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naturejobs

A boost for the Big Apple

New York is a great place to get a scientific education. But for young researcher looking to switch from academia to local industry, the city has always lagged behind the scientific hubs in California and Massachusetts.

It is true that New York has one of the highest concentrations of world-class universities and hospitals — New York University, Columbia University, Rockefeller University and the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, for example, are all within a short walk or subway ride from each other. But other than a few small incubators, biotechnology companies have largely been absent — especially from Manhattan, where most of the academic research institutions are located.

That may now change, thanks to two developments announced last month that together total more than \$800 million in investment. One will boost the biotech sector, the other, the basic research that spurs it. The first is a \$700-million research complex called the East River Science Park, which will consist of 78,000 square metres of lab and office space. The project, to be built in two phases, will begin construction in 2006; the first 46,000 square metres will be

finished in 2008. It is being funded by the city, and developed by California scientific building specialists Alexandria Real Estate Equities. The company will pay the city \$3 million a year rent, and act as a landlord for the site's tenants.

Meanwhile, New York University is set to receive a donation of some \$105 million from Jan Vilcek, a professor there who made his fortune by co-discovering the blockbuster drug Remicade, which is used to treat Crohn's disease and arthritis. The money will be used to fund basic microbiology research at the university — the kind that led Vilcek to his drug.

Together, the two developments should bring more entrepreneurially minded researchers to the city — and, if Vilcek's generosity is any example, draw in even more funding to fuel the next generation of scientists.



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