SINGAPORE, NOVEMBER 26, 2008 — The Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN) became the first research institute to win a Gold Award at the biennial Singapore Helping Employees Achieve Life-Time Health (HEALTH) Awards organized by the Health Promotion Board. The 2008 Singapore HEALTH Awards were presented on November 20, 2008 before the 8th National Conference on Workplace Health Promotion, Singapore International Convention and Exhibition Centre at Suntec City Convention Centre.

This national award recognizes organizations with commendable workplace health promotion (WHP) programs. The 2008 Singapore HEALTH Awards represents the first time that IBN is participating in this event. Spearheaded by IBN Director, Ms Noreena AbuBakar, IBN’s Human Resource team, Ms Amanda Wong, Ms Sor Leng Chua and Ms Siew Yen Yeo, established a structured program ranging from talks to health screenings and fitness activities to encourage staff members to lead healthy and active lives.

“At IBN, our top priority is to provide a conducive environment for our staff as they spend most of their waking hours working in the office or laboratories. The workplace health promotion program is the cornerstone of our efforts to create a healthy workplace. Through this program, we aim to encourage staff to maintain an active lifestyle and healthy habits even while they are busy pursuing their careers. It would be ironic if our staff, who are working hard to solve biomedical challenges and develop better treatments for diseases, neglect their own health and well-being,” shared IBN Director, Ms Noreena AbuBakar.

Since 2005, IBN’s Human Resource Department has developed a holistic workplace health and wellness program. IBN’s WHP program includes activities such as regular health screening, talks, stress management, counseling, the establishment of a health corner, fitness events, fruit distribution, as well as vaccine administration.

Ms Amanda Wong, Assistant Head, Human Resources, IBN, noted, “We would not have achieved this award without the strong support from our leadership — IBN
Executive Director, Professor Jackie Y. Ying and IBN Director, Noreena AbuBakar. In fact, our Director was the one who kick-started this program by showing us a news report on crisis management in the workplace, which prompted us to develop our program.”

“Our program caters to the needs of our staff and covers a wide range of topics and issues that are of interest to them. Through multiple channels of communication, such as conveniently located suggestion boxes, our staff members are encouraged to contribute ideas for improving the health and well-being at our Institute,” added Ms Sor Leng Chua, Assistant Head, Human Resources, IBN.

The Health Promotion Board (HPB) encourages employers to establish WHP programs to fight workplace ill-health in order to keep up with global competitiveness. The HPB also advocates adopting a healthy lifestyle to counter the risk of suffering from illnesses and chronic diseases especially with an aging population. IBN’s outstanding WHP program, which won the Gold award from the Health Promotion Board in the Institute’s first year of participation, was recognized for the exceptionally strong leadership and support from the Institute’s senior management in forming new policies and allocating sufficient resources for their implementation. IBN’s first Gold HEALTH Award also recognizes the holistic approach that the Institute developed in providing psychological and emotional support to its employees.

About the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology

The Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN) is a member of the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR), Singapore. It was established in 2003.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Professor Jackie Yi Ru Ying, 42, was hand-picked by former A*STAR Chairman Philip Yeo to lead the institute as its Executive Director in March 2003. She has been on MIT’s Chemical Engineering faculty since 1992, and was promoted to Professor in 2001. She is among the youngest to be promoted to this rank at MIT. Under her direction, IBN conducts research at the cutting-edge of bioengineering and nanotechnology. Its programs are geared towards linking multiple disciplines across all fields in engineering, science and medicine to produce research breakthroughs that will improve healthcare and our quality of life.

IBN’s research activities are focused in the following areas:

- **Drug and Gene Delivery**, where the controlled release of various therapeutics involve the use of functionalized polymers and hydrogels for targeting diseased cells and organs, or for responding to specific biological stimuli.
Cell and Tissue Engineering, where biomimicking materials, stem cell technology and bioimaging are combined to develop novel approaches to regenerative medicine and artificial organs.

Pharmaceuticals Synthesis and Nanobiotechnology, which encompass the efficient catalytic synthesis of chiral pharmaceuticals, and new materials for sustainable technology and alternative energy generation.

Biosensors and Biodevices, which involve nanotechnology and microfabricated platforms for the detection and treatment of diseases, and the synthesis and screening of biologics.

IBN’s innovative research is aimed at creating new knowledge and intellectual properties in the emerging fields of bioengineering and nanotechnology to attract top-notch researchers and business partners to Singapore. Since 2003, IBN researchers have produced a total of 445 papers published/in press, of which 184 were published in journals with impact factor greater than 3. IBN also plays an active role in technology transfer and spinning off companies, linking the research institute and industrial partners to other global institutions. As of October 2008, IBN has filed 637 patent applications on its inventions and the Institute is currently looking for partners for collaboration and commercialization of its portfolio of technologies.

IBN’s current staff strength stands at around 170 scientists, engineers and doctors. With its multinational and multidisciplinary research staff, the institute is geared towards generating new biomaterials, devices, systems, equipment and processes to boost Singapore’s economy in the fast-growing biomedical sector.

IBN is also committed to nurturing young minds, and the institute acts as a training ground for PhD students and undergraduates. In October 2003, IBN initiated a Youth Research Program to open its doors to university students, as well as students and teachers from various secondary schools and junior colleges. It has since reached out to more than 23,000 students and teachers from over 190 local and overseas schools and institutions.

In 2008, IBN celebrates 5 years of innovative research. For more information, please log on to www.ibn.a-star.edu.sg.

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