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DSU's Dr. Noureddine Melikechi Receives Delaware Bio Award

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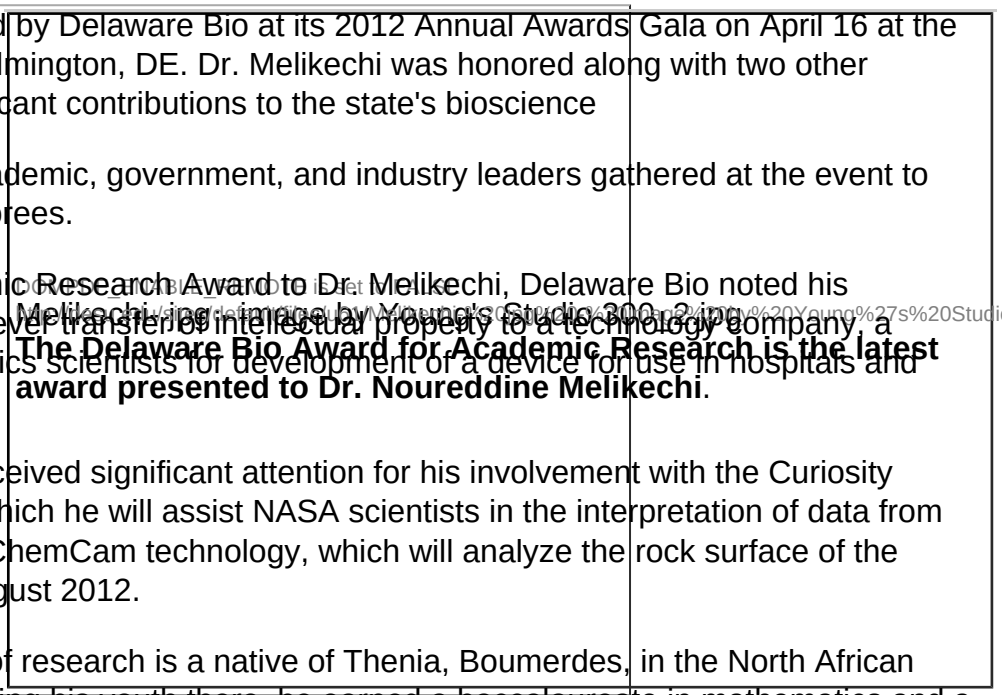
Dr. Noureddine Melikechi, dean of the College of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology, has been presented the Delaware Bio Award for Academic Research by the Delaware BioScience Association (Delaware Bio).

The award was presented by Delaware Bio at its 2012 Annual Awards Gala on April 16 at the DuPont Country Club, Wilmington, DE. Dr. Melikechi was honored along with two other individuals for their significant contributions to the state's bioscience

community. Over 300 academic, government, and industry leaders gathered at the event to celebrate this year's honorees.

In presenting the Academic Research Award to Dr. Melikechi, Delaware Bio noted his leadership in DSU's first-ever transfer of intellectual property to a technology company, a method created by its optics scientists for development of a device for use in hospitals and laboratories.



The Delaware Bio Award for Academic Research is the latest award presented to Dr. Noureddine Melikechi.

Dr. Melikechi has also received significant attention for his involvement with the Curiosity Rover Mars Mission, in which he will assist NASA scientists in the interpretation of data from the rover?s laser-based ChemCam technology, which will analyze the rock surface of the planet after it lands in August 2012.

The DSU vice president of research is a native of Thenia, Boumerdes, in the North African country of Algeria. Following his youth there, he earned a baccalaureate in mathematics and a D.E.S. (Diplome d?Etudes Superieures) in physics, both from the Houari Boumediene University of Sciences and Technology in Algiers, Algeria. He earned a Master of Science in Physics in 1982 and a Ph.D in Physics (Quantum Optics) in 1987, both from the University of Sussex in England. During his doctorate work at the University of Sussex and his later post-doctorate work at the North East London Polytechnic, Dr. Melikechi worked in the labs of Dr. Leslie Allen, one of the leaders in lasers in the world today.

Following a two-year lecturer stint at his undergraduate alma mater in Algiers, Dr. Melikechi arrived at DSU in 1995 as an assistant professor of physics. By 2006, he was a full professor and chair of the Department of Physics and Pre-Engineering.

In 1998, he was the founding director of the first Applied Optics Center of Delaware at DSU. With a focused vision that was fueled by the enduring power of the endless possibilities, Melikechi methodically worked over the next decade to maximize every new opportunity and each research success at DSU.

Under his leadership, the DSU Optics Program later received two $5 million research grants from the National Science Foundation (2006) and from NASA (2009), creating two separate optics centers under Dr. Melikechi?s direction. Respectively, those grants resulted in the

establishment of a Center for Research in Education and Optical Sciences and its Applications, and the Center for Applied Optics in Space Sciences.

The expansion of the Optics Program research infrastructure led to the creation of an Applied Optics Master of Science and Optics Ph.D. programs at DSU in 2008.

In January 2011, Dr. Melikechi announced that the optics program?s research had produced the University?s first-ever intellectual property that a company is currently developing into a laser-based diagnostic device to be used in hospitals and medical laboratories.

Dr. Melikechi?s prolific achievements were instrumental in leading Delaware Gov. Jack Markell to announce in May 2011 the inclusion of $10 million in his fiscal 2012 budget to go toward the construction of an Optics Research Facility on campus. The facility will provide the Optics Program with improved laboratory facilities and permit a wide variety of optics activities under the same roof.

Honored along with Dr. Melikechi at the Delaware Bio event were:

Innovation Award: Charles W. Robertson, Jr., co-founder and chief technology officer, NanoDrop Technologies, Inc. NanoDrop, a leading manufacturer of micro-volume ultraviolet visible (UV-Vis) instrumentation, was acquired by ThermoFisher in October 2007.

Service Award: J. Michael Bowman, chairman and president, Delaware Technology Park. Mr. Bowman has nurtured many successful companies in the DTP and throughout Delaware and supported efforts to locate large bioscience and other technology operations in the state.

Company of the Year: Incyte Corporation?s Paul A. Friedman, M.D., president and CEO. Incyte's Jakafi? is the first and only FDA-approved treatment for intermediate or high-risk myelofibrosis, a potentially life-threatening blood cancer.

?Delaware Bio members annually honor and recognize key people and organizations that have made an impact in the Delaware bioscience community. Each of the honorees of the class of 2012 possesses a pioneering spirit prevalent in the bioscience industry,? stated Bob Dayton, president of Delaware Bio.

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