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Media contact
Ms Daphne Lye
Assistant Manager
Corporate Communications Office
Nanyang Technological University
Tel : 6790 6685
H/P : 9436 1227
Email : xilye@ntu.edu.sg

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NTU SUPPORTS NATION’S DRIVE TOWARDS BECOMING NANO HUB

Nanyang Technological University’s (NTU) bid to support Singapore’s drive towards becoming a nano hub has seen progress in the launch of Nanofrontier Pte Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary which serves as a consultant and a provider of nanotechnology equipment and facilities to industry.

Two Japanese conglomerates, Mitutoyo Asia Pacific Pte Ltd (Singapore) and Sumitomo Corporation Pte Ltd will be partnering Nanofrontier to boost nanotechnology research and development in Singapore and the region.

NanoFrontier and Mitutoyo have established the NanoFrontier-Mitutoyo Nanometrology Centre, Singapore’s first nanometrology centre. This is expected to support Singapore in its drive towards becoming a nano hub by providing industry with much-needed expertise in nanometrology and access to nanomeasurement devices.

The collaboration is Mitutoyo’s first in Asia outside Japan. The collaboration will leverage on the nanotechnology and nanoscience expertise and resources resident at NTU, and Mitutoyo’s experience in nanometrology as the world’s largest manufacturer of precision measuring instruments.

NanoFrontier and Mitutoyo will also collaborate on the development of a nanomeasurement device called a nanoprofiler with the semiconductor and wafer sectors in mind. When developed, this precision measuring tool will be able to take nano measurements of components without making physical contact with
the components. For NanoFrontier, this is an opportunity to play a leading role in the field of nanometrology in Singapore and later, give industry the competitive nano edge through access to such equipment.

Says Mr Kazusaku Tezuka, President of Mitutoyo Corporation Japan, “We are pleased to be in partnership with NTU’s NanoFrontier and are confident that our partnership will further Singapore’s aim to be a nano hub. NanoFrontier and Mitutoyo will show industry the immense benefits they stand to enjoy by moving from the micro to the nano level. Our centre is in an excellent position to help industry capitalize on nanotechnology to enhance their processes as well as to develop next-generation products and services. We invite members of industry to draw on the broad spectrum of expertise at our centre and to tap the state-of-the-art facilities and equipment available.”

On another front, NanoFrontier will also establish a strategic alliance with Sumitomo Corporation for novel research leading to commercialization of innovative products using nanoscience and nanotechnology. For example, the collaboration will look into introducing single-wall carbon nanotubes to enhance the properties of materials.

Mr Masao Tetsuya, Managing Director of Sumitomo Corporation (Singapore) Pte Ltd is excited at the prospects of the alliance. He says, “Our alliance looks forward to helping industry realize the strategic benefits of nanotechnology, which has significant economic significance. New methods and solutions in manufacturing and fabrication processes and brand new nanomaterials can be achieved through this cutting-edge technology.”

Says Assoc Prof Bryan Ngoi, Director of NanoFrontier Pte Ltd, “The Singapore government has identified nanotechnology as a new engine of growth for Singapore’s industries. NanoFrontier is pleased to play an integral role in helping Singapore become a nanotechnology hub and helping Singapore industries reinvent and renew themselves by staying in the forefront of this new frontier through strategic partnerships with such esteemed collaborators as Mitutoyo and Sumitomo. NanoFrontier can play this pivotal role by capitalizing on NTU’s robust capabilities and resources for nanotechnology research and development, its strong links with industry and its expertise in bringing technological innovations to commercial fruition.”

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister For Community, Youth and Sports and Second Minister For Trade and Industry, said, “Today’s launch of NanoFrontier reflects Singapore’s concerted efforts to develop nanotechnology-enabled products and applications. Recognising the great potential of this technology, Singapore is positioning itself to be a hub for the development of nanotechnology applications, which will bring the promise of the laboratory into the market. This includes building up a larger and stronger nanotech community to encourage collaborations between researchers, industry and academia."
NanoFrontier and the NanoFrontier-Mitutoyo Nanometrology Centre will both be launched on 13 May 2005 by Dr Balakrishnan. Minister and Deputy Head of Mission of the Embassy of Japan, Mr Kenichi Suganuma, will also grace the launch. Coinciding with the launch will be two signing ceremonies. NanoFrontier is signing a Memorandum of Agreement with Mitutoyo to establish the NanoFrontier-Mitutoyo Nanometrology Centre and undertake research and development projects in nanotechnology. NanoFrontier is also signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Sumitomo Corporation to formally acknowledge their strategic alliance in the research and commercialisation of innovative products using nanoscience and nanotechnology.

About NanoFrontier Pte Ltd
NanoFrontier Pte Ltd is a wholly-owned entity of NTU Ventures Pte Ltd, the commercial arm of Nanyang Technological University (NTU). It was set up in October 2004 with the support of the Economic and Development Board, to serve as a consultant and provider of nanotechnology equipment and facilities to companies wishing to capitalise on nanotechnology to develop next-generation products and services.

NanoFrontier Pte Ltd is located within NTU’s Nano-Cluster, a dedicated university-wide network of research centres to provide an interdisciplinary environment to conduct nanotechnology research and development. The Nano-Cluster currently house some $200 million worth of nanotechnology-related equipment, and engages about 125 faculty members from NTU’s diverse disciplines.

About Nanyang Technological University
Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is an established international institution in tertiary education.

Our university has a distinguished lineage with roots that go back to 1955. We began as Nanyang University, a private university set up with donations from people of all walks of life, from Singapore and the region. The university grounds, Yunnan Garden Campus, was donated by the Hokkien Clan Association as part of this campaign.

We were reborn as Nanyang Technological Institute, established on the same campus in 1981 with government funding to educate practice-oriented engineers for the burgeoning Singapore economy. In 1991 we became Nanyang Technological University with the absorption of the National Institute of Education.

Today, we are a research-intensive university ranked among the top 50 universities in the world. We have a strong engineering college ranked among the best globally, a business school with one of the top 100 MBA programmes in the world, an internationally acclaimed National Institute of Education, one of the best communication and information schools in Asia, and a biological sciences school at the forefront of Singapore’s life sciences initiative.
Undergraduate enrolment will swell from 17,500 to 23,500 with the establishment of three new schools – the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Art, Design and Media, and School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences.

A traditional strength of the university is the high employment rate and high remuneration received by its graduates. The university is now in the process of realising its New Undergraduate Experience initiative with a comprehensive curriculum, wide choices of options for students, vibrant campus life and international experience. Strong international relationships and collaboration programmes is a hallmark of the university. This includes the Singapore-MIT Alliance, Singapore-Stanford Partnership, Cornell-Nanyang Institute of Hospitality Management, Singapore – University of Washington Alliance in Bioengineering, Global Immersion Programme with Peking University, Tsinghua University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, University of Washington and Georgia Institute of Technology, among many other programmes in US, China, India, Japan and Europe.

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