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Seven Virginia Universities Sign Groundbreaking Agreement to Share Resources to Enhance Collaborative Research

Institutions focus on more advanced collaboration to drive solutions to the world's most pressing human health challenges

RICHMOND, VA – July 11, 2017 – Seven academic research institutions in Virginia have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to share core facilities and resources in an effort to advance life sciences and other areas of research in the Commonwealth. This initiative will accelerate the commercialization of Virginia's innovations, creating more high potential start-up companies, producing many more high-paying jobs, and growing the Commonwealth's biosciences economy. The Vice Presidents for Research from the University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Eastern Virginia Medical School, George Mason University, Old Dominion University, Virginia Tech and William & Mary, working together with Virginia Catalyst, have achieved a breakthrough in collaborations that will greatly increase Virginia's competitiveness nationally and globally.

The universities have agreed to provide reciprocal access to shared R&D resources. The institutions have individually made significant investments to acquire specialized equipment and establish unique research laboratories to support basic, translational and clinical research. To further enhance the availability of these existing resources, the institutions seek to share, in an economical manner, specialized technical services and access to equipment and expertise for research purposes.

The memorandum will be reviewed biannually and could be amended at those times. Other state institutions are also encouraged to become signatories of the MOU.

Virginia Biosciences Health Research Corporation, now known as the Virginia Catalyst, is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation funded by the Virginia General Assembly's general fund and seven of Virginia's research universities. The organization has now awarded 24 grants totaling \$10 million, combined with \$20 million in matching funds, which financed the achievement of meaningful milestones. This then resulted in follow-on funding of an additional \$80 million and the creation of high-paying jobs throughout the Commonwealth.

Supporting Quotes

“Virginia’s institutions of higher education are committed to working together to enhance the competitiveness of research in the Commonwealth, while sharing resources to improve efficiency. This MOU enables us to achieve both of those goals by formalizing our collaboration.” – **University of Virginia President Teresa A. Sullivan**

“The research officers of VCU and our sister institutions have crafted an unprecedented agreement that will enhance research across the Commonwealth's universities. In doing so, it effectively leverages state resources that are frequently used to create and maintain these shared resource core facilities.” – **Michael Rao, President of Virginia Commonwealth University**

“Eastern Virginia Medical School has a history of collaborative research that addresses healthcare disparities and the medical priorities of our community and the Commonwealth. We welcome this opportunity to expand collaboration in biomedical research with our partner universities.” – **Richard V. Homan, President and Provost, Dean of the School of Medicine, Eastern Virginia Medical School**

“George Mason University is delighted to join with its sibling institutions to share research facilities and expertise that will advance the Commonwealth’s leadership in the knowledge economy. This agreement reflects our deep commitment to work together to advance our shared mission and goals.” – **President Ángel Cabrera of George Mason University**

“Old Dominion University has long been a proponent of collaboration, in disciplines from flooding-resiliency to cybersecurity. We are happy to be part of this effort, which will maximize the ability of all institutions to conduct cutting-edge research to address the Commonwealth's most important priorities.” – **Old Dominion University President John R. Broderick**

“Virginia Tech is proud to be part of this unique research agreement and we applaud the spirit of cooperation and collaboration it represents. Virginia’s research institutions are doing remarkable things to improve lives and energize the Commonwealth’s economy, and when we work together, the sky’s the limit.” – **Virginia Tech President Tim Sands**

“William & Mary hopes and expects this agreement to share resources will heighten the efficiency of each participant’s efforts and the excellence of research done in the Commonwealth. Effective collaboration can bear rich fruit for us all.” – **William & Mary President Taylor Reveley**

About the Virginia Catalyst

The mission of Virginia Biosciences Health Research Corporation (VBHRC), known as Virginia Catalyst, is to advance life sciences throughout Virginia as a means of addressing large unmet medical needs to improve human health and to create high-paying jobs throughout the Commonwealth. Funded by the Virginia General Assembly’s General fund, the University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia Tech, Eastern Virginia Medical School, George Mason University, Old Dominion University, and William and Mary, Virginia Catalyst has funding opportunities to support collaborative projects in the Commonwealth and is home to the Virginia Neuroscience Initiative. For more information, visit www.virginiacatalyst.org.

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