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Science Center Awards \$600,000 to Researchers at Three Universities
Through QED Program

PHILADELPHIA – (December 3, 2013) – Four promising technologies are one step closer to the marketplace thanks to funding from the University City Science Center’s QED Proof-of-Concept Program. Life science and health IT researchers from Drexel University, Temple University and Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, received a total of \$600,000 through the QED program to develop a potential drug therapy for Lou Gehrig’s disease; validate a new therapeutic compound for pancreatic cancer; develop software to analyze EEG readings and guide diagnosis; and improve communications skills of health care professionals.

The four projects were selected from a pool of 65 submissions from 14 universities in the Greater Philadelphia region. For each project, half of the awarded funding is provided by the Science Center, and the balance comes in the form of a match from the researcher’s university.

Additionally, for the first time, the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC) is funding a portion of the awards for the projects at universities in Philadelphia, through Startup PHL.

The QED Program, the nation’s first multi-institutional proof-of-concept program for life science technologies, bridges the “valley of death” – the gap between research grants and commercial seed investment, by awarding grants to life science and digital health technologies with high potential in the healthcare industry.

Altogether, since its inception in 2009, QED has awarded \$3.6 million to 20 projects. Five projects have progressed to the point where the relevant technologies have been licensed. Together, these five projects have attracted more than \$9 million in follow-on funding.

“QED is shining a light on Greater Philadelphia’s innovation community and demonstrating our region’s potential and power as a technology commercialization hub,” says Stephen S. Tang, Ph.D., MBA, President and CEO of the Science Center. “We’ve found that by offering funding, business advice and guidance to exit, we can speed the progress of commercialization and help researchers succeed – or fail – faster.”

“We are excited to contribute to the growing vibrancy of the Philadelphia innovation sector by funding cutting-edge life science and digital health technologies through our investment in the Science Center’s QED program as part of the Startup PHL initiative,” says John Grady, President of PIDC, “Through Startup PHL, PIDC is increasing the availability of seed-stage capital and making Philadelphia a great environment to launch and grow new businesses.”

QED Round 6 Awardees:

- Dr. Christof Daetwyler of Drexel University College of Medicine, who is developing an online system to improve the communication skills of healthcare professionals using practice, assessment, and feedback. This project in the digital health track received business guidance from QED advisors Shawn Bridy and Aaron Moskowitz and will receive a total award of \$100,000.

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- Dr. Joseph Picone of Temple University, who is working on EEG reporting software that automatically analyzes readings and guides diagnosis. This project in the digital health track received business guidance from QED advisors Sina Adibi and Robert Solomon and will receive a total award of \$100,000.
- Dr. Samuel Gunderson of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, who is validating a new therapeutic compound for pancreatic cancer, one of the most difficult to treat. This project in the life sciences track received business guidance from QED advisors Joseph Messina and Kevin O’Neill and will receive a total award of \$200,000. This is Dr. Gunderson’s second QED award.
- Dr. Benjamin Blass of Temple University, who leads a program that is developing a potential drug therapy for Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), or Lou Gehrig’s disease as it’s popularly known. This project in the life sciences track received business guidance from QED Advisors Bozena Korczak and Don Skerritt and will receive a total award of \$200,000.

About the Science Center

The University City Science Center is a dynamic hub for innovation, and entrepreneurship and technology development in the Greater Philadelphia region. It provides business incubation, programming, lab and office facilities, and support services for entrepreneurs, start-ups, and growing and established companies. The Science Center was the first, and remains the largest, urban research park in the United States. Since it was founded in 1963, graduate organizations and current residents of the Science Center’s Port business incubators have created more than 15,000 jobs that remain in the Greater Philadelphia region today and contribute more than \$9 billion to the regional economy annually. The Science Center is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2013. For more information about the Science Center, go to www.sciencecenter.org.

About the QED Program

The QED Program was launched in April 2009. Twenty-two colleges, universities and research institutions in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware participate under a common agreement that defines matching funds and intellectual property management: The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, Delaware State University, Drexel University, Fox Chase Cancer Center, Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, Lankenau Institute for Medical Research, Lehigh University, Monell Chemical Senses Center, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Penn State College of Medicine and Hershey Medical Center, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, Philadelphia University, Rowan University, Rutgers University, Temple University, Thomas Jefferson University, University of Delaware, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, University of Pennsylvania, University of the Sciences in Philadelphia, Widener University, and The Wistar Institute.

QED has received a \$1.0 million grant from the U.S. Economic Development Administration, plus additional financial support from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania’s Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development’s “Discovered and Developed in PA” program, the Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation (PIDC), the William Penn Foundation, and Wexford Science and Technology. For more information: <https://www.sciencecenter.org/programs/qed>

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