OAKLAND UNIVERSITY

Thursday, February 26, 2009

OU announces launch of Nanotech R&D Institute

*By **Dave Groves**, news editor*

Nanotechnology is seen by many as a herald of the world's third industrial revolution, and Oakland University has moved boldly to position itself on the cusp of this emerging science.

With the recent establishment of the NanoTech R&D Institute, administrators, faculty and students are expanding efforts to explore a science with an immense array of potential applications. The pursuit is seen as a virtually boundless frontier of discovery, innovation and advancement.

"That's the excitement we have in this field – that it's brand new," said T.C. Yih, vice provost for research and executive director of the institute. "Almost anything you find in your research now, no one has found it before."

Embedded in the NanoTech R&D Institute's mission is a commitment to advance knowledge and support education in nanoscale science. Functioning at the level of the atom, the conceived machines and materials of nanotechnology hold the promise of remarkable breakthroughs in a wide array of scientific disciplines.

"Dr. Yih is a nationally recognized leader and investigator in this arena," said Virinder Moudgil, OU's senior vice president and provost. He added that with Yih's leadership, the institute is well-positioned to attract support for and undertake research projects that will help shape the nanoscale revolution.

Institute members are beginning to pursue this promise through collaborative, multidisciplinary research, as well as enriched curriculum and both graduate and undergraduate student involvement. Moudgil added that highly collaborative corporate partnerships will contribute significantly to the research and development process.

The institute, for example, has received nearly $730,000 in grants and sponsorship from Octillion Corp., a Washington, D.C.-based company focusing on the development of alternative and renewable energy technologies. In addition, Nanorex, a Bloomfield Hills-based developer of tools used to design and analyze atomically precise nanosystems, has provided a $10,000 sponsorship.

"We would like to be one of the leaders in nano-biotechnology, not only here in Michigan, but in the nation," Yih explained. "This really will put our faculty members on the front line. Then I think they will be all the more competitive when they're submitting proposals for future research grants."

At the same time, the institute is likely to establish and broaden research partnerships with the School of Engineering and Computer Science, the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine, the School of Health Sciences and Oakland's business incubator, OU Inc., among others.

"We want to build on our current strengths," Yih said. "Pretty much everyone will be a player under this umbrella of nanotechnology. Everybody has a role."

As institutional and corporate relationships grow, Yih anticipates that work being done by NanoTech R&D Institute researchers will contribute significantly to advancements that capture the awe and wonder of those who benefit from them.

"This is no longer sci-fi. That's how powerful the human mind is," Yih said. "If you imagine it or dream it, you research it, develop it, build it and it becomes reality."

Noting Oakland's strengths, Moudgil added, "We are in a very good position to transform our investigative findings into real-world applications. We have the infrastructure and resources now to develop this technology and bring products to market."

Those interested in learning more about or supporting the NanoTech R&D Institute should contact Yih at (248) 370-2552 or **yih@oakland.edu**.

SUMMARY
Administrators, faculty and students are exploring a science seen as a virtually boundless frontier of technological discovery, innovation and advancement.

Created by David Groves (groves@oakland.edu) on Thursday, February 26, 2009
Modified by David Groves (groves@oakland.edu) on Thursday, February 26, 2009
Article Start Date: Thursday, February 26, 2009