

Scientists and Engineers

August 6, 2009

Parabon® NanoLabs announced today that Dr. Christopher Dwyer, its Co-Founder and Senior Research Scientist, received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE). Announced by the White House, PECASE is the highest honor given to scientists beginning their careers by the Federal Government. Dwyer received a five-year, \$1 million research grant to further his studies to aid critical government projects.

"These extraordinarily gifted young scientists and engineers represent the best in our country," said President Barack Obama. "With their talent, creativity, and dedication, I am confident that they will lead their fields in new breakthroughs and discoveries and help us use science and technology to lift up our nation and our world."

Nominees are selected for their innovations in their field of research and commitment to community service. The Department of Defense's Army Research Office nominated Dr. Dwyer, who was recognized for his "extraordinary potential to catalyze the kinds of scientific and technological advances that have long been at the core of this nation's strength," according to John P. Holdren, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, who issued the award.

Dr. Dwyer has a unique combination of wet-lab and bit-lab experience, and is a pioneer in the merged disciplines of DNA nanotechnology and computer science. He has conducted extensive research using DNA as scaffolding to support sensors that are programmed to target specific devices — for use in [cancer therapeutics](#), bioweapons defense, and rapid readouts of DNA. "We want to be able to fuse computational techniques with these sensors to come up with better sensing systems," Dr. Dwyer said, "This award is important because it provides the resources we need to develop this new circuit technology and to apply it to a spectrum of problems."

Dr. Dwyer co-founded Parabon NanoLabs for its unique combination of DNA nanotechnology fabrication and [grid computing sequence optimization](#) that has culminated in the development of proprietary technology for precisely directing the self-assembly of designer macromolecules. "We're bringing computation to a length, scale, and domain where it hasn't been possible before," explained Dr. Dwyer. Also a recipient of the 2008 Young Investigator Award from the Army Research Office and a member of the 2009 DARPA Computer Science Study Group, Dr. Dwyer serves as Assistant Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Duke University.

"It's a privilege to have Chris on our team," stated Dr. Steven Armentrout, Parabon NanoLabs President and CEO. "He's brilliant, passionate and consistently innovative — a world-class scientist and engineer most deserving of this esteemed honor."

The President will present each PECASE recipient with his or her award at a ceremony at the White House this fall.

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