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**Big 12 “Rising Star” Scientists to be Honored at
Big 12 Innovation and Capital Formation Conference**

Innovation Showcase Will Feature Top Technologies Under Development at Universities

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (Feb. 26, 2007) — Twelve distinguished scientists from Big 12 universities will be honored as “Rising Stars” at the Big 12 Innovation and Capital Formation Conference being held March 1, 2007 at the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation in Kansas City, Mo. These scientific “super stars” are leading some of the most promising technologies under development on Big 12 university campuses and their expertise ranges from metabolic engineering to chemical engineering and animal and food sciences.

“Brilliant minds at Big 12 universities are developing technologies that can shape the region’s economic future, and we are thrilled to honor these leading scientists,” said Ron Kessler, a founder of Big 12 CEDIC. “At this conference, these innovators will be matched with the best thinking in commercialization and capital formation strategy so that they might serve as economic engines for future growth in this region.”

The Conference is designed to boost collaboration among Big 12 universities, foundations, state governments, and private sector businesses as a means to encourage and foster innovation-driven economic development in the central United States. The Conference is the inspiration of lifelong civic entrepreneurs and policy advisors Pike Powers and Ron Kessler and will provide a constructive format for venture capitalists to advise leading university scientists and business advisors on the commercialization strategies for some of the most promising innovations under development on these 12 campuses.

The Big 12 “Rising Star” scientists being honored include:

- Baylor University: Ian Gravagne — Electrical engineering, mechatronics
- University of Colorado at Boulder: Ryan Gill — Metabolic engineering, directed evolution and genomics
- **Iowa State University: Surya Mallapragada — Chemistry and biomolecular materials**
- University of Kansas: Joseph Tash — Medicinal chemistry and proteomics
- Kansas State University: Kristan Corwin — Atomic, molecular, and optical physics
- University of Missouri: Peter Sutovsky — Animal sciences and reproductive physiology
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln: Yiqi Yang — Biological systems engineering and advanced materials from natural fibers
- University of Oklahoma: Daniel Resasco — Chemical engineering and heterogeneous catalysis
- Oklahoma State University: Jim Smay — Chemical engineering and solid freeform fabrication processes

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- University of Texas: S.V. Sreenivasan — Mechanical engineering and nano-resolution lithography
- Texas A&M University: John Criscione — Biomedical engineering and biomedical devices
- Texas Tech University: Mindy Brashears — Animal and food sciences

Additionally, 12 “Big 12 Heroes” also will be recognized at the Conference during an awards banquet hosted by former U.S. Representative University of Nebraska-Lincoln head coach Tom Osborne. These heroes represent leaders who have encouraged innovation in the respective Big 12 communities. The “Big 12 Heroes” honorees include:

- Baylor University: Mark Hurd, chairman of the board, CEO, and president of Hewlett-Packard
- University of Colorado at Boulder: R.C. “Merc” Mercure, co-founder, Ball Aerospace and Technologies Corporation
- Iowa State University: John Pappajohn, pioneering venture capitalist, Pappajohn Capital Resources
- University of Kansas: Valentino Stella, distinguished professor of pharmaceutical chemistry
- Kansas State University: Bill Sanford, executive founder and retired chairman of the board, president and CEO of Steris Corporation
- University of Missouri: Greg Steinhoff, founder, Option Care of Columbia; director, Missouri Department of Economic Development
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln: John Brasch, founder, Senior Technologies, Inc.; Director, Technology Development at the University of Nebraska
- University of Oklahoma: Skip Porter, University of Oklahoma Regents professor of engineering; former president and CEO, Houston Advanced Research Center
- Oklahoma State University: William Spears, founder, Energy Education, Inc.
- University of Texas: Laura Kilcrease, founder and managing director, Triton Ventures LLC; founding executive director, Austin Technology Incubator
- Texas A&M University: Guy Diedrich, co-founder of GRA, Inc.; vice chancellor for technology commercialization, Texas A&M University System
- Texas Tech University: Dick Auld, Rockwell professor of plant genetics and breeding

The conference also will include an *Innovation Showcase* featuring presentations of 36 innovations rated as having strong commercialization potential by university technology transfer offices, as well as structured input from panels of venture capitalists and intellectual property experts on their commercialization strategies. This *Innovation Showcase* will cover topics on animal health, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, information technology, clean energy, and emerging technology.

Sponsors already committed to support the March 1 event include: The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation; Sonnenschein, Nath, & Rosenthal; AT&T; Global Green Energy; Fleishman-Hillard Inc.; Kansas Technology Enterprise Corporation; Vantage Learning; SAIC; Shook, Hardy, & Bacon; Fulbright & Jaworski LLP; Kansas City Area Development Council; Invest Midwest; Advanced Micro Devices (AMD); Kansas City Power & Light; Ponca City Development Authority; and Events Plus. Also sponsoring are the universities of the Big 12 Conference: Baylor University; University of Colorado at Boulder; Iowa State University; University of Kansas; Kansas State University; University of Missouri-Columbia; University of Nebraska-Lincoln; University of Oklahoma; Oklahoma State University-Stillwater; University of Texas at Austin; Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University.

For more information about the event, please visit www.Big12CEDIC.com.

About the Big 12 CEDIC

The Big 12 CEDIC—Center for Economic Development, Innovation, and Commercialization— is the experimental organization tapped with the responsibility to explore the methods by which a cooperative of 12 universities in seven states could deliver positive and cost-effective economic outcomes for the shared region. The Big 12 CEDIC was conceived to support universities and their leaders through structured collaborations that leverage the brand and the spirit of athletics. Pike Powers and Ron Kessler, noted “civic entrepreneurs” who have defined their careers by facilitating effective economic development collaborations between business, government, and university sectors in the Midwest, are leading the initiative.

About the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation of Kansas City is a private, nonpartisan foundation that works with partners to advance entrepreneurship in America and improve the education of children and youth. The Kauffman Foundation was established in the mid-1960s by the late entrepreneur and philanthropist Ewing Marion Kauffman. Information about the Kauffman Foundation is available at www.kauffman.org.

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