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HKUST Wins Lion's Share of Government Grants for Cooperative Research Centers

The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) has received funding totaling HK\$9.646 million—the biggest share among its competitors—from the Research Grants Council (RGC) to establish four university/industry cooperative research centers. These programs, each having 20% supplementary funding commitment from industry, will spearhead technological innovation in key areas, which are essential for Hong Kong in the new millennium of global competition.

The Center for Co-operative Research in Active Matrix Organic Light Emitting Diode Displays will perform research in improving organic light emitting diode (OLED) technology. OLED displays have been heralded as the display technology of the future. This co-operative research center will help bring much needed upgrading to the products of Hong Kong's sizeable electronic display industry. The center is led by Prof Hoi Sing Kwok, Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, and received HK\$1.44 million.

The Advanced Composite Materials for Infrastructure Repair Co-operative Research Center, led by Mr Stephen Lee, Associate Director of the Advanced Engineering Materials Facility, received HK\$2.326 million. This Center will investigate the prospects of advanced composite materials as light, strong and durable alternatives for repairing buildings and infrastructures in Hong Kong's corrosive environment.

The Internet Switching Technology Center (ISTC) seeks to bring Hong Kong closer to the huge Internet-generated telecommunication equipment market. It will research and develop key components of internet switching technologies, and disseminate the relevant knowledge. The Center is led by Prof Chin-Tau Lea of the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and received HK\$3 million.

Biotechnology research will be the focus of the Co-operative Research Center for Soluble Receptor Biology, led by Dr Hong Xue of the Department of Biochemistry. Soluble receptors are protein molecules that are valuable research tools as well as diagnostic and therapeutic agents. The Center will investigate two prominent classes of soluble receptors, one for neurotransmitters and one for cytokines. It received HK\$3 million from the Government.

"HKUST has always done well in this competition," said Prof Tony Eastham, Associate Vice-President for Research and Development at HKUST. "Previously we secured 9 Cooperative Research Center programs out of a total of 16 awards made by the Research Grants Council. And now, in this latest competition, another 4 are being funded. This demonstrates the quality, impact and benefits of the applied research that we are conducting with industry in Hong Kong."