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## UM Collaboration Leads to New Research Center in Poland

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## UM Collaboration Leads to New Research Center in Poland

Pharmacy researchers excited about possibilities of three-year collaboration

MARCH 10, 2016 BY ERIN GARRETT



Bialystok University of Technology's Scientific and Research Centre

OXFORD, Miss. – A new center devoted to natural products research has been dedicated at **Bialystok University of Technology** in Poland, due in part to collaboration with the **University of Mississippi School of Pharmacy**.

Located in Hajnowka and funded by the European Union, the state-of-the-art Scientific and Research Centre is overseen by Bialystok's Faculty of Forestry. The center is strategically located near one of the oldest forests in Europe. Bialowieza Forest, which is 7,000 years old, holds great potential for the discovery of new natural products

that could be used to develop medicines to treat a broad range of ailments.

"The new center will expand research capabilities of an existing team of scientists in Hajnowka," said Jordan Zjawiony, UM professor of **pharmacognosy**. "It is the first center in Europe that is conveniently located within a natural setting. As such, there is endless potential for accelerated research on plants and fungi from this ancient forest."

Zjawiony, who has worked with natural products for 26 years, was instrumental in the development of the center. He delivered a keynote address at the center's opening in November.

"We found common interest with professor Zjawiony about the great natural resources of Bialowieza Forest," said Sławomir Bakier, dean of the Faculty of Forestry and professor at Bialystok. "We have decided to develop collaboration between two laboratories, which initiated scientific and student exchange."

Bakier said the center will provide a wide range of research possibilities.

"Our laboratories are very diverse and include areas to study entomology, waste forest products, environmental monitoring and genetics," he said. "One is especially important: the supercritical fluid extraction lab. There are few labs of this nature in Poland, and even in Europe as a whole."

Zjawiony will further collaborate with Bialystok and the new center through a three-year project funded by a grant from the **National Science Foundation** (grant no. 1459504). The grant allows groups of Ole Miss students to travel to Europe each summer to conduct research in the Bialowieza Forest alongside Bialystok students and scientists.

The first year of the project went very well, Zjawiony said.

"Thanks to tremendous dedication of Bialystok scientists who voluntarily worked with our students, the first year of our project was successful," he said. "With the new center in Hajnowka, I have high hopes for even greater collaboration in the future."



UM professor Jordan Zjawiony gives a keynote address at the Scientific and Research Centre's opening in November.

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