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## Messages & Writings : October 2010

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### Our Research Enterprise

10.07.10

Last month, the Northeastern community celebrated two major announcements that underscore the ever-growing strength of our research enterprise.

First, a partnership led by Professor Vladimir Torchilin of Bouvé College of Health Sciences secured a highly competitive \$13.5 million research award from the National Institutes of Health to establish Northeastern's new Center for Translational Cancer Nanomedicine. The award will support new approaches that reduce the time it takes for discoveries in cancer research to be transformed into treatments that save lives. It also officially designates Northeastern as a Center of Cancer Nanotechnology Excellence, further advancing our strong position in promoting use-inspired research.

In September, we also broke ground on the George J. Kostas Research Institute for Homeland Security, which will be located on our Burlington campus. Supported by a \$12 million gift from alumnus George J. Kostas, the new center will dramatically enhance our activity in the national-security research sphere, promoting new opportunities for our faculty to conduct secure, state-of-the-art research in cryptography, data security, information assurance, explosives detection, and energy harvesting.

I'm pleased to inform you of yet another major research announcement that we will formally release to the public later today.

Northeastern's Center for Renewable Energy Technology (NUCRET), led by Professor Sanjeev Mukerjee, has just been awarded six federal research awards totaling more than \$8 million. The awards, given by the U.S. Department of Energy, support projects that will propel Northeastern to the forefront of materials-science research. They include a four-year, \$6.38 million award to develop cost-effective, energy-efficient fuel cells that will power the next generation of electric cars, as well as other grants that will support the development of innovative consumer products.

These are just the latest in a series of dramatic successes for Northeastern's research enterprise. In four short years, our University has nearly doubled its receipt of research awards to \$82 million, up from \$44 million in 2006. We are an undisputed leader in research that addresses the global imperatives of health, security, and sustainability, and our strength in interdisciplinary and use-inspired research is being recognized as never before.

None of this would be possible without the outstanding work of our faculty colleagues, who have enlivened our mission to create and translate knowledge to meet global and societal needs throughout every corner of our University. From Professor Katherine Tucker of Bouvé College of Health Sciences to Professor Akram Alshawabkeh of the College of Engineering, our faculty colleagues are uncovering new insights into the factors that cause common medical conditions like heart disease and preterm births. Professor of biology Kim Lewis is unwrapping the mysteries of drug-resistant bacteria that afflict millions with tuberculosis and cystic fibrosis.

The path-breaking work of Professors Hortensia Amaro and Dolores Acevedo-Garcia of our Institute on Urban Health Research is bringing new hope to people with substance-abuse problems, providing vital mental-health services to disadvantaged children, and shedding new light on our understanding of racial and ethnic inequality in the United States. Meanwhile, faculty colleagues like Professor Ahmed Busnaina, who leads Northeastern's Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center for High-Rate Nanomanufacturing, are pioneering efforts to revolutionize the health-care and energy industries through the development of nanotechnology products that can be used in large-scale manufacturing.

This cutting-edge work is not just limited to our faculty. More than ever before, our students—both graduate students and undergraduates—are further enhancing our research enterprise through their deep involvement in our vibrant research programs. For example, dozens of students each year are charting new ground in the development of therapies to treat cancer, cardiovascular disease, and other illnesses through our Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT) nanomedicine program, led by Professor Srinivas Sridhar.

The efforts of these distinguished faculty colleagues—and so many more I could name—have been central to the transformation of Northeastern into a global research university. As we further accelerate our leadership in research this year, we will continue to chart our own distinctive path to success by aligning our research with national priorities and making bets on emerging opportunities. Most of all, our efforts will continue to embody our steadfast commitment to producing research that alleviates society's most pressing problems.

At Northeastern, our research is in tune with the world. And that is why the world is taking notice.

Joseph E. Aoun  
President

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