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NTU collaborates with Mayo Clinic in biomedical research
- Collaboration is a first for a Singapore university and Mayo clinic

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has scored a first for Singapore in collaborating with the world-famous Mayo Clinic in the USA in the field of biomedical research. The two institutions aim to derive joint patents and go into product commercialisation and industrial start-ups.

In a good start, NTU’s School of Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) and Mayo Clinic’s College of Medicine are already working on a project to develop nanoparticles to transport drugs or genes to cancer sites in the body. Such a project has significant relevance in the global search for new and effective cancer therapy methods.

Current cancer treatments like chemotherapy and radiotherapy destroy both cancerous and healthy cells. As therapies, these have only incremental room left for improvement. Hence the search for alternative therapies.

The two main alternative cancer therapies currently being researched around the world include a form of therapy that uses biological techniques involving viruses; and a form of therapy that uses non-biological techniques involving targeted drug delivery. Both present disadvantages. Biological techniques may weaken the body’s resistance, while non-biological techniques are not very efficient in cancer targeting.

The therapy being developed by NTU and Mayo Clinic overcomes these setbacks because it combines biological and non-biological techniques. With
Mayo Clinic being a hospital, it is possible that the process of clinical trials may even be hastened.

Says Dr Stephen Russell, Director of the Molecular Medicine programme at Mayo Clinic College of Medicine: “We are very excited to partner NTU for collaborative work in biomedical research. MSE’s research expertise in nanomaterials is a perfect combination to our cancer research as the world goes in search of new effective cancer therapy methods. We hope that this tie-up will lead to exciting new innovations in this field and bring new hope to cancer patients.”

Adds Professor Freddy Boey, Dean, of NTU’s MSE: “This is an exciting collaboration, a first for Singapore in the field of biomedical research and between a Singapore University and Mayo Clinic. Mayo Clinic’s expertise in cancer research coupled with MSE’s expertise in nanomaterial properties make for an excellent combination of strengths. I am confident the tie-up will pave the way towards world-class research and biomedical innovations that will benefit mankind, especially in the area of cancer therapy.”

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on 15 May 2006 between NTU and Mayo Clinic.

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About Nanyang Technological University

Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is a research-intensive university with globally acknowledged strengths in science and engineering. The university has a beautiful garden campus and a distinguished lineage with roots that go back to 1955.

NTU’s 12 schools span diverse disciplines – from engineering and the sciences to art, design and media. The university has a strong engineering college focused on innovation, 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. The Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies is a world authority on terrorism issues.

Ranked among the top 50 universities in the world, NTU has in place multi-country programmes and initiatives, many established through its strategic alliances with 300 institutions in more than 45 countries, including Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, California Institute of Technology, Cornell University, Cambridge University, and Beijing University.

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