
Microproducts Breakthrough Institute has new home

A Hewlett Packard donation of laboratory and office space near Oregon State University for a 3-to-5-year period has put the Microproducts Breakthrough Institute closer to reality.

The institute, created last January as a formal collaboration of OSU and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, works with organizations to conduct micro-technology research and develop microchemical or microenergy products for specific applications. It offers both graduate and undergraduate students an opportunity to get real-world experience in a research environment.

The HP donation means the institute is now three years further along in its planning than expected, according to co-directors Landis Kannberg of PNNL and Kevin Drost of OSU. "When we hosted the 'virtual groundbreaking' in January, we predicted we'd have a bricks-and-mortar facility in three years," said Kannberg. "This gives us tremendous momentum to reach our goal of a \$20 million business for the MBI by 2006."

The HP donation, valued at \$2 million, was given to OSU for the Signature Research Center for Multi-Scale Materials and Devices, which will focus on developing nano- and micro-scale materials and devices. The HP facility will house the center's OSU headquarters, administrative offices and conference spaces until a permanent center can be built.

The Microproducts Breakthrough Institute will have laboratory, assembly and project capabilities collocated with OSU researchers in the HP facility. The center also will provide lab and office space for industry product development in micro devices. "Collocation with private industry will be critical for us to take the microtechnologies we are developing and move them to commercial products," said Kannberg.

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski announced the donation, calling it an important step in Oregon's economic future. "This will allow us to capitalize on the incredible research going on at our universities," Kulongoski said.

"We consider this type of cooperation a model for economic growth in our region, and the right way to build a great scientific community in the Northwest," said Rod Quinn, PNNL associate laboratory director for the Environmental Technology Directorate. ■