



News

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Philadelphia University Receives \$1.25 Million Grant to Establish the Pennsylvania Advanced Textile Research and Innovation Center

PHILADELPHIA, July 29, 2008 – The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) through the Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority awarded \$1,255,500 to Philadelphia University to establish the Pennsylvania Advanced Textile Research and Innovation Center (PATRIC). A collaboration of Philadelphia University, Drexel University and the Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Southeastern Pennsylvania, PATRIC will be located at and administered by Philadelphia University.

The primary goal of PATRIC is to provide leading-edge expertise in research, development and testing of advanced material systems – primarily textiles – that support industrial growth in a range of biomedical and human protection applications. The Center will promote the development of technologies and commercialization through applied research driven by the needs of an initial group of eight industry partners within the Commonwealth. Additional partnerships will be formed with companies throughout the northeast U.S.

“We are extremely pleased that DCED has provided this funding to launch PATRIC and appreciative of the work put into this proposal by Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Southeastern Pennsylvania,” said Philadelphia University President Stephen Spinelli, Jr. “It will enable us to further advance innovative textiles research and technology development and will support applied textile research that is not being conducted anywhere else in the United States, giving Pennsylvania industries a clear, competitive advantage.”

RoseAnn B. Rosenthal, president and chief executive officer of Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Southeastern Pennsylvania, said, “We are proud to work with Philadelphia University and Drexel University to create the Pennsylvania Advanced Textiles Research and Innovation Center. The unique capabilities of PATRIC and the partnership it puts in place will be of tremendous value to companies in Pennsylvania and across the country.”

PATRIC will focus primarily on three areas of advanced textiles research and technology development: nanofiber technology for biomedical devices, human comfort interactions with protective textile systems and the identification of toxic agents in consumer textiles and apparel.

“Philadelphia University’s textile program was the first of its kind in the United States and we were pioneers in the field of medical textiles, having developed the first bifurcated aortal graft,” said Jeffrey D. Senese, vice president for academic affairs at Philadelphia University. “It is fitting that we are spearheading this important new textile research program and establishing a Biomedical Textiles Structures Laboratory.”

In collaboration with medical researchers, the Biomedical Textiles Structures Laboratory will focus on the development, testing and support of basic research in biomedical textile devices using a variety of nanofiber platforms and applications.

“An exciting concentration will be in the area of nanotextile structures and their impact on advanced tissue engineering,” said David Brookstein, dean of Philadelphia University’s School of Engineering and Textiles. “This area holds tremendous potential for the development of new technologies for Pennsylvania industries.”

Philadelphia University is a worldwide leader in state-of-the-art textiles research. The Laboratory for Engineered Human Protection (LEHP) provides testing and application reviews relating to comfort, wearability and performance of advanced textile and apparel systems. LEHP is working with the U.S. Department of Defense to study the relationship between comfort and protection, including wearer performance, for U.S. military personnel.

The University’s Institute for Textile and Apparel Product Safety was established in fall 2007 to research, test for and advise on appropriate regulatory oversight relating to the prevalence of toxic materials used in the production of textiles and apparel. Its mission includes working with firms to identify and mitigate the use and application of toxic agents in their products. In testing so far, Institute researchers have found elevated levels of potentially harmful formaldehyde in children’s clothing and brominated resins in children’s car seats.

“Philadelphia University will be working in partnership with other colleges and universities, and other Keystone Innovation Zones and applied researchers will be added as the program develops,” Senese said. “By providing textiles structures and advanced fibrous materials technologies, PATRIC will be a proving ground for new industries in Pennsylvania, as well as significantly expanding the economic opportunities for existing companies.”

Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,350 full- and part-time students enrolled in more than 50 undergraduate and graduate programs. As part of its core mission, the University focuses on professionally oriented programs that prepare students for successful careers, with a strong foundation in the liberal arts and an orientation toward interdisciplinary cooperation. Philadelphia University includes Schools of Architecture, Business Administration, Design and Media, Engineering and Textiles, Liberal Arts, and Science and Health.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Southeastern Pennsylvania is the region's catalyst for stimulating entrepreneurial potential. Ben Franklin invests in innovative enterprises and creates commercialization pathways that generate wealth through science and technology. Part of a statewide network in Pennsylvania, BFTP/SEP provides entrepreneurs and established businesses with the "Capital, Knowledge and Networks" to compete in the global marketplace. BFTP/SEP has provided more than \$130 million to grow more than 1,600 regional enterprises. BFTP/SEP is a founding partner of The Nanotechnology Institute™ (NTI), Mid-Atlantic Nanotechnology Alliance (MANA®), Emerald Stage2 Venture Fund and the Minority Angel Investor Network. BFTP/SEP is part of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Ben Franklin Technology Partnership.