Five MU projects gain grants through Coulter Program Awards

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COLUMBIA — MU gained five new grants at the fourth annual Coulter Program Awards on Thursday, totaling to about $500,000 to help commercialize medical research projects.

The Wallace H. Coulter Foundation gives the annual awards to researchers whose projects demonstrate great scientific potential and meet a well-defined health care need, according to an MU news release. This year's grants will go to teams at the MU College of Engineering and the MU School of Medicine faculty.

"A lot of great research just ends up being nice publications," Jinglu Tan said Thursday morning at the award ceremony at the Reynolds Alumni Center. "We recognized the need to close the gap, and we provide the funding so that the researchers can take one step further."

The Coulter Translational Partnership Program creates project teams consisting of at least one clinician from the School of Medicine and one engineer from the College of Engineering, said Tan, the principal investigator of MU Coulter Translational Partnership Program, the James C. Dowell professor and the chair of the Department of Bioengineering.

"Many of these discoveries hold great potential to improve the lives of people throughout the world," said Cynthia Helphingstine, MU's Coulter Program director. "However, these research projects often require a bit of additional investment to demonstrate the technical visibility in their potential to help patients and the society."

One of the five awarded projects, "Panacea's Cloud: Augmented reality system for mass casualty disaster triage and coordination," was presented at the awards ceremony.

The idea behind Panacea Glass, a mobile cloud framework, is to use Google Glass to "open up new possibilities for mobile health care communication," according to the project's publication, "Panacea's Glass: Mobile Cloud Framework for Communication in Mass Casualty Disaster Triage (http://bengal.missouri.edu/~calyamp/publications/panacea-glass-mobilecloud15.pdf)."

With Panacea Glass, rescue workers would be able to communicate even without power or Internet connections, said Prasad Calyam, the co-principal investigator of the grant and an assistant professor at the MU Department of Computer Science and IT.

A dozen of the previous Coulter's grants have been licensed, Tan said, and the five new projects today are looking for funding opportunities.

The Boone County Fire Protection District will test the Panacea Glass cloud in disaster simulations, Calyam said. The project will be presented and launched in January at the Consumer Electronics Show.

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