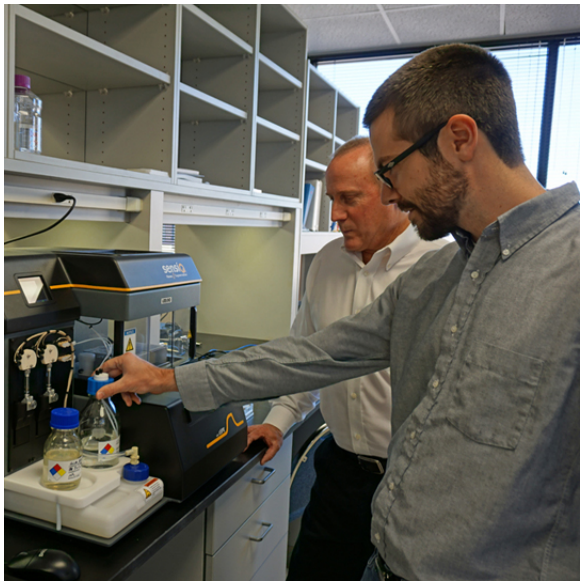
SENSIQ TECHNOLOGIES

SensiQ Technologies finds spot for making the right connections



Listen to the chatter of economic development professionals or academic campus leaders, and a familiar theme emerges. It centers around a mission to encourage people from disparate disciplines or neighboring businesses to talk to each other on a regular basis.

The hope is that someone sharing lunch or a cup of coffee with a colleague from another business or laboratory might say something that sparks the Big Idea and results in a groundbreaking new technology. Or they might decide that their companies should become business partners.

Call it purposeful serendipity. It really can happen.

That's why its location in the University Research Park – formerly the Presbyterian Health Foundation Research Park – has meant so much to Oklahoma City-based SensiQ Technologies.

Founded in 2005 as part of ICX Nomadics, SensiQ developed and manufactures sophisticated scientific instruments that allow scientists to assess what is called the "binding affinity" of molecules early in the drug development process.

The machines can sell for up to $300,000 each and are used by researchers at big pharmaceutical companies, biotechnology firms and universities.

Co-founded by Nomadics founders Colin Cumming and Jim Luby, SensiQ was spun out on its own three years ago after ICX Nomadics was acquired by Oregon-based Flir Systems. Tom Jobe is chief operating officer.

"This is a great park to be located in," Jobe said recently as he guided me through SensiQ's development laboratories. "There's a lot going on here. I love interacting with the other players down in the cafeteria area, mixing it up with people. We probably couldn't do what we do anywhere else in Oklahoma. That's why I say it's the perfect spot for us."

SensiQ sells its scientific instruments worldwide, but also to Oklahoma customers, many of whom make their headquarters at the University Research Park. Sensiq also provides contract binding affinity services for researchers at its certified laboratory.

Among SensiQ's 20 or so employees are chemists, biomedical engineers, software engineers and electrical engineers who design, build and calibrate its biomedical instruments.

Jobe brought an electrical engineering and instrumentation background to the company when he joined it as a startup.

Through the past decade of operations, SensiQ's research and development work has resulted in about 20 patents, with much of that groundbreaking work supported by grant funding from the Oklahoma Center for the Advancement of Science and Technology (OCAST).

"We've had numerous OCAST grants over the years," Jobe said. "We actually got our start in developing the first instrument with an OCAST grant in 2006."

SensiQ also has drawn on OCAST's Intern Partnership program to bring talented college students to its staff, some of whom never left.

Principal scientist Aaron Martin was a chemistry major at the University of Central Oklahoma when he came to SensiQ as an intern a decade ago.

SensiQ's most recent OCAST funding — an Oklahoma Applied Research Support grant — is helping the company create a new "low cost" automated analyzer for academic researchers.

Principal investigator on the project is SensiQ research scientist David Goad, Ph.D.

"The funding we've received from OCAST has been pretty phenomenal," Goad said. "OCAST funding goes a long, long way. If you put together all the research that has been leveraged out of even small OCAST grants, there is a ton out there."

The bottom line will be more high-tech inventory to sell to SensiQ's worldwide customer base, all with a mission of bringing revenue into Oklahoma.

"That's been our aim here all along," Jobe said. "I'd have to say it's been a fun ride."

It really can happen.

Watch the video

See the story in the 12-16-15 Oklahoman

Go to the SensiQ website