

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



**Fannin Innovation Studio Selects Singh, Bakkalbasi
to Join Intensive Two-Year Entrepreneurship Fellows Program**

*Fellows will help guide promising life science startups through commercialization process.
Fannin seeks to more than triple the size of the Fellows program over time.*

Houston, TX (May 1, 2015) – Life science commercialization company Fannin Innovation Studio (www.FanninInnovation.com) has selected biomedical scientist Melissa Singh, Ph.D. and molecular biologist Erol Bakkalbasi M.Sc. to join its intensive two-year Entrepreneurship Fellows Program, where they will gain valuable hands-on experience in leading new biotech portfolio companies through the early stages of the commercialization process.

Singh, who joined Fannin as an intern before being named the company's first Fellow, currently serves as the lead on two therapeutic technologies, one being developed in partnership with M.D. Anderson and the other in partnership between Rice University and Houston Methodist. She earned her Ph.D. from University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and has extensive experience in supervising translational research projects leading to scientific discovery.

Bakkalbasi is a recent graduate of Baylor College of Medicine with a Master of Science in Molecular Virology and Microbiology, and he was promoted from Fannin intern to Fellow after providing expert support on several high-level projects. As the company's second Fellow, Bakkalbasi is tasked with investigating the commercialization potential of a therapeutic emerging from a leading Texas Medical Center institution.

Fannin has long offered internships and short-term apprenticeships and many talented interns have gone on to lead local start-up companies. However, feedback from institutional leadership as well as the interns themselves highlighted the criticality of a full-time multi-year program that allows for a deeper understanding of the processes involved in moving inventions from concept to reality.

“The root cause of Houston’s commercialization gap is a lack of skilled entrepreneurs with both scientific and business backgrounds,” said Leo Linbeck III, Fannin’s founder and Chairman. “Melissa and Erol excelled as interns, and with further hands-on experience,

they will be sought-after candidates for open positions in our company or within the city's larger ecosystem.”

Dr. Atul Varadhachary, Fannin's Managing Partner, added that that while the first two Fellows were graduates from Fannin's in-house intern program, he expects many future Fellows to join directly from academia or industry. “Fannin has enough business opportunities to support a six-person Fellowship program. We have been in discussions with a number of major local foundations about supporting these fellowships, creating a win-win outcome for the community. We get access to highly qualified talent, who we train and develop as entrepreneurs. Experienced entrepreneurs are without question the life blood of any thriving bioscience ecosystem. While Houston certainly has some great entrepreneurs, we just don't have enough of them,” he said.

The Entrepreneurship Fellows Program is a two-year, multi-disciplinary fellowship designed to provide opportunities for medical professionals, scientists and engineers to learn first-hand about the business processes of commercializing life science innovation. Candidates must have earned a clinical or research-based graduate degree in a life science related field, have solid scientific and technical credentials and have a demonstrated interest in entrepreneurship and commercialization.

About Fannin Innovation Studio

Houston-based Fannin Innovation Studio is an early-stage life sciences development group focused exclusively on commercializing medical technologies. Fannin partners with life science innovators to co-found startup companies by providing a pooled management team, central office space and seed funding. To further bridge the commercialization gap, Fannin's internship and Entrepreneurship Fellows programs provide aspiring entrepreneurs with hands-on development experience with its portfolio companies.

For more information, visit www.FanninInnovation.com or email innovate@fannininnovation.com.

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