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INNOVATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION

March 4, 2026

OHSU Innovates



LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

OHSU has a long tradition of taking ideas to impact, and this spring we are highlighting innovative work happening across the institution. We are excited to share our latest [annual report](#), which showcases how we are strengthening Oregon's innovation community, supporting new clinical ventures, empowering innovators and advancing health care through research and collaboration.

We also invite you to the [2026 OHSU Innovation Awards](#) happening next week. The celebration honors innovators and offers an opportunity to connect with peers, colleagues and the OHSU Innovates staff. With many events on the horizon this spring, including OHSU Innovation Day, the Oregon Drug Discovery Symposium and the Oregon Innovation Showcase, it's an excellent time to engage with the people and ideas driving advancements at OHSU and across the region.

This year's awards recognize individuals who have built OHSU's innovation tradition. Among them is Brian Druker, M.D., recipient of the 2026 Career Innovation Excellence Award, who played a key role in the development of the medication Gleevec, now celebrating its 25th year. Gleevec transformed chronic myeloid leukemia from a once-fatal disease into a manageable condition and helped launch the era of precision medicine.

Our team is grateful to facilitate innovation and collaboration at OHSU and to support regional economic development. We look forward to celebrating these achievements and sharing the next generation of ideas that advance health care, improve lives and strengthen Oregon's innovation ecosystem.

Travis and Aditi

Travis Cook, M.S., M.B.A, CLP
Senior Director, Technology Transfer

Aditi Martin, Ph.D.
Senior Director, Collaborations and Entrepreneurship

FEATURED STORY

Explore the OHSU Innovates 2025 impact report



Check out the fiscal year 2025 impact report to learn how OHSU is fueling Oregon's innovation ecosystem by launching new clinical ventures, championing innovators, celebrating leaders in medical advancement, advancing women's health and spotlighting breakthrough research and technologies.

[Read the report.](#)

FEATURED NEWS

OHSU named a Rare Disease Center of Excellence by NORD

OHSU has been recognized as a Rare Disease Center of Excellence by the [National Organization for Rare Disorders \(NORD\)](#), highlighting the institution's leadership in rare disease research, patient care and collaboration. The honor reflects the work of the [OHSU Rare Disorders Research Consortium](#), supported by the Human Genetics Initiative and the Oregon Clinical and Translational Research Institute, which provides a hub at OHSU for investigators to advance discovery and connect with families affected by rare disorders.

To mark [Rare Disease Day](#), OHSU researchers, clinicians and staff came together Feb. 27 in Vey Auditorium at Doernbecher Children's Hospital to celebrate the institution's impact, share insights and connect across departments. Presentations highlighted advances in rare disease research at OHSU including neurodegeneration, ophthalmic genetics and Marfan syndrome, followed by a poster session showcasing ongoing projects.

Trace Biosciences receives FDA IND clearance for nerve imaging agent

OHSU startup company [Trace Biosciences](#) has received Investigational New Drug clearance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for LGW16-03, its first nerve-specific fluorescent imaging agent.

The clearance enables first-in-human clinical studies of the investigational agent, which is designed to selectively bind peripheral nerves and emit a near-infrared signal that allows surgeons to visualize critical nerve structures in real time. Accidental nerve injury remains a significant cause of surgical complications across multiple specialties.

Trace plans to initiate a Phase I study later this year beginning in orthopedic surgery.

[Read the full press release.](#)

OHSU's Summer Gibbs named senior member of National Academy of Inventors



[Summer Gibbs, Ph.D.](#), professor of biomedical engineering at OHSU, has been named a 2026 senior member of the [National Academy of Inventors](#).

The academy recognizes academic inventors whose work has demonstrated impact in patents, licensing, commercialization and broader benefit to society. Gibbs was selected for her research and innovation in fluorescence-guided surgery and molecular imaging. She holds 24 disclosed inventions and five U.S. patents and has helped translate discoveries while mentoring emerging inventors.

She also co-founded Trace Biosciences, an OHSU startup developing nerve-specific imaging agents for surgery.

The 2026 class will be inducted at the NAI annual conference in June. Gibbs will also be honored at the [OHSU Innovation Awards](#) on Wednesday, March 11.

New Pacific Northwest Nucleate chapter opens to Oregon students

Graduate students at OHSU have launched a Pacific Northwest chapter of [Nucleate](#), a trainee-led nonprofit that supports the next generation of biotech leaders. Nucleate has chapters in 41 regions representing more than 280 academic institutions.

The new chapter was created in partnership with the existing Seattle chapter and welcomes students across Oregon. Recent events include the Nucleate Activator Team Launch and Mentor Matching Event in Seattle and an upcoming “Academic Entrepreneurship” panel at the [2026 Oregon Drug Discovery Symposium](#) in Portland. Additional educational sessions are planned throughout the year.

The Oregon team meets bi-weekly on Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. Students interested in joining can contact Jee Min Lee at leejee@ohsu.edu.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Now Hiring: Senior Director of Strategic Partnerships at the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute

The OHSU Knight Cancer Institute is recruiting a senior director for strategic partnerships. This role works closely with the Knight’s leadership, faculty, clinicians, scientists, and trainees to advance outstanding scientific programs. The position leads a team of experienced professionals to identify, secure and manage partnerships with corporate, academic, government and nonprofit organizations, while driving commercialization and translation of Knight discoveries and inventions.

To learn more and apply, visit the internal portal [here](#) or the external portal [here](#).

Elevate your ideas with the ASCEND Award

Two innovative projects were selected for funding in the most recent round:

The ASCEND Award supports bold, practical ideas that aim to make a real-world impact, both in the community and in the professional growth of OHSU innovators. Open to current OHSU members, this quarterly funding opportunity offers up to \$4,000 to help move innovative projects forward. Funding can be used for a wide range of activities, such as attending innovation-related training, traveling to relevant conferences, building prototypes or purchasing materials. The next proposal deadline is Tuesday, March 31.

Read the full [Request for Proposals](#) for more information and the [Application Form](#) to apply (OHSU username and login required).

FEATURED EVENTS

2026 OHSU Innovation Awards

2026 | INNOVATION AWARDS



March 11, 2026 | 4 - 7 p.m.
Robertson Life Sciences Building, 3A001



The OHSU Innovation Awards honor researchers, clinicians and collaborators whose vision, dedication and creativity are driving advances in science, technology and health care. This year's awards highlight distinguished awardees whose work is improving health outcomes in Oregon and beyond. The ceremony takes place Wednesday, March 11, from 4 to 7 p.m. at the Robertson Life Sciences Building in Portland.

Distinguished awardees include:

- Early Career Innovator Award: [Yasmeen Elsawaf, M.D.](#)
- Career Innovation Excellence Award: [Brian J. Druker, M.D.](#)
- New Innovator of the Year Award: [Becca Spain, M.D., MSPH](#)

- Partnership Excellence Award: [Jamie Lo, M.D., MCR](#)
- [National Academy of Inventors](#) honors: [Yali Jia, Ph.D.](#), 2025 Fellow; [Summer Gibbs, Ph.D.](#), 2026 Senior Member

The full announcement also lists recipients in other categories, including creators of licensed technologies, inventors of issued U.S. patents, inductees in the OHSU chapter of the National Academy of Inventors and new startup companies.

[Read more about this year's awardees in the 2026 OHSU Innovation Awards announcement.](#)

When: Wednesday, March 11, 4-7 p.m.

Where: Robertson Collaborative Life Sciences Building & Skourtes Tower, 2730 S Moody Ave., Portland, Oregon 97201

Who: All OHSU members, OHSU Innovates sponsors and regional partners

Cost: Free

[Register via Eventbrite.](#)

Upcoming OHSU Innovates Foundations seminar on intellectual property

OHSU INNOVATES FOUNDATIONS:
NAVIGATING RESEARCH TO IMPACT

Intellectual Property 101: Key Concepts for
Researchers

March 26
12 to 1 p.m. PT



Join us for the upcoming virtual seminar, “Intellectual Property 101: Key Concepts for Researchers.” This session will provide practical strategies for protecting and advancing research. Attendees will learn how different types of intellectual property work, how protection is established and how to integrate IP into research and innovation plans.

Speakers include [Janina Malone, J.D., M.A.](#), a patent attorney at Lee & Hayes P.C. with more than 20 years of experience in life sciences and Cole Brashaw, a recent OHSU neuroscience Ph.D. who will share a researcher’s perspective on leveraging IP to support discoveries and early-career opportunities.

The session is part of OHSU Innovates Foundations: Navigating Research to Impact, a virtual seminar series for researchers at all career stages.

When: Thursday, March 26, 12-1 p.m. PT

Where: Virtual

Who: Open to all

Cost: Free

[Register here.](#)

Oregon Drug Discovery Symposium returns for a second
year



Connect with the drug discovery community at the Oregon Drug Discovery Symposium, or ODDS, 2026. The event brings together researchers, pharmaceutical

companies, investors, academia and the broader biomedical community to share ideas and innovations.

The program includes talks, discussions and a poster session. Join us at OHSU for two days of collaboration and networking.

When: Wednesday, April 8 – Thursday, April 9

Where: Knight Cancer Research Building, 2720 S. Moody Ave., Portland, Oregon 97201

Who: Researchers, industry professionals, students and trainees

Cost: Academia/nonprofit – \$100 | Industry – \$250 | Virtual – \$25 | Trainees/students – \$50

[Register here.](#)

Oregon Innovation Showcase



Join entrepreneurs, investors and industry leaders for the [Oregon Innovation Showcase](#), an annual event highlighting Oregon-grown, deep-tech companies developing innovation-driven, scalable solutions over five years or more. Attendees can meet emerging startups, hear success stories, connect with investors and explore

how the state's supportive ecosystem reduces risk and fuels next-generation ventures.

Startup applications are now open:

Early-stage Oregon and Southwest Washington startups can apply to participate in the Showcase. Most eligible startups will have the opportunity to exhibit, and a limited number of high-performing companies may be invited to present on stage in the Venture Showcase. Applications close Tuesday, March 31. [Apply to participate.](#)

When: Monday, May 11 – Tuesday, May 12

Where: Sentinel Hotel, 614 SW 11th Ave., Portland, Oregon 97205

Who: Entrepreneurs, investors, innovation supporters, researchers and students interested in deep-tech industries

Cost: Standard – \$249 | Student – \$49

[Register here.](#)

Mark Your Calendar: OHSU Innovation Day, Thursday,
May 7



Innovation Day – May 7

[OHSU Innovation Day](#) will take place on Thursday, May 7, as part of [OHSU Research Week](#). The day is designed to inspire, educate and connect the scientific community, featuring insights into innovation, entrepreneurship and emerging ideas. The majority

of the programming will be held virtually, with an in-person career-focused session for early-career scientists in the evening

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, March 6

[Change Management \(Oregon Life Sciences\)](#)

**Wednesday, March 11 and
Tuesday, March 17th**

[Current Good Manufacturing Practices \(Oregon Life Sciences\)](#)

Tuesday, March 17

[OEN Pitch, Please: March](#)

Wednesday, March 18

[Virtual Lunch & Learn: AI-Powered Clinical Trials: De-Risking Enrollment, Timelines, and Investor Confidence for Biotech Leaders \(OBI\)](#)

March 18-20 and 23-25

[Design of Experiments \(Oregon Life Sciences\)](#)

Thursday, March 19

[TAO Real Talk: AI Across the Cascadia Megaregion](#)

Tuesday, March 31

[Co-Work with OEN](#)

Tuesday, March 31

[Managing Deviations \(Oregon Life Sciences\)](#)

Wednesday, April 1

[Customer Complaints and Recalls \(Oregon Life Sciences\)](#)

Monday, April 6

[Risk-Based Approach to Manufacturing \(Oregon Life Sciences\)](#)

Tuesday, April 8

[AI Ambition vs. Business Reality \(TAO\)](#)

Tuesday, April 14	Scaling Innovative Clinical Trial Approaches: Challenges, Progress, and Opportunities
Monday, April 20	Oregon Life Sciences Membership Lunch-and-Learn
Tuesday, April 21	OEN Pitch, Please: April
Monday, April 27	Project Management: Foundations & Best Practices (Oregon Life Sciences)
Tuesday, April 28	Startup Business Essentials: An Introduction to Leading Healthy Sales (OEN)
May 2-8	2026 OHSU Research Week
Tuesday, May 5	Oregon Technology Awards 2026
May 11-16	Portland Startup Week

TECHNOLOGIES

Newly Licensed or Optioned OHSU Technologies

OHSU-developed technologies are available for licensing to industry partners. For a list of available technologies, visit the [OHSU Technology Portal](#).

Congratulations to the inventors of the below technologies, which were recently licensed or optioned to outside partners.

[OHSU 1771](#) - Materials from the BioLibrary

[OHSU 3191](#) - Workplace Mental Health Support Training for Leaders

[OHSU 3213](#) - Protease Activity Sensing Probes For Early Detection and Prognosis of Pancreatic Cancer

OHSU 3270 - Senescence cell binding and senolytic peptide

OHSU 3337 - D2-I212F Transgenic Mouse

OHSU 3382 - Serum samples from PDAC studies

OHSU 3470 - A genetic mouse model of a human movement disorder

OHSU 3505 - Simple, alignment-free and low-cost fiber photometry system for fluorescence lifetime measurement

OHSU 3510 - CEDAR Biorepository samples for PACMANN validation

SPONSORS

Thank you to our current sponsors for their support of OHSU Innovates!



Questions? Contact us at innovates@ohsu.edu

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