Eppendorf Partners with the BETC

Eppendorf supplies New Brunswick bioreactors and scientific expertise to support the center’s growing biomanufacturing training programs.

Large scale laboratory at the BETC

Eppendorf, a global life science products company, has signed a three-year partnership agreement with the Biomanufacturing Education and Training Center (BETC) at Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI).

Under the agreement, Eppendorf will supply three of its New Brunswick bench-scale bioreactors, a CEPA continuous-flow centrifuge, a New Brunswick CO2 Incubator, and other equipment for use in the BETC’s small-scale laboratory. Engineers and scientists from Eppendorf will work with BETC staff on program development and training support. In addition, a limited number of Eppendorf customers, referred to WPI by the company prior to registration, will qualify for discounted tuition for BETC programs.

“I am so pleased to welcome colleagues from Eppendorf as partners at our center,” said Kamal Rashid, PhD, director of the BETC and a research professor at WPI. “I have had the pleasure of collaborating with talented people from Eppendorf for many years, and I know this new partnership is an important addition to the BETC that will enhance our ability to provide the highest quality and most relevant training experiences for our students.”

Eppendorf president and CEO Mike Sattan

Eppendorf Inc. president and CEO Mike Sattan will serve on the BETC’s advisory board. “We are proud to support this partnership with the BETC,” Sattan said. “Eppendorf is a global leader in the life sciences industry, with strong ties in the bioprocessing area, and this program at WPI will provide a valuable resource for our customers. We look forward to collaborating with the BETC’s biomanufacturing program team and we are very excited about this initiative.” Eppendorf Inc. is a subsidiary of Hamburg, Germany-based Eppendorf AG.

Funded in part by a grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, the BETC, which opened at WPI’s Gateway Park in Worcester in May 2013, has large- and small-scale bioprocessing areas for both microbial fermentation and mammalian cell culture production. The center also features support labs and classrooms integrated with industry-standard process areas for equipment preparation, buffer and media preparation, product
capture, purification, and analytics. It is equipped with single-use technologies as well as traditional autoclavable and stainless steel process equipment.

The BETC curriculum now spans 11 programs, including upstream and downstream processes, designed to help current biomanufacturing employees improve and expand their skills. The center works closely with biomanufacturers to develop and deliver customized hands-on programs that support their specific business needs. The BETC also offers open-enrollment, nonproprietary programs for individuals in the industry seeking to advance, as well as a fundamentals course designed for people seeking entry to the field. Biomanufacturing companies affiliated with the center include AbbVie (formerly Abbott Laboratories), Biogen-Idec, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Pfizer, and Shire Human Genetic Therapies.

Biomanufacturing uses living cells to produce medicines—often called biologics or biopharmaceuticals. Biologic drug development is the fastest-growing segment of the therapeutics industry, and a particular strength in the Northeast. WPI created the BETC to help the industry grow by expanding the qualified workforce available to biomanufacturers, and by helping companies train, and re-train, their employees at a state-of-the-art center, removed from their own production facilities.

“For more than 20 years, WPI has partnered with companies for bioprocess optimization projects and to deliver educational programs in the life sciences and business management, so we have seen the evolution of the biomanufacturing industry up close,” said Stephen Flavin, vice president for academic and corporate development at WPI. “This important new partnership with Eppendorf is the latest example of how academia and industry are working together at WPI to foster economic growth and innovation and to create opportunities for people.”

In addition to the workforce development mission of the BETC, the center is also a resource for graduate and undergraduate education at WPI.

**About Eppendorf**

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