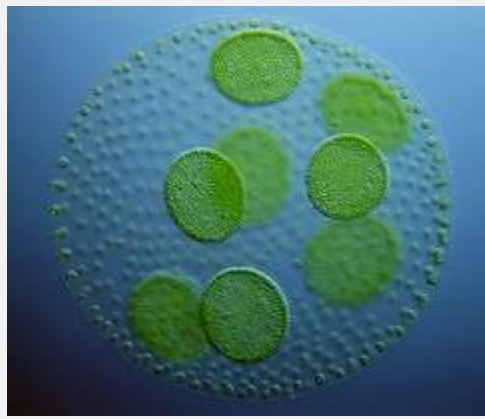


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UT to add \$1M facility for algae biofuel work



BLADE STAFF

By early next year, the University of Toledo's Scott Park Campus for Energy and Innovation will be home to a nearly \$1 million facility to research and develop algae biofuels in hopes of accelerating the alternative fuel's commercialization.

Ohio University, which plans to increase analysis at its algae research facility, and UT are leading a three-year project with a dozen partners, including some Ohio businesses involved in energy. Among partners are Recombinant Innovation of Toledo,

Red Lion Bio-Energy of Maumee, and Midwest Biorenewables of Toledo.

The project, called the Center for Algal Engineering Research and Commercialization, recently was awarded a nearly \$3 million grant through the Ohio Third Frontier Wright Projects Program.

At UT's Scott Park, the half-acre facility will have open ponds to grow algae, as well as ponds in a greenhouse. It also will be equipped with enclosed photobioreactors to test the efficiency of a variety of growth systems.

University and company researchers also will be able to convert algae materials into fuel, said Sridhar Viamajala, UT assistant professor of chemical and environmental engineering.

"Our goal is to be able to grow our own fuel stocks and to go through the whole process of making fuel," said Mr. Viamajala, an investigator for the project. "We'll have a complete system."

Traditional laboratories typically are not able to produce enough materials to do meaningful testing, such as using algae biofuels in engines, he said.

Oil from algae can be used to make fuel, and it doesn't need clean water or high-quality land to grow. It is a simple, single-celled organism that grows quickly.