

payments for rDNA technology. One company paid up front all the royalties it expects to earn in the next six years. Another company repaid back royalties.

He predicted the income from rDNA will drop next year to \$10-12 million, giving OTL a forecasted gross income of \$18-

shock. When certain bacteria — typically *Escherichia coli* — infect the blood, doctors can administer antibiotics to kill the bacteria. But the dying microorganisms release a toxin that causes septic shock.

Centoxin binds to and neutralizes this toxin. Amy Porter, an OTL licensing associate, said clinical trials show the drug reduces

search.

"If the new system works and faculty regain trust, we anticipate the disclosure rate will increase to prior levels," said Reimers. ■

Robin Bonner is a science writing intern at the Stanford News Service

OTL research funds encourage innovative projects

By ROBIN BONNER

Since 1989, the Office of Technology and Licensing has given more than \$1.4 million to the OTL Research Incentive Fund. Niels Reimers, director of the office, says OTL expects to donate approximately \$2 million this year.

Administered by the dean of research, the research fund provides one-year grants to faculty with new and innovative projects that cannot yet get outside funding.

Pat Devaney, associate dean of research, says that since January 1990, when the program began, her office has made 25 to 30 awards, with an average of \$18,000 each.

"There is so much competition for external funding that, in many cases, you must show persuasive results that the idea will work before you can get funding," says Devaney. "Our intent is to foster some new ideas and get them to the point that they're ready for outside funding."

For instance, one grant of \$23,890 went to Peter Pinsky, associate professor of civil engineering.

Working with David Maurice, an ophthalmologist at the medical center, Pinsky created a computer model of the human cornea. He hopes the model will help doctors to make more accurate predictions of the cornea's reaction to surgical procedures,

such as radial keratotomy.

After a year of research, Pinsky will have his results published this year in the *Journal of Biomechanics*, and he has applied to the National Institutes of Health for a three-year grant to continue his research. He plans a comprehensive study that will involve not only mathematical and computer modeling, but also actual experimental investigation of the properties of the cornea.

"The (research incentive) money gave us a year to make our ideas credible," says Pinsky. "Now we can propose a major project."

New research ideas are not the only projects difficult to fund. Scientists just starting out often have trouble establishing grant sources.

"If you're young, it's very difficult to get funds without prior results," says John Griffin, an assistant professor of chemistry who joined the faculty in September.

He recently won an award to study the nature of weak chemical bonds — research that applies to understanding corrosion, lubrication and biological membranes.

"I hope Stanford is able to continue its success in securing patents so that the fund will remain strong," he says. ■

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Quarterly research proposals must be submitted by April 2

OTL Research Incentive Funds will now be awarded four times each year, and proposals will be due on the first day of each quarter. Faculty have until April 2 to submit proposals for spring quarter.

In the past, the Office of the Dean of Research evaluated proposals one by one, as they came into the office. But now the office wants to formalize the process.

In addition to setting deadlines, the Office of the Dean of Research plans to include assistant professors on the committees that review and rank the proposals.

"We think the fresh perspective of the junior faculty will be helpful," explains Pat Devaney, who says she also believes it will be good experience for the new professors to learn the funding process.

According to a campus memorandum issued by Robert Byer, dean of research, proposals should "be no more than three pages; indicate the thrust of the new venture; why it is new, innovative or risky; and how it is advancing the state of knowledge in the field."

Proposals should also include a budget and a description of necessary resources.

The office will announce awards within six weeks of the proposal due dates. ■