

Biotech Daily

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FEDERAL BUDGET 2007

MARC SINATRA'S COMMENT

As a former scientist, it is always good to see more money being made available for research.

What tends to worry me, however, is when that funding blurs the line between academia and business, as much of the funding announced last night seems to do.

Academia is good at undertaking research that extends the bounds of human knowledge, while business is good at developing products that make money.

For biotechnology to be successful, academia and business must interact continuously, vigorously and positively with one another, but I am not sure that trying to force academia into business and business into academia is the right way to go about it.

Moreover, the Government's penchant for funding infrastructure for science puzzles me somewhat, because I have never seen a building undertake research or produce a product.

The most successful medical device I have been involved with came to life in a temporary laboratory, built in the warehouse of a construction company.

More money needs to go into the human capital - namely research staff - who are charged with creating the groundbreaking scientific discoveries that will ultimately allow our biotechnology companies to produce innovative world-leading products.

Issues such as career structure, further education and professional development need to be addressed to retain and attract talented academic and research staff.

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