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Technology Transfer Office

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CU Announces Annual Technology Transfer Awards

Researchers working on biofuels, cancer treatments and addiction support among those honored for technology commercialization.

DENVER (Jan. 18, 2011) – The University of Colorado Technology Transfer Office will host its annual awards ceremony tonight, honoring six faculty researchers, two companies founded on university research, and several members of the local entrepreneurial community.

The CU Technology Transfer Office will recognize this year's honorees during a special banquet on Tuesday, Jan. 18, at 5:30 p.m. at the historic Tivoli Turnhalle. The awards will follow a panel discussion focused on the state of Colorado's venture capital community.

Over the past two decades, CU researchers have developed technologies that have led to the creation of 103 new companies. Of these, 79 have operations in Colorado, seven have "gone public," becoming publicly traded companies (either through an IPO or via a reverse merger), and 12 have been acquired by public companies. Companies created based on CU technology have attracted a total of over \$4 billion in financing.

"CU plays a big part in the economy of Colorado and the lives of Colorado's citizens, and technology transfer – the process of conveying university research inventions to companies – is one dimension of that impact," said David Allen, associate vice president for technology transfer at CU. "Most of the companies that license CU technology operate in Colorado. This event recognizes excellence in the people and licensee companies that are part of the CU technology transfer environment."

Faculty and companies recognized this year represent all CU campuses, and are developing technologies ranging from biofuels and hybrid aircraft engines to novel treatments for cancer, heart disease and eye disease.

This year's award winners at the Boulder campus include:

[Ryan T. Gill](#), Inventor of the Year, CU-Boulder. Gill, an associate professor of chemical and biological engineering, is developing new tools and applications for directed evolution of genomes. In particular, his work focuses on metabolic engineering for sustainable bio-diesel and bio-gasoline production. Technology from the Gill lab has formed the basis of [OPX Biotechnologies](#), a venture-backed Boulder company making renewable bio-based chemicals

and fuels that are lower cost, higher return and more sustainable than existing petroleum-based products.

[Jean N. Koster](#), New Inventor of the Year, CU-Boulder. A professor of aerospace engineering, Koster has done work expanding the concepts of hybrid vehicles to airplanes; his team's research is the foundation of a new company, [Tigon EnerTec](#).

Other awards:

[Malik Y. Kahook](#) and [Naresh Mandava](#); Inventors of the Year, Anschutz Medical Campus. Kahook, an associate professor of ophthalmology, and Mandava, chair of ophthalmology, work on novel treatment for eye diseases including glaucoma, macular degeneration, and retinal detachment.

Dan Theodorescu; New Inventor of the Year, Anschutz Medical Campus. Theodorescu, director of the University of Colorado Cancer Center, has demonstrated efficacy of a new class of drugs in the treatment of bladder, prostate and lung cancer and successfully formed a collaboration team to pursue new compounds to take into clinical trials.

[Rory A. Lewis](#); New Inventor of the Year, Colorado Springs. An assistant professor of computer sciences, Lewis developed a social media platform for addiction recovery that is now optioned to Syberenety, Inc., a Colorado Springs startup company which won a Phase I SBIR award to develop the technology.

[miRagen Therapeutics](#); Bioscience Company of the Year. miRagen Therapeutics (based in Boulder, Colo.) is a biopharmaceutical company focused on improving patients' lives by developing innovative microRNA (miRNA)-based therapeutics for cardiovascular and muscle disease. miRagen has raised \$12M in capital from several top-tier venture firms.

[Sundrop Fuels](#); Physical Sciences/Engineering/IT Company of the Year. Sundrop Fuels (based in Louisville, Colo.) is a solar gasification-based renewable energy company developing a technology to turn any type of plant material into ultra-clean, affordable liquid transportation fuel for use in today's automobiles, diesel engines and aircraft. In September 2009, Sundrop began operations at an 80 kW (thermal) solar research facility in Broomfield; the company plans to build a full-scale commercial plant capable of producing 100 million gallons of fuel a year by 2015. (Sundrop acquired CU licensee Copernican Energy Inc., in 2008; Copernican Energy had been founded by CU chemical engineering professor Alan Weimer.)

Lauren C. Constantini; Business Advisor of the Year. Constantini has over 15 years of experience in pharmaceutical development and is a recognized leader in the area of central nervous system (CNS); she is a frequent participant in review and strategy sessions used to move forward development of CU technologies and start-up companies.

Mikhail "Misha" Plam; Serial University Startup Entrepreneur Award. Plam has built a distinguished career on successfully bringing university innovations to market. He has founded three companies based on inventions from the University of Colorado: AmideBio, BiOptix Inc. and Sievers Instruments (acquired by GE).

James C. T. Linfield; Colorado Technology Infrastructure Leadership Award. Linfield is a partner in the Cooley LLP Business department and Partner-in-Charge of their Colorado office;

he serves on the advisory boards of numerous CU entrepreneurship and innovation initiatives, and is among the leaders promoting new initiatives and collaboration strategies in Colorado.

The CU Technology Transfer Office pursues, protects, packages, and licenses to business the intellectual property generated from research at CU. The TTO provides assistance to faculty, staff, and students, as well as to businesses looking to license or invest in CU technology. For more information about technology transfer at CU, visit www.cu.edu/techtransfer.

The University of Colorado is a premier teaching and research university with four campuses: the University of Colorado at Boulder, the University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, the University of Colorado Denver and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus. Nearly 57,000 undergraduate and graduate students are pursuing academic degrees on CU campuses. CU is ranked seventh among public institutions in federal research expenditures in engineering and science by the National Science Foundation. Academic prestige is marked by the university's four Nobel laureates, seven MacArthur "genius" Fellows, 18 alumni astronauts and 19 Rhodes Scholars. For more information, go to www.cu.edu.