are not bound by the terms of this alliance and share an interest in exploring opportunities :

A. to jointly develop a corporate partners program for industry-science relationships with leading institutions worldwide; and

B. to jointly identify and recruit key corporate partners to participate in this strategic alliance and to develop a joint research agenda with the affiliated academic partners; and

C. to identify potential funding sources for collaborative research projects; and when appropriate, consider joint investments in promising new technologies and innovations that emerge from this strategic alliance; and

D. to serve, in their respective location, as "points of contact" and provide assistance to life science companies in Massachusetts, Northern Ireland and Finland that have interested in joint research, direct foreign investment, market development and corporate partnering.

The Parties to this strategic alliance shall maintain regular communication and provide each other with the highest degree of access and coordination to the information required for the practical implementation of the cooperation by and among each other so as to prevent the duplication of services without compromising each party's confidentiality or ability to prevent conflicts of interest. The parties undertake to treat as confidential any and all information labeled as confidential or trade secret obtained from the other party within the framework of this agreement.

Any specific activity performed under the provisions of this MOU will be the subject of separate agreements. If a party informs the other parties about its willingness to negotiate a mutual research, technology development or business development agreement, the other parties shall be obligated to participate in the negotiations in a positive atmosphere and to look into the possibility of taking part in the research, technology development or business development.

At least the following points shall be specified in mutual agreements:

- the research problem to be investigated and the interface between the parties
- respective portion of the research funding;
- allocation of intellectual property rights between the parties; and
- limitation of indirect liability.

Unless otherwise agreed upon in a mutual research agreement, the intellectual property rights shall remain the property of the party, to whose portion of the research, as agreed between the parties, the invention or computer software belongs. In unclear cases, and if the invention is made as a result of joint research, the results shall remain the joint property of the parties.

This agreement shall terminate three years from the date it is executed unless it has been extended in writing by mutual agreement of the parties hereto. Any party wishing to extend the term of this must provide written notice of its desire to extend to the other parties no later than ninety (90) days prior to the expiration of this Agreement, as extended. This agreement may be extended for five (5) additional terms of three (3) years each.

The parties shall agree together about communicating to the public about this agreement

This Strategic Alliance is a statement of intent and is not legally binding upon the Parties. This Alliance shall not create legally enforceable rights and cannot be the basis of any legal claim between the Parties to this MOU.

In Witness whereof, the parties hereto have authorized their duly authorized officers to affix their signatures and seals to this alliance on this twenty-ninth day of June, 2011.

FOR:

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

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Chancellor Jean F. MacCormack

University of Tampere **Tampere University of Technology**

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Rector Kaija Holli Rector Markku Kivikoski

Tampere Institute of Biosciences and Medical Technology

_____
Director Hannu Hanhijärvi

University of Ulster **The Queen's University of Belfast**

_____ _____
Pro Vice-Chancellor Professor of Research and Innovation Norman Black Pro Vice Chancellor of Research. Professor James McElnay

VTT Technical Research Centre

_____ _____
Erkki KM Leppävuori, President & CEO Anne Ritschkoff, Executive Vice President

Witnesses:

Northern Ireland Massachusetts Connection

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Senator Therese Murray, Witness

Invest Northern Ireland

_____
Mr. John Logan, Witness

Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

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Dr. Susan Windham-Bannnister, Witness

Attachment "A"
Scope of Work

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, the University of Tampere, the Tampere University of Technology, the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland, the University of Ulster, and the Queen's University of Belfast, agree to explore opportunities for collaborative research in the area of tissue engineering with the other parties to this agreement and to implement the following Scope of Work in Year One of this Strategic Alliance:

1. Convene an initial planning meeting at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Massachusetts to prepare a joint research agenda and to finalize a schedule for faculty and student exchange; and

2. Sequentially exchange graduate students in the areas of strong gel scaffolds, cell printing and surface engineering for control of adult stem cell fate (or other topics) in order to align research programs between the participating research groups.

3. Exchange no fewer than one (1) student each way per topic between the respective institutions involved in each area for a period of exchange to be finalized during the initial planning meeting; and

4. Exchange no fewer than one (1) faculty researcher each way per topic between the respective institutions involved in each area for a period of exchange to be finalized during the initial planning meeting, and

5. Explore jointly opportunities to expand this strategic alliance by integrating other Universities, research organizations and corporations.