Utah State Signs 2-Year Research Deal with Korean Bio Medical Institute | Biological Engineering

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May 20, 2015 – It was a meeting of East and West on Wednesday morning at the Innovation Campus where a new deal was signed by USU researchers that could help bring fresh answers in the fight against cancer, diabetes and other diseases.

Representatives from the university and Department of Biological Engineering signed an official research agreement with SORAM Bio-Medicine Research Institute of Seoul, South Korea. The research agreement ultimately aims to improve combined radiotherapy and chemotherapy cancer treatments through the use of naturally-occurring compounds found in ginseng.

USU VP for Research and Dean of Graduate Studies Mark McLellan, left, and Rob Behunin, VP for Advancement and Commercialization, middle, sign a two-year research agreement with Dr. Wonjun Cho, Director of the Soram Bio-Medicine Institute.

USTAR-endowed professor of biological engineering Foster Agblevor is the chief researcher behind the project. Agblevor and his associates at SORAM plan to explore the health-promoting benefits of Korean ginseng and other ginseng species that have been used for centuries in traditional Chinese and Korean medicine.

“The most active ingredients in these extractions are ginsenosides which have been reported to have several curative properties for diseases including type II diabetes, erectile dysfunction and some cancerous tumors,” he writes in a proposal. “There is intense interest in investigating the properties of these extracts for non-traditional medicinal applications. There have also been attempts to develop ginseng hairy roots for ginsenoside applications.”

College of Engineering Dean Christine Hailey and USTAR Professor Foster Agblevor speak to a Korean delegation about a new research agreement at USU.