



INTERNATIONAL
CONFERENCE &
EXHIBITION

**VivoSphere™ Nominated for Prestigious Ignite Award at the
Upcoming SLAS International Conference and Exhibition**

Auburn Engineering faculty start-up to be featured on Innovation AveNEW, a premiere exhibit space featuring the most innovative new bio-pharmaceutical companies in the industry.

[VivoSphere](#), a biomedical engineering start-up founded by two Auburn University [chemical engineering](#) researchers that has created a precise, cost-effective test bed for high-throughput and, pre-clinical evaluation of critical cancer therapy candidates, has been selected as one of the most promising new ventures in the biotech industry.

VIVOSPHERE

The [New Venture Accelerator](#) company was nominated for the Ignite Award [Society for Laboratory Automation and Screening](#) (SLAS) International Conference and Exhibition [SLAS2024](#) to be held on February 3-6 in Boston, Massachusetts. VivoSphere co-founders [Elizabeth Lipke](#) and [Yuan Tian](#), will be in attendance to meet with potential customers, partners and investors from around the world who are expected to be in attendance.

The SLAS is an international professional society of academic, industry and government researchers, developers and providers of laboratory automation technology and tools that helps drive innovation through international conferences and symposia, scientific publishing and opportunities for continuing education, collaboration, and career advancement.

VivoSphere was born out of a 2021 National Science Foundation-awarded project, "*I-Corps: Spheroidal engineered tissues for more efficient drug discovery*," for which Lipke, George E. & Dorothy Stafford Uthlaut Endowed Professor in Chemical Engineering at Auburn's Samuel Ginn College of Engineering, served as principal investigator and advisor to the entrepreneur lead Tian, who serves as a post-doctoral researcher in chemical engineering at Auburn.



“We are honored to be nominated for the prestigious Ignite Award and thankful for the extraordinary opportunity it offers us to exhibit on the Innovation AveNEW showcase at SLAS next month,” said Tian. “The visibility and industry exposure our young company will get as a result of this featured position will go a long way in support of our efforts to progress our patented technology into market trials.”

VivoSphere is addressing the need for more physiologically relevant drug screening models able to perform accurate, cost-effective testing of promising pharmaceutical candidates that also meet the high-throughput requirements drug companies face in bringing lifesaving therapeutics to market. The company’s unique 3-dimensional hydrogel scaffold-based tissues provide a robust platform for assessing the efficacy of drug candidates while also identifying any toxicities these potential treatments might generate.

Importantly, the VivoSphere™ at the heart of the new platform are tissues that have been designed to enable pharmaceutical companies to use the same equipment and assays they currently use for traditional 2D and 3D tissue test beds, speeding their adoption and deployment. The company recently won first place and \$25,000 in Alabama Launchpad’s Cycle 2 concept stage finals.



“Given that 90 percent of drugs that go into the clinical stage fail, the ability to identify those that might work vs. those that don’t or that carry debilitating toxic side effects offers a critical benefit to the developers of those drugs and to society as a whole,” noted Lipke. “Cancer cells don’t grow in isolation from the environments they infiltrate. Tumors exist within complex 3D environments, interacting with neighboring cells and their surroundings. Our tissues do a much better job of replicating these conditions in humans by creating miniature versions of those human tissues, allowing researchers to study the intricate interactions between cancer cells, normal cells and the extracellular matrix. This level of detail is impossible to achieve with 2D cultures or current iterations of 3D testing models.”

VivoSphere provides 3D cell culture models for in vitro drug discovery and toxicity testing using tissue engineering technologies.



3D Cell Culture

More physiologically relevant condition for cell culture.



Oncology

Replicate 3D tumor microenvironment with control over extracellular matrix components and mechanical properties.



HTS screening

Assay-ready 3D tissues compatible with lab automation system.

The company is exhibiting at SLAS in Boston – the home of numerous biotechnology firms, global pharmaceutical companies and biomedical investment firms – to broaden their portfolio of partners and research organizations seeking innovative approaches to critical drug development and testing processes.

To schedule a meeting with VivoSphere during SLAS, please contact Yuan Tian at yzt0028@auburn.edu.

About SLAS and Innovation AveNEW

Innovation AveNEW, part of the SLAS Ignite program, has been boosting the visibility of startups since its launch in 2007 when a specially designated area of the exhibit floor was set aside for emerging and start-up companies and has grown from a handful of vetted emerging biotech companies to the flourishing, eagerly anticipated showstopper it is today.

To learn more, visit vivospheres.com

Media Contacts:

Samuel Ginn College of Engineering: Joe McAdory jem0040@auburn.edu

New Venture Accelerator: Ward Swift wardswift@auburn.edu