



For Immediate Release

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Cancer and heart disease drug discovery company is latest spin-out from the University of Southampton

A new spin-out company from the University of Southampton is aiming to make the treatment of cancer and heart disease more patient friendly.

Chemist Dr A. Ganesan from the School of Chemistry, cancer scientist Dr Graham Packham and heart biologist Dr Paul Townsend from the School of Medicine have come together to create Karus Therapeutics, a company that plans to develop novel drugs known as histone deacetylase (HDAC) inhibitors to treat cancer and heart disease.

There has been intense interest in industry in HDAC inhibitors, which can slow abnormal cell growth, cause controlled cell death and/or correct abnormal cell differentiation in tumours. The next generation products to be developed by Karus are expected to offer patients a potent and less toxic treatment than their predecessors.

'Karus Therapeutics builds on highly successful academic collaborations between different disciplines at the University,' said Dr Packham. 'There have always been strong links between chemistry and medicine and, if we work together and combine our knowledge, we can achieve great things.'

The new spin-out has received £750,000, a record level of joint seedcorn funding from IP2IPO, the early stage technology transfer specialists, and the SULIS fund, a seed fund owned by the Universities of Southampton, Bath and Bristol. It is the 15th company to be spun out of the University of Southampton since 2000, two of which have already listed on the London Stock Exchange.

Commenting on the formation of the new company, David Norwood, Chief Executive of IP2IPO said: 'This is potentially a world leading technology in an important therapeutic area.'

Dr Tony Raven, Director of the University of Southampton's Centre for Enterprise and Innovation (CEI), said: 'The launch of Karus Therapeutics demonstrates our continued success in developing high quality research into high quality commercial opportunities. The excellence of our chemistry, cancer and heart specialists combined with the business expertise and acumen in the CEI, and funding opportunities from IP2IPO and SULIS all contribute to an enviable track record in commercialisation.'

Notes to editors

1. The University of Southampton is a leading UK teaching and research institution with a global reputation for leading-edge research and scholarship. The University has around 20,000 students and nearly 5,000 staff. Its annual turnover is in the region of £270 million.
2. The SETsquared Partnership is a collaboration between the four universities of Bath, Bristol, Southampton and Surrey. With a research base of 6,500 scientists and researchers and 8 per cent of the UK's research budget, the Partnership has a vital role to play in the development of the UK knowledge economy, It acts as a catalyst and as a support for enterprise, equipping graduates for business success and providing businesses with research, consultancy and a mentor network.
3. The Centre for Enterprise and Innovation (CEI) is the focus of entrepreneurial activity within the University of Southampton. Formed in September 2000, the office encourages and supports enterprise activity across the whole university including enterprise education for students and businesses, consultancy for industry and the commercialisation of university intellectual property through the creation of start-up companies and licensing. Since 2000, the CEI has encouraged the start-up of over 25 student and arts-based businesses, supported consultancy transactions across the university and helped spin out 14 companies, two of which floated on the Alternative Investment Market of the London Stock Exchange in 2004.
4. IP2IPO is an intellectual property (IP) company that specialises in commercialising university technology. The Company was founded in 2001 and listed on the AIM Market of the London Stock Exchange plc in October 2003. IP2IPO's first partnership was with the University of Oxford. In March 2002, IP2IPO entered into a second long-term partnership with the University of Southampton. Under the terms of this partnership, IP2IPO is committed to working with the University of Southampton in the identification and facilitation of spin-out companies from across the University of Southampton and to investing £5 million in early-stage University of Southampton spin-out companies over a four year period in return for equity stakes in those companies. In addition, IP2IPO also received a 20 per cent stake in Southampton Asset Management Limited, a company that has been formed to hold the University's equity stakes in its spin-out companies. The partnership has a term of at least 25 years.

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