



Professor William Gallagher, a leading cancer biology researcher in UCD's School of Biomolecular and Biomedical Science, was yesterday presented with the NovaUCD 2011 Innovation Award. The Award was presented by Dr Hugh Brady, President, University College Dublin (UCD) to recognise Professor Gallagher's ongoing successes in the commercialisation of intellectual property arising from UCD research programmes.

Currently 1 in 3 people in Europe and the US will develop cancer at some point during their lifetime. This rate is expected to increase over the coming years due to an aging population in the economically developed regions of the world. While the management of cancer patients has improved significantly, the availability of reliable biomarkers, or indicators, of the therapeutic response of patients to cancer treatments and their prognosis is a key outstanding issue.



A major focus of Professor Gallagher's research at UCD has been on the identification and validation of candidate biomarkers of breast cancer and melanoma and the translation of his research results into clinically relevant assays or tests which can help to improve the quality-of-life of cancer patients.

His research has to date resulted in the formation of a UCD spin-out company, OncoMark, currently employing 12 people at NovaUCD, 7 invention disclosures, 5 priority patent applications, 1 executed license with another license pending.

Professor Gallagher established OncoMark in 2007 with Stephen Penney to support cancer drug development through tissue-based biomarker development and validation.

The company has already secured over €3.5 million in research funding from European Framework 7 (FP7) Programmes and has embarked on its own biomarker discovery programme whilst also in-licensing technologies for validation and product development. OncoMark, which also provides digital pathology and tissue processing services to pharma and biotech industry, plans to double its workforce at NovaUCD by 2013.

On presenting the NovaUCD 2011 Innovation Award to Professor Gallagher, Dr Hugh Brady, President, UCD said, "William Gallagher is an absolute dynamo and epitomises everything this university is trying to achieve in terms of translating high-quality scientific discovery into patents and ultimately, commercial innovations. This Award acknowledges him as an excellent role model to young scholars and academics as he combines excellence in teaching and in research with a strong commitment to and track record in innovation and the successful commercialisation of his research-generated intellectual property for the benefit of society and the economy." He added, "I would like to congratulate him and wish him continued success."

Professor Gallagher has secured over €17 million in research funding as principal investigator within University College Dublin from Science Foundation Ireland, the Irish Cancer Society, the Health Research Board of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and the European Commission.

Professor Gallagher is co-ordinator of a large-scale FP7 collaborative project, entitled RATHER, which is focused on providing new rationalised therapy options for difficult-to-treat breast cancer subtypes. This €6 million project involves 6 academic groups and 2 industrial parties, including Agendia, a Dutch molecular diagnostics company, across 5 European countries.

Dr Pat Frain, Director, NovaUCD congratulating Professor Gallagher on receiving the 2011 NovaUCD Innovation Award said, "Given the strength of the pipeline of invention disclosures and patents that William is generating, it is reasonable to assume that his efforts will result in further commercial success in the years ahead."

Professor Gallagher is also co-ordinator of the Target-Melanoma consortium, which in 2009 received over €1.7 million in funding as part of the Marie Curie Industry-Academia Partnerships and Pathways Programme. The focus of Target-Melanoma, which involves 7 partners (5 academic and 2 industrial partners, including Cellix, a TCD spin-out company) from across 5 European countries, is to identify and validate novel molecular determinants of melanoma progression.

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