

PRESS RELEASE

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Life Science companies and researchers steal the show at the 2012 Innovation & Enterprise Awards

Singapore, 20 April 2012 – The winners for this year’s Innovation & Enterprise (I&E) Awards, which are co-organised by NUS Enterprise and the National University of Singapore Society (NUSS), are all within the life sciences sector. This demonstrates the role of the National University of Singapore (NUS) in boosting the sector’s vibrancy, as well as its potential to contribute towards the global healthcare scene. There were two winners under the Promising NUS Start-up Award – BioMers Pte Ltd and Clearbridge BioMedics Pte Ltd; and one winner from the Outstanding NUS Innovator Award – a husband-wife team consisting of Professor Ding Jeak Ling from the Department of Biological Sciences of the NUS Faculty of Science and Associate Professor Ho Bow from the Department of Microbiology of the NUS Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine. Now into its second year, the I&E Award aims to recognise individuals and companies within the NUS community, who have achieved significant accomplishments in entrepreneurship and innovation in Singapore in recent years.

BioMers and Clearbridge BioMedics each received \$100,000 in prize money, which they can invest back into the company, and a trophy. The team consisting of Prof Ding and Assoc Prof Ho received \$10,000 in prize money and a trophy. These prizes were given out by Professor Tan Eng Chye, NUS Deputy President (Academic Affairs) and Provost, at The Enterprise Connection Gala Dinner, held today at the Orchard Hotel. Please refer to the Annex for details on the eligibility criteria, judging guidelines and judging panel.

“We established the I&E Award with the objective of inspiring and motivating other young entrepreneurs and innovators within the NUS community. This is the second year that we have organised this award and we are very pleased to see a huge improvement in the quality of nominations. The judges were impressed with the fact that both BioMers and Clearbridge BioMedics have translated technologies from laboratories in NUS into fully-commercialised products, and that Prof Ding Jeak Ling and Assoc Prof Ho Bow are internationally-known for their work with the “Factor C” enzyme, and their ecological contributions in helping to save horseshoe crabs. My heartiest congratulations to all the winners,” said Prof Wong Poh Kam, Director, NUS Entrepreneurship Centre, and co-chair of the I&E Award Organising Committee.

“NUSS is very proud to be a co-organiser of the I&E award. This initiative gives our alumni and the NUS community an opportunity to showcase and publicise their achievements as entrepreneurs and innovators to the wider community,” said Dr Joshua

Kuma, Director PSB Academy, who was also the co-chair of the I&E Award Organising Committee, on behalf of NUSS.

The Innovation & Enterprise Award winners

The Promising NUS Start-up Award is for innovation-based ventures in Singapore, which have some NUS linkage. The winners were selected for the following reasons:

BioMers – This medical device company uses a patented manufacturing process for the fabrication of novel polymer composite products with orthodontic applications. Its flagship product is SimpliClear, the world's only completely translucent orthodontic braces system that can be used to treat a wide range of teeth misalignment cases. The SimpliClear Full solution was launched in 2010 and since then BioMers have recruited over 130 orthodontists in the U.S., Spain and Singapore. Some 500 patients have benefited from the SimpliClear solution. BioMers was established in 2005 as an NUS spin-off company, licensing a technology that arose from a research project between the Faculty of Dentistry, National University Health System (NUHS) and Department of Mechanical Engineering. BioMers plan to spend their prize money from the I&E Award to digitise the ordering process of SimpliClear. This will help to streamline their processes, improve the customer experience and hasten the product lead time.

Clearbridge BioMedics – Launched in 2010, this medtech company is developing microfluidics-based research tools and *in-vitro* diagnostics for the detection of circulating tumour cells (CTCs). This has applications in drug discovery, cancer research, cancer management and patient care. Within 18 months of incorporation, Clearbridge BioMedics developed the ClearCell system, which comprises of the CTChip and the ClearCell unit. The CTChip is a disposable biochip that isolates, enumerates and retrieves CTCs, and this biochip runs on the ClearCell unit. Clearbridge BioMedics launched the ClearCell system earlier this year, for the research market. The company has also achieved ISO13485 certification for the development of cell-based *in-vitro* diagnostic devices. Clearbridge BioMedics intends to use the I&E Award prize money to further accelerate the development of its next-generation microfluidics biochips. This will allow the company to access a wider number of applications in life sciences and medical diagnostics, capitalising upon the growing interest from the medical community in adopting microfluidic approaches to tackle diagnostic challenges.

The Outstanding NUS Innovator Award is open to NUS staff/ ex-staff, students or alumni who have made innovations in recent years that have generated significant commercialisation value or social impact. The winning team was selected by the I&E Award judges for the following reason:

Professor Ding Jeak Ling and Associate Professor Ho Bow – Horseshoe crab blood clots when it comes into contact with bacteria due to presence of an enzyme called 'Factor C'. This phenomenon has been used by the pharmaceutical industry to test the purity of sterilised medical equipment or human injectable products for presence of bacterial endotoxins. Factor C has been traditionally purified directly from horseshoe crab blood. The award-winning NUS team developed a recombinant-DNA based system to produce active Factor C enzyme in the laboratory. The recombinant Factor C or 'rFC' enzyme produced by NUS technology reacts with bacteria and endotoxins at extremely low levels and is more stable and chemically-consistent than the natural form. Using rFC

enzyme means horseshoe crabs, which are an endangered species, do not have to be bled. This technology has been licensed exclusively to Swiss multinational Lonza. The NUS technology is incorporated into several Lonza products in endotoxin detection kits and in an online endotoxin monitoring system. This license commenced in 2000 and licensing revenues will continue till the patent expires in 2018. A related technology based on Factor C derived 'sushi peptides' has been licensed to US-based company BioDtech Inc., which has commercialised the technology to make products for the removal of bacterial endotoxins from pharmaceuticals /fluids. The patent for this technology will expire in 2020.

These awards were given out at The Enterprise Connection Gala Dinner, a networking dinner attended by some 300 entrepreneurs, innovators and investors. It is an event under InnovFest 2012, and enables entrepreneurs, inventors and other stakeholders within NUS Enterprise's global network to connect and share ideas. During the evening event, a panel discussion focused on "Start-up Survival; Struggles, Setbacks and Successes". The panelists were founders/ CEOs of start-up companies from around the world – James Tan (55tuan, China), Amit Anand (Jungle Ventures, India) and Per Palmer (Comaea International AB, Sweden).

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About NUS Enterprise

NUS Enterprise is a University-level cluster that provides an enterprise dimension to NUS teaching and research involving the University's students, staff and alumni. The functions of the Enterprise Cluster complement the academic cluster of the University to nurture talents with an entrepreneurial and global mindset. NUS Enterprise promotes the spirit of innovation and enterprise through Experiential Education, Industry Engagement & Partnerships and Entrepreneurship Support. For more information, visit www.nus.edu.sg/enterprise

About the National University of Singapore Society (NUSS)

NUSS is the foremost graduate club with more than 15,500 graduate members from NUS and other universities. Officially established in 1954, NUSS has undergone several revisions in name – the University of Malaya Society (1954), the University of Singapore Society (1962) and finally the National University of Singapore Society (1981), as it is known today. In promoting the interests of its members and NUS, NUSS continually fosters a lifelong relationship with NUS and the wider graduate community. With an extensive network of graduates frequenting its four Guild Houses in Kent Ridge, Suntec City, Adam Park and Bukit Timah, NUSS endeavours to provide its members with networking opportunities with fellow graduates and professionals, as well as premium social, recreational and dining facilities. For more information on NUSS, please visit www.nuss.org.sg.

Annex – Eligibility Criteria and Judging Guidelines

Outstanding NUS Innovator Award

To be eligible, nominees must be NUS staff/ ex-staff, students or alumni. In addition, they should have been involved in the licensing or commercialisation of innovations in recent years. Entries for this award must be nominated by a third party.

The judging guidelines are as follows:

- Commercialisation of licensed innovations in the recent years.
- Financial returns
- Innovativeness of innovation(s)
- Commercial impact
- International recognition
- Social impact

Promising NUS Start-up Award

To be eligible, the companies should be innovation-based ventures, as well as be located within Singapore. They should also have some NUS linkage, including utilising NUS technology, being founded by NUS staff/ ex-staff, students or alumni, or being incubated by NUS. The company should also be revenue generating. Nominations for this category must be submitted by a member of the companies' senior management team.

The judging guidelines are as follows:

- Degree of innovation in the product/ service
- Validation of business model
- Scalability and growth potential
- International recognition
- Social Impact

Panel of judges for the I&E Award

- Dr Lily Chan, CEO NUS Enterprise
- Mr Lucas Chow – Executive Director, Far East Organisation
- Prof Hang Chang Chie, Head Division of Engineering & Technology Management, Faculty of Engineering, NUS
- Mr Gay Chee Cheong, Chairman Radcliffe Invertron Pte Ltd
- Ms Janet Ang, Managing Director IBM Singapore
- Ms Koh Soo Boon, Managing Partner, iGlobe Partners

Members of the Organising Committee

- Prof Wong Poh Kam, Director NUS Entrepreneurship Centre (co-chair)
- Dr Joshua Kuma, Director PSB Academy (co-chair)
- Mr Tong Hsien Hui, CEO National University of Singapore Society
- Mr Yeo Keng Joon, NUS Business School Advisory Board member
- Ms Irene Cheong, Director NUS Industry Liaison Office, NUS Enterprise