



A*STAR, EDB partner with Stanford University to nurture next-generation Asian leaders in medical device innovation

29th JANUARY 2010 [SINGAPORE] - The Stanford University Biodesign Program is partnering with the Agency for Science, Technology & Research (A*STAR) and the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) to establish a new training program called Singapore-Stanford Biodesign. This program seeks to train the next generation of Asian leaders who can develop innovative medical devices to address Asia's growing healthcare needs.

“Stanford welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with scientists from Singapore in an effort to provide solutions to some of the biggest challenges in health care and medicine,” said Stanford University President John Hennessy, PhD, who is in Singapore today for the official launch of the program. “Through this partnership, we aim to foster innovations in medical technology in Singapore and Silicon Valley that will capitalize on the expertise that Stanford has pioneered in Biodesign.”

The Singapore program will provide a fellowship for four Asian fellows to go to Stanford for six months of training in the Biodesign process. The fellows will be based in Singapore for the remaining six months, of which at least one month will be spent obtaining first-hand experience in determining clinical needs in hospitals and clinics. They will subsequently develop solutions to address these clinical needs through new medical device technologies and bring concepts to the prototype or proof-of-concept stage. These four fellows will come from different disciplines (engineering, medicine, business) that represent key segments of Stanford's Biodesign process to invent, develop, and commercialize innovative medical devices.

“We are excited to enter this partnership with Stanford,” said Mr Lim Chuan Poh, Chairman of A*STAR. “I am confident that the opportunities presented for cross-cultural exposure and learning will do much to nurture the next generation of Medtech leaders and innovators for Asia. By fostering multidisciplinary collaborations among the engineering, clinical, scientific and entrepreneurial communities, we are opening up the space for knowledge creation and innovation to further develop and raise the capabilities and talent in the Medtech sector.”

“Singapore recognises the industry’s need to train and develop multidisciplinary teams who can translate novel ideas into viable healthcare solutions. We are delighted to be collaborating with Stanford University and A*STAR to address this demand and nurture talent who will become well acquainted with the Medtech innovation process, while being attuned to Asian clinical needs,” said Dr Beh Swan Gin, Managing Director of the Singapore Economic Development Board.

Medical technology constitutes a key part of Singapore’s biomedical sciences sector, which comprises about 4 per cent of the nation’s gross domestic product. About 600 researchers in 30 global Medtech companies are helping to put Singapore at the forefront of advances in Medtech innovation, as they seek to develop new products to address health-care needs in Asia and beyond.

“Singapore has a very mature high-tech manufacturing base and leads the region in medical research,” added Chris Shen, MD, U.S.-based Executive Director of Singapore-Stanford Biodesign and a Stanford-trained physician and venture capitalist. “What we will offer at Singapore-Stanford Biodesign is a proven methodology in innovation that starts with identifying unmet clinical needs and leads to potential therapies through the application of technology. We firmly believe innovation is a trainable process.”

Singapore-Stanford Biodesign, in partnership with the National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University, plans to launch a second component in 2011 which will allow graduate students at these universities to undertake a semester-long Innovation class. The curriculum will provide students accelerated exposure to the Medtech innovation process and a broad education in global regulatory policies, intellectual properties and various economic drivers of medical technology innovations.

“Singapore will benefit from the 10 years of experience we have in training young engineers and physicians in the Biodesign process - most importantly, by our direct mentoring of some of their most talented young innovators,” said Paul Yock, MD, Director of Stanford’s Biodesign Program. “Stanford will gain a highly effective portal to the Asian medical technology scene. Emerging Medtech innovators in the U.S. need to develop a global focus and expertise. Singapore is a terrific starting point for us in Asia.”

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About Singapore-Stanford Biodesign Program

The Singapore-Stanford Biodesign Program is a joint partnership between the Agency for Science, Technology & Research (A*STAR), the Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB) and Stanford University. Its goal is to nurture and train the next generation of Asian medical device innovators in Singapore for the global industry. For more info, please visit www.ssb.a-star.edu.sg

About the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR)

The Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) is the lead agency for fostering world-class scientific research and talent for a vibrant knowledge-based and innovation-driven Singapore. A*STAR oversees 14 biomedical sciences, and physical sciences and engineering research institutes, and seven consortia & centres, which are located in Biopolis and Fusionopolis, as well as their immediate vicinity.

A*STAR supports Singapore's key economic clusters by providing intellectual, human and industrial capital to its partners in industry. It also supports extramural research in the universities, hospitals, research centres, and with other local and international partners.

For more information on A*STAR, please visit www.a-star.edu.sg

About Singapore Economic Development Board (EDB)

EDB is the lead government agency for planning and executing strategies to enhance Singapore's position as a global business centre and grow the Singapore economy. We dream, design and deliver solutions that create value for investors and companies in Singapore. In so doing, we generate economic opportunities and jobs for the people of Singapore; and help shape Singapore's economic future.

'Host to Home' articulates how EDB is sharpening its economic development strategies to position Singapore for the future. It is about extending Singapore's value proposition to businesses not just to help them improve their bottom line, but also to help them grow their top line. EDB plans to build on existing strengths and add new layers of capabilities to enable Singapore to become a 'Home for Business', a 'Home for Innovation' and a 'Home for Talent'.

For more info about the EDB, please visit www.sedb.com/medtech

About Stanford University Medical Center

The Stanford University School of Medicine consistently ranks among the nation's top 10 medical schools, integrating research, medical education, patient care and community service. For more news about the school, please visit <http://mednews.stanford.edu>. The medical school is part of Stanford Medicine, which includes Stanford Hospital & Clinics and Lucile Packard Children's Hospital. For information about all three, please visit <http://stanfordmedicine.org/about/news.html>.