



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™  
EL PASO

***NEWS RELEASE***

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**TTUHSC El Paso and UTEP Announce Launch of Innovation and  
Commercialization Fund**

EPIC, the first shared commercialization fund between the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso (TTUHSC El Paso), was launched through a state grant from the Texas Emerging Technology Fund (ETF).

Both universities also provided matching dollars to create a \$500,000 fund for faculty to move technologies to market.

The EPIC Fund will award eight grants of up to \$50,000 to faculty from both universities whose work has demonstrated strong commercial potential.

Awardees at both universities were recognized at an event Wednesday, June 17, at the Hub of Human Innovation. Awardees from UTEP are Associate Professor of Biological Sciences Marc Cox, Ph.D., for his work with pharmaceuticals treating prostate cancer; UTEP doctoral candidate Eva Deemer and Professor of Chemistry Russell Chianelli, Ph.D., for work utilizing the carbon material graphene; Assistant Professor of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering David Roberson, Ph.D. for his work with 3-D printing; Professor of Mechanical Engineering Roger Gonzalez, Ph.D., for development of a low-cost energy storage and return prosthetic foot; and Associate Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering Raymond Rumpf, Ph.D., for improving electromagnetic compatibility.

TTUHSC El Paso faculty receiving grants are Bradley P. Fuhrman, M.D., Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, for his work on expiratory positive airway pressure (EPAP), Brad A. Bryan, Ph.D. in the Center of Excellence in Cancer, for commercialization of a biomarker to detect certain tumors, and Amr Abdelgawad, M.D., a pediatric orthopaedic surgeon at TTUHSC El Paso, for commercialization of an internal bone lengthener device for children. Dr. Abdelgawad's project is in collaboration with Noe Vargas Hernandez, Ph.D., former assistant professor of mechanical engineering at UTEP. Dr. Abdelgawad was out of town and not available to receive his award.

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The EPIC Fund grant program is designed to support a culture that promotes innovation, translation and commercialization of new ideas and technologies within the El Paso region. It does this through grants for the maturation and acceleration of early stage technologies or spin-out start-up companies based on university intellectual property across any sector.

“The mission of this new venture, the El Paso Innovation and Commercialization (EPIC) Fund is to help our faculty innovators and entrepreneurs develop their intellectual property”, said Peter Rotwein, M.D., Assistant Vice President of Research at TTUHSC El Paso. “EPIC will allow our faculty inventors to bring their ideas and novel products to market more quickly, allowing the public to eventually benefit from their innovations.”

Currently, the ETF contracts the Texas Tech University System to operate the Trans-Pecos/El Paso Regional Center for Innovation and Commercialization within its Office of Research Commercialization (ORC). The ORC led the effort to create this commercialization fund.

For more information about the EPIC Fund, please contact [eli.velasquez@ttu.edu](mailto:eli.velasquez@ttu.edu).

**About Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso**

Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, the Texas Tech University System’s fourth university, has a mission to provide education, research, and patient care to West Texas. It is comprised of the Paul L. Foster School of Medicine, the Gayle Greve Hunt School of Nursing and is a regional campus for a Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences. The university has a clinical practice called Texas Tech Physicians, which is part of the largest network of healthcare physicians in West Texas. Research focuses on cancer, diabetes and metabolism, infectious diseases, and neurosciences. For more information about Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center El Paso, please visit [www.elpaso.ttuhscc.edu](http://www.elpaso.ttuhscc.edu)

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