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Personalized Medicine Center of Innovation (PMCOI) By organizing and leveraging the state's capabilities, resources and investments in personalized medicine and providing an organizational framework under which the stakeholders can come together, the NC Personalized Medicine Network (NC PMN) will be creating a plan to establish North Carolina as a national leader in the discovery, translation and clinical implementation of personalized medicine.

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The North Carolina Biotechnology Center is a private, non-profit organization located in Research Triangle Park (North Carolina, United States). Founded in 1984 by the North Carolina General Assembly, it was the first state-sponsored biotechnology initiative in the United States, merging the interests of the academic private and public sectors.[1] The North Carolina Biotechnology Center's mission is to provide long-term economic and societal benefits to North Carolina through support of biotechnology research, business, education and strategic policy. It receives nearly all of its funding from the North Carolina General Assembly.

Since 1984, the North Carolina Biotechnology Center has invested more than \$187 million in state monies to develop biotechnology statewide. It is not a site for laboratory research or company incubation, but it works to strengthen the research capabilities of North Carolina's companies and universities.

In 1981, the North Carolina Biotechnology Center was created by the North Carolina General Assembly.[2] At that time, the state's General Assembly appointed a legislative study commission to determine how North Carolina could ensure long-term economic benefits from biotechnology. A yearlong study by the commission concluded that North Carolina needed a private, non-profit organization dedicated exclusively to biotechnology development.

North Carolina Biotechnology Center Don't miss out on NCSU Poole College of Management's 9th Annual Biosciences Forum taking place tomorrow at NCBiotech. Featured speakers include executives from Metabolon, Purdue Pharmaceuticals and Quintiles. Registration is FREE but required to attend. <http://ar.gy/5Q4B>

The result of this multi-faceted partnership is an innovative \$1-billion flu vaccine facility in Holly Springs, N.C., covering 430,000 sq. ft. (39,947 sq. m.) and employing 400 workers. Expected to be fully operational in 2013, the plant will be equipped to produce 150 million doses of pandemic influenza vaccine within six months.

"As a company with global operations, Novartis makes decisions about where to locate facilities and employees based on a number of factors," says Liz Power, spokesperson for the company, reputation and issues management for Novartis Vaccines & Diagnostics, based in Cambridge, Mass. "As a major center for biotechnology innovation, North Carolina provides an exciting environment for companies engaged in the discovery, development and manufacture of life-saving and enhancing treatments for patients. In addition, North Carolina has proven to be a good place to recruit and retain top talent."

Of the 400 Novartis workers in Holly Springs, 300 are local hires. "Novartis also made a commitment to helping to develop the work force of the future in North Carolina," says Power. "The company is a partner with North Carolina State University's BTEC program and the BioNetwork community college program."

BTEC, which stands for the Golden LEAF Biomanufacturing Training & Education Center, is located on the Centennial Campus of N.C. State in Raleigh. Executives at Novartis and leaders at the North Carolina Biotechnology Center say that BTEC was one of the fundamental drivers of the entire Novartis site selection process.

"BTEC provides a trained work force at both the undergraduate and graduate level, and we also provide specialized training for the industry including FDA inspectors," says Dr. Ruben Carbonell, director of BTEC. "Around seven or eight years ago, biomanufacturing was really growing tremendously in North Carolina. Companies got together with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center and got the Legislature to provide funding for specialized training for biotech firms. So BTEC really grew out of the need in the industry to have a work force available to them."

BTEC provides hands-on training on the same equipment that students will use on the job. "This minimizes the training that companies have to do internally," says Carbonell. "The construction of BTEC was a \$39-million investment, and that helped pay for a lot of equipment. We opened in July of 2007 and built this facility around the current best practices in the biotech industry."

BTEC offers courses in bio-reactors, purification, regulatory issues, and analytical issues like quality analysis and quality control. "In the first year we were open, we had 100 or so students," says Carbonell. "This year, we will have over 600 students go through the program, and we will have another 400 workers from companies go through training here."

BRITE is the result of a close collaboration between academia and industry, Love says. "We look at what our clients need," she says. "The goal of North Carolina is to put in place this very industry-focused training. What makes us different is that the Golden LEAF Foundation (funded by tobacco lawsuit settlement dollars) stepped up and put the money on the table to help the Department of Commerce put these programs in place."

BRITE recruits its faculty from private industry. "That is very profound," Love says. "People in education are now teaching from a solid industry background. They have worked as researchers at large biotech and pharmaceutical companies. Our students are learning the exact same technologies that they teach in the industry."

"We work with the many colleges around the state, determine what their needs are and then customize training that is specifically tailored for each company," says Drabble. "We have trained 3,240 people so far this year in the 204 courses that we offer that are specific to the life-sciences industry. A good portion of those students are incumbent workers who are employed at a life-science firm in North Carolina. The North Carolina Community College System is the vehicle

through which we administer this training."

"We were asked a couple of years ago to provide annual training to a company," he says. "The FDA had imposed some stringent training requirements on them. They approached us around Thanksgiving and said they needed to train 586 employees by Dec. 31. We trained all 586 workers through four classes required by the FDA. We started training them on Dec. 2 and finished on Dec. 11. We can respond quickly, and we have no limits on the number of people we can accommodate."

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