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Clemson, GHS incubator set to hatch this fall

(http://scbiznews.s3.amazonaws.com/1304960743-Patewood_011.jpg) **In today's print edition:** The Clemson University Bioengineering Translational Research Center at Greenville Hospital System will be a testing ground for start-up companies to develop medical devises and other technologies. For more in depth coverage, subscribe to *GSA Business* here (https://www.gsabusiness.com/subscriptions) .

By Chuck Crumbo
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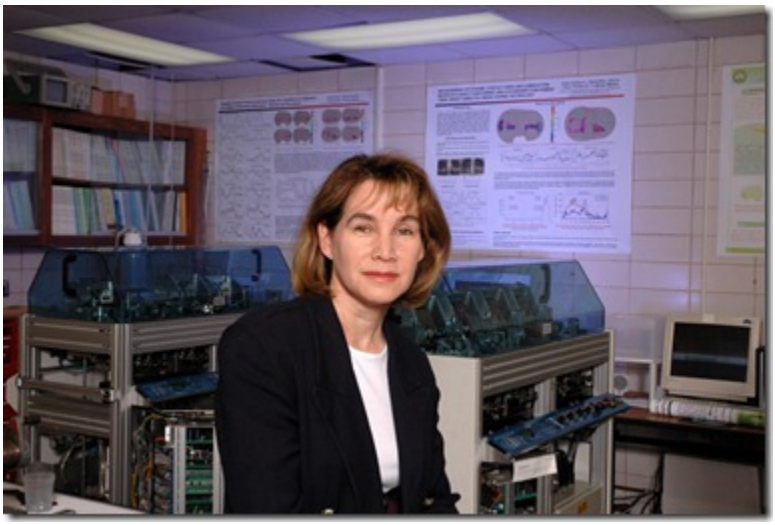
The Clemson University incubator program for companies entering biomedical and bioengineering research should be open for business this fall at Greenville Hospital System University Medical Center.

Although details for the business program are still being worked out, school trustees on April 15 approved lease-outs for lab and office space in Clemson's Bioengineering Translational Research facility to research partners and companies.

Neither the school nor the hospital named companies negotiating for space in the incubator, which is on the fourth floor of the Patewood Medical Campus.



(http://scbiznews.s3.amazonaws.com/1304960745-LaBerge.jpg) "We haven't completed agreements for the companies that will be housed in the incubator," said Martine LaBerge *(pictured at left)*, Clemson professor and chairwoman of the bioengineering department. "The facility won't be ready until the fall semester, and the ink is not yet dry on the term sheet approved by the board of trustees, so we won't expect to have those agreements until later this year."

The companies will be involved in the research and development of biomedical devices and technology, LaBerge said.

“Patewood will give them a truly unique environment with access both to cutting-edge research in the field and to its practical application in a patient setting,” LaBerge added. “That's really the heart of what translational technology is all about.”

Being at Patewood will benefit the fledgling firms, she added. That's because the Upstate already is home to 50 companies that made medical devices.

Also, the area was listed in a recent report by Battelle, an independent research and development organization, as one of the six emerging medium-sized regions in the United States for the medical device industry.

“Incubating start-ups in biomedical device and technology is a natural outgrowth of that environment,” LaBerge said.

(http://scbiznews.s3.amazonaws.com/1304962397-Gene-Langan.jpg) Eugene M. Langan III *(pictured at left)*, chairman of the GHS surgery department, said the hospital is “excited about working with Clemson University as well as working with future partners in the incubator.

“This bioengineering initiative will lead to breakthroughs in patient care as well as have a direct impact on our local economy,” Langan added. “It will have tremendous benefit for the Upstate.”

While the university prepares to launch the incubator program, there's plenty of research being done by Clemson scientists, engineers, teachers and students at the Patewood campus, LaBerge said.

Right now, work is concentrated on orthopedic, regenerative medicine, translational biomaterials, and bio-imaging facilities, which provides ultrasound equipment for teaching and research.

Research at Patewood is aimed to help contain and even bring down the cost of health care and at the same time improve cost-effectiveness, quality and accessibility, LaBerge said.

Additional work from the university will be moved to the Patewood campus this year and by August plans call for having shared facilities for medical device evaluation, including implant histopathology – microscopic study of tissues for causes of disease – plus a training facility for reprocessing and recycling of medical devices, LaBerge said.

“This is a fast-growing field where engineers can use their skills to reduce health care costs and decrease waste,” she said. “Patewood will enable us to educate engineers to respond to the needs of this emerging field.”

After receiving $3.5 million from the state, the university agreed in 2007 to lease space for 15 years at Patewood to research and develop orthopedic and cardiovascular devices, improve methods of rehabilitation and performance and analyze trauma data.

The center includes research laboratories, a bio-imaging facility, medical library, faculty offices, a conference room, and a Center for Vascular Disease Diagnosis and Management.

Clemson, the Greenville Hospital System and the Orthopedic Research Foundation of the Carolinas, representing the Steadman-Hawkins Clinic of the Carolinas, are core partners in the center, according to a Clemson press release.

Several corporate partners have initially invested more than $5 million in the project, the release added. Those firms are London-based Smith and Nephew, Ziehm Imaging of Germany, Agfa Healthcare of Greenville, and Virturad of Phoenix.

Clemson and the Greenville Hospital System have a “symbiotic relationship” at Patewood, Laberge said.

“I think it's important to view our partnership in the larger terms of what is happening in the industry at large,” she added.

Such relationships are key to developing a health-care delivery system in the 21st century, she said.

“We are fortunate to have the kind of relationship with GHS that will allow us to capitalize on the strengths of our bioengineering faculty – and students – and on the expertise of the physicians at GHS.”

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