



University scoops biotech awards

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13 March 2007, Professors Bill Denny and Bill Wilson, of the University's Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre, were named joint Biotechnologist of the Year at a dinner held last night, in conjunction with NZBio's annual conference. Their research looks at developing new drugs to treat cancer, and in 2004 was the founding science behind Proacta Therapeutics, a spin-off company from the University. Earlier this year, Proacta raised \$US35 million in venture capital for furthering research into cancer treatments.

University spin-out company CoDa Therapeutics received the inaugural Deal of the Year Award for its development over the past year. The company, which develops drugs for treating wounds, was founded on the science of Professor Colin Green from the University's Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences. Over the past year the company appointed Brad Duft as CEO of San Diego-based CoDa Therapeutics Inc and closed a financing round of US\$20 million.

PhD student Steven Wu, who studies bioinformatics at the School of Biological Sciences, was awarded the first prize in the student poster competition held at the NZBio conference. University of Auckland students accounted for around half of the posters entered into the competition.

School of Biological Sciences Director Professor Joerg Kistler says the University's success at last night's awards highlights its strength as a key player in New Zealand's biotechnology sector.

"The University's biotechnology programme is making progress towards developing treatments for major diseases such as cancer and diabetes. It is also proving itself in the international market, making an increasing contribution to the local economy."

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