



R.I. offers science grants

The state hopes to encourage hospitals and universities to team up to develop research that could one day form the basis for new companies.

01:00 AM EDT on Wednesday, October 11, 2006

BY ANDREA L. STAPE
Journal Staff Writer

PROVIDENCE -- Governor Carcieri's Science and Technology Advisory Council has created a statewide program to distribute \$1.35 million in financing to researchers, the latest step in a drive to improve the state's science and technology sector.

The Rhode Island Research Alliance, a part of STAC, will be responsible for distributing the state money to new collaborative science and technology research projects. The alliance is focused on supporting projects proposed by groups of researchers from different organizations.

The goal is to encourage the state's hospitals and universities to team up to develop research that could attract additional financing from the federal government and corporations, said Jeff Seemann, co-chairman of STAC, and dean of the College of Environmental and Life Sciences at the University of Rhode Island. Eventually, the research could form the basis for new companies, adding jobs and economic activity to the state.

It's a "statewide platform" for creating "innovative and analytic partnerships," Seemann said during a STAC meeting at the State House yesterday.

STAC was created by Carcieri in 2005 to study Rhode Island's science and technology industry in comparison with other states and to develop a strategic plan for retaining scientists, encouraging company creation and fostering innovation. The council recommended during the last fiscal year that the state set aside money specifically for collaborative research.

Applications for grant money will be accepted from Nov. 1 to Nov. 15. The awards will last one year, and will be no larger than \$200,000 each, according to STAC.

Applicants must be working on projects that have the potential to be commercialized and will contribute to the state's economic development, according to STAC. In addition, to be eligible for consideration, researchers from two separate institutions must submit the funding application. Applicants must prove that input from both organizations is necessary to conduct the research and that neither institution could achieve results on its own, according to STAC.

This financing is part of a \$1.5-million pool of money which was allocated by the state in fiscal 2006 to match a \$6.75-million federal grant Rhode Island received from the National Science Foundation. The NSF grant from the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research is intended to help the state's research hospitals and higher-education institutions work together to develop greater life science research

capacity.

The Research Alliance will use \$1 million of the state aid to fuel new collaborative research projects. It will award \$350,000 to support research done as part of the EPSCOR program. The remaining \$150,000 will be used to support the operations of the Research Alliance, said Seemann.

STAC is now planning its recommendations for 2007, with the help of a new co-chairman -- Clyde Briant, Brown University's vice president for research and an engineering professor. Briant replaces STAC's former co-chairman Andries van Dam, who was also Brown's vice president for research. He stepped down from both positions earlier this year to focus on research and teaching, according to STAC.

In addition to Seemann and Briant, advisory council members include: Joseph Amaral, president of Rhode Island Hospital; Kimball Hall, vice president and general manager of the Rhode Island operations for [Amgen](#); Paul Choquette Jr., chairman of Gilbane Construction; David Hibbitt, chairman of Hibbitt, Karlsson & Sorensen; Saul Kaplan, deputy director, Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation; Margaret Leinen, assistant director for geosciences, National Science Foundation; Richard Nadolink, former chief of technology at the Naval Undersea Warfare Center; Thomas Rockett, governor for higher education and vice provost emeritus, University of Rhode Island; Thomas Ryan, chairman and CEO of [CVS](#); Cheryl W. Snead, president and CEO of Banneker Industries; and Donald Stanford, president of Stanford Scientific.

astape@projo.com / (401) 277-7269

Online at: http://www.projo.com/business/content/projo_20061011_stac1011.2ad8990.html