

UMBC News

Office of Media Relations • University of Maryland, Baltimore County

1000 Hilltop Circle • Baltimore, MD 21250 • 410-455-6380

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CONTACT: Deborah Shapiro
Marketing Manager
410-455-1509
dshapiro@umbc.edu

Columbia BioSystems Receives Key Grants

New Incubator Company Gets Support For Its Research

Columbia BioSystems, a new tenant of bwtech@UMBC's Incubator, has been awarded two important grants from the State of Maryland. The \$149,000 grant from Maryland Industrial Partnerships and the \$75,000 Maryland Technology Transfer Fund award from the Maryland Technology Development Corporation (TEDCO) are a vote of confidence in the potential of the company's research.

The company, founded in January 2008 by Robert Jones, was spun off from Raptor Detection, Inc. and moved to bwtech@UMBC in December. The company licensed Molecularly Imprinted Polymers (MIPs) technology from the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory and the University of Maryland, and is developing MIPs to detect viruses, bacteria and parasites, focusing on public health applications. Specifically, MIPs are being developed to detect nosocomial or hospital-acquired pathogens such as Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) and *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*. Columbia's research focuses on detecting these two pathogens and hopes to have its first biotech product prototypes, a spray and a wipe to detect MRSA on clinical surfaces, available by the end of the year.

The MIPs developed for the spray and wipe can also be used in a nasal swab to detect MRSA in patients in real-time at a fraction of the current cost for such tests. The company hopes to have a prototype available by the end of the year for beta or pilot testing, and eventually for general use, pending approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Previously, the company was located in Columbia at the offices of its parent company. After looking at office space at incubators in downtown Baltimore and College Park, Jones chose bwtech@UMBC for its support services and opportunities to collaborate with other life science companies. "The Incubator is a good environment for early-stage

companies. I'm impressed with the support here. It's refreshing," Jones said. He expressed confidence in his company's potential, noting that laws have been passed in many states requiring hospitals to test patients and facilities for MRSA, creating a large demand for testing tools like those Columbia is developing.

"The products Columbia BioSystems is developing have a wide range of uses," said David Fink, director of entrepreneurial services at bwtech@UMBC. "We are delighted to welcome the company to bwtech@UMBC and are pleased that the State of Maryland has recognized the potential of their research with these awards."

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About bwtech@UMBC:

bwtech@UMBC (<http://www.bwtechumbc.com>) is a 71-acre research and technology community at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). It comprises the technology business Incubator and Accelerator, home to over 30 early-stage high-tech and life science companies, and the Research and Technology Park, with a capacity of 350,000 square feet of office and laboratory space. bwtech@UMBC offers collaboration with university faculty and students, and enjoys a strategic and convenient location, close to downtown Baltimore, BWI Thurgood Marshall Airport, and Washington, D.C. bwtech's annual economic impact on the state is estimated to be over \$300 million.

About UMBC:

UMBC is a medium-sized public research university of 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students who collaborate with faculty to address real-world challenges. Located just south of Baltimore near I-95 and the BWI airport, UMBC's residential campus houses state-of-the-art facilities in the sciences, engineering, arts, social sciences and humanities. UMBC combines the energy of a research university with the close community feel and attention to individual students found in liberal arts colleges.