



NEWS RELEASE

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AUSTIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S BIOTECHNOLOGY INSTITUTE RECEIVES GIFT

January 30, 2004 – Ambion, an Austin medical research and products company and one of the most prominent local biotechnology firms, will present a \$10,000 contribution to the Austin Community College Biotechnology program to provide scholarships so more students can enter the program.

The presentation will be made at 6 p.m. Monday, February 2, at the Highland Business Center, 5930 Middle Fiskville Road, Room 201.

Conceived in 1997 and implemented in 1999, the Biotechnology program at ACC educates Austin's future biotechnicians by providing students with basic skills and state of the art techniques that they will need to fill future positions in this booming industry. It has also been a key element in the Chamber's effort to recruit more bioscience industry to the region.

"We are able to offer biotech firms a ready-made workforce training program, one of only eight in the country," said Susan Davenport, the Chamber's Director of Economic Development. "Trained workforce is a necessity for this industry so ACC Dean of Biotechnology Linnea Fletcher has accompanied us on recruiting trips and told the story."

ACC also operates 15 one-year, college- equivalent biotechnology courses in 11 area high schools in eight Central Texas school districts, using a grant from the National Science Foundation. A fundraising effort is underway to maintain the high school program and to expand the ACC biotechnology program. The Ambion gift is the first major contribution.

Industry experts were consulted so that the program's curriculum would best prepare students to handle the demands of the job. Industry leaders also encourage students to participate in fall, spring, and summer internships so that they may better understand and gain valuable experience in the biotech field. Fifty percent of the students in the program already have a bachelor's degree or higher when they enter the program.

As a member of Bio-Link, a consortium of biotech programs from the United States, Austin Community College serves as the South Central Regional headquarters. ACC is committed to enhancing and expanding biotechnology education programs by providing cutting edge professional development for instructors, by improving curriculum, by making use of technologies and by creating a system that promotes the sharing of information.

