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Intel donation advances medical research

A donation of equipment from Intel to Arizona State University will put sophisticated technology to an entirely new use that could result in earlier, less costly diagnosis of disease.

A long-standing supporter of ASU research and programs, Intel donated equipment, which has a market value of more than \$2.3 million. The majority of the equipment will be used by ASU's Biodesign Institute on promising research that aims to detect illness before there are any symptoms of the disease.

"One of the remarkable aspects of this generous donation is that it provides an entire suite of sophisticated equipment, allowing us to make a dramatic leap in capabilities," said Dr. Neal Woodbury, deputy director of the Biodesign Institute.

Key components of the equipment were originally designed for the fabrication of computer microchips. Now, Biodesign researchers will repurpose it to make "peptide chips." Each chip will have millions of protein fragments on its surface. The concept is that a tiny sample of blood – like that used in diabetic testing – would be put in contact with the chip. The goal is a comprehensive snapshot of the patient's immune system called an immunosignature. Assuming a home-based test kit would be developed enabling the test to be run every month or so, this would enable detection of disease at its earliest stage – even before there are symptoms, improving the chance of effective treatment.

"ASU is a great research institution, and its engineering and science programs are becoming the cornerstones for the advancement of new technologies," said Nasser Grayeli, vice president of Intel's technology and manufacturing group and director of its Corporate Quality Network. "In the past few years, Intel and ASU have collaborated on a wide range of activities and programs, including manufacturing sciences, packaging, wireless and now, biodesign. We enjoy our interaction with ASU students, faculty members and administrators. We look forward to a strong, continued cooperation in areas of mutual interest."

Intel has a long history of support for a broad range of ASU programs and initiatives, particularly in the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering's fields of computer science and biomedical informatics, to name a few. The equipment will be housed in a dedicated facility at ASU's Polytechnic campus.

Polytechnic's Department of Engineering Technology also received another piece of equipment, a coordinate measuring machine (CMM) for 3-D part models measurement, which junior-level mechanical and manufacturing engineering technology students will use.

According to Scott Danielson, an engineering technology chair at ASU, this piece of metrology equipment is something the program could never afford to purchase on its own and is invaluable to student learning.

"This CMM provides extremely accurate measurement for the quality-control step in product development," he said. "The students' access to this equipment greatly increases their real-world exposure to metrology. Our metrology laboratory is unique within ASU and its high quality is, in large part, due to Intel's generosity."

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