Singapore, 29 October 2004

NTU collaborates with strategic partners to develop a Drug Discovery Centre

The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is developing the Drug Discovery Centre at its School of Biological Sciences by collaborating with strategic partners. One such partner is China’s premier institutions for drug research, the Institute of Materia Medica (IMM) of the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences.

NTU’s Dean of the School of Biological Sciences, Professor James Tam, and IMM’s Director, Professor Wang Xiaoliang, will sign a Memorandum of Understanding today, 29 Oct 04, to promote co-operation between the two institutes. The agreement outlines the general areas of collaboration such as tapping IMM’s collections of natural products compounds and Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) extracts for collaborative projects at the Drug Discovery Centre, conducting joint research programs, arranging visits by and interchange of staff and graduate students for research, teaching and research collaborations.

“NTU and IMM have strong expertise in their respective areas of research that are complementary to one another. At NTU’s School of Biological Sciences, our international
faculty has diverse expertise in the research of disease areas such as cancer and immune and neurological disorders, as well as in research technologies such as bioinformatics, genomics and medicinal chemistry. IMM on the hand, is internationally-known for its strength in drug R&D, especially in the field of natural products research. So with this collaboration, we are confident of generating maximum value both in research output and in the training of investigators for the future generation in the field of drug R&D”, says Professor Tam.

IMM’s Professor Wang agrees, “The main task of IMM is to search for new drugs to treat common life-threatening diseases such as cancer, neurological disorders, cardio-and cerebral vascular diseases. By collaborating with NTU’s researchers who have wide-ranging expertise in various areas of life sciences, as well as tapping NTU’s global network of strategic partners we hope to be able to push the envelope of research in drug R&D in the area of TCM.”

Researchers from NTU and IMM, as well as from another one of NTU’s strategic partner, the Waseda-Olympus Research Institute in Singapore, are setting up screening assay systems to test which are the active compounds in herbal medicines that are able to fight diseases such as anxiety, depression and Alzheimer’s disease. This is one of the proposed programs of the Drug Discovery Centre. The other programs include cancer, inflammation, infectious diseases, and ageing.

The Drug Discovery Centre at NTU’s School of Biological Sciences aims to foster the entrepreneurship spirit of its students and faculty by translating basic research advances into practical clinical solutions. The centre is established for the practice of world-class basic biomedical research and the rapid application of the discoveries from this research to the study, diagnosis and treatment of human diseases.

The centre also fits into the overall strategy to complement the teaching component and clinical demonstrations of the dual degree program which will be offered jointly by NTU and the Beijing University of Chinese Medicine (BUCM) in 2005. The five-year undergraduate program leads to the award of a Bachelors of Science (Biomedical Sciences) from NTU and a Bachelors of Chinese Medicine by BUCM.
Already, existing undergraduates pursing their Bachelors of Science (with Honors) degrees at NTU’s School of Biological Sciences can take up electives in the medicinal aspects of TCM in their final year curriculum.

**About Nanyang Technological University**

The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) is a top-tier university, ranked among the best science and technological universities in Asia. It has a business school that is consistently ranked among the top ten in Asia.

With an international faculty of over 1,500 and an undergraduate and graduate enrolment of about 25,000, NTU positions itself as a global university of excellence and is committed to its mission of *Educating Leaders and Advancing Knowledge for Singapore and Beyond*.

NTU is on its way to becoming a comprehensive university by 2005 with the setting up of three new Schools – the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, the School of Art, Design and Media, and the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences. The university offers a broad-based curriculum, which focuses on the development of global views, entrepreneurship and adaptability, through the following schools:

1. College of Engineering, which consists of five schools:
   - Civil and Environmental Engineering
   - Computer Engineering
   - Electrical and Electronic Engineering
   - Materials Engineering
   - Mechanical and Production Engineering
2. Nanyang Business School
3. School of Biological Sciences
4. School of Communication and Information
5. School of Humanities and Social Sciences
6. School of Art, Design and Media (*to be established by 2005*)
7. School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences (*to be established by 2005*)

For more information, visit [http://www.ntu.edu.sg](http://www.ntu.edu.sg)

**About Institute of Materia Medica, Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences**

Institute of Materia Medica (IMM), Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, is one of the premier institutions for drug research in China. Founded in 1958, the Institute employs more than 500 scientific and technical staff, including more than 100 professors and associate professors, three members of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and two members of the Chinese Academy of Engineering.

The main task of the Institute is searching for new drugs for the treatment of common life-threatening diseases, such as cancer, cardio- and cerebral vascular diseases,
inflammatory and immunological disorders, hepatitis and other viral infectious diseases, and neurological disorders. It is also a postgraduate institution for the education and training of Master and PhD students as well as postdoctoral researchers.

For more information, visit http://www.imm.ac.cn/