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U.Va. Spinoff Neoantigenics Announces Collaboration with Pfizer, Investment from CIT to Develop Antibody-based Therapeutics For Cancer

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Neoantigenics LLC, a new biotechnology company founded on discoveries made by Dr. John Herr at the University of Virginia **School of Medicine**, announced today it has entered into an early-stage research and development collaboration with Pfizer Inc.

The collaboration is focused on the development of antibody-based therapeutics and companion diagnostics targeting Neoantigenics' proprietary oocyte-associated biomarkers, which are selectively expressed on a wide array of human cancers.

In addition to scientific engagement between Neoantigenics and Pfizer's scientific teams, Pfizer is making an equity investment in Neoantigenics through the Pfizer Seed Fund, which supports promising earlystage life science companies. The investment is part of a round that included an investment from the Center for Innovative Technology's GAP Fund and an award from the Commonwealth Research Commercialization Fund.

"Our collaboration with Pfizer supports the unique foundational science behind Neoantigenics, and demonstrates an innovative way for start-ups like us to effectively work with a leading pharmaceutical company," said Brian A. Pollok, founding CEO for Neoantigenics and Entrepreneur-in-Residence at **U.Va. Innovation**.

"UVA Innovation is pleased to have worked with Pfizer, CIT, Neoantigenics' management and with Dr. Herr to help create a unique funding model to launch this company," said Michael P. Straightiff, director of **U.Va. Licensing & Ventures Group**.

Herr, Neoantigenics' scientific founder and inventor of oocyte-associated cancer targets, said the partnership with Pfizer is an important step in further advancing research that his School of Medicine team began in the 1990s.

"Our discovery of oocyte-specific membrane proteins, coupled with an understanding that certain cancers express genes normally restricted to growing eggs, provides Neoantigenics with a platform strategy to develop biological drugs that are tumor-selective," he said.

"This partnership reflects Pfizer's commitment to supporting cutting edge science that has promise for patients with cancer and other diseases," said Ron Newbold, Pfizer's vice president for external R&D Innovation.

Pete Jobse, president and CEO of the Center for Innovative Technology, said, "this investment is representative of the strong pipeline of early stage companies that are produced from research conducted in the commonwealth

of Virginia. CIT is pleased to invest in companies founded on leading-edge research such as Neoantigenics, which is developing new ways to detect and treat cancer."

U.Va. supported Herr's team's research that led to these discoveries through the Wallace H. Coulter Translational Research Partnership Endowment and a grant from the **Paul Mellon Urologic Oncology Institute** at the **U.Va. Cancer Center**. "A key element of our mission at U.Va. Cancer Center is to support research that may lead to potential breakthrough treatments for a range of cancers," said Dr. Thomas Loughran, the center's director.

Collaborations among departments at the School of Medicine have been vital to development of the technology licensed to Neoantigenics by U.Va. Innovation's Licensing & Ventures Group, which helps U.Va. research discoveries reach the marketplace, Herr said.

"The science behind this discovery is impressive. The Mellon Institute and the Urology Department have been proud to support Dr. Herr's innovative research," said Dr. William Steers, who chairs U.Va.'s **Department of Urology.**

About Neoantigenics LLC

Neoantigenics, a privately held oncology biotechnology company located in Charlottesville, was established in July 2012 to advance the research and development of novel research findings of Dr. John Herr on oocyte proteomics. Neoantigenics holds an exclusive license from U.Va. Licensing & Ventures Group to the intellectual property of Herr on oocyte-associated biomarkers in the cancer field. The company is actively advancing both monoclonal antibody agents to these biomarkers, as well as molecular diagnostic assays for precision, personalized medicine.

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