I am very proud to say our first employee was a Buffalo native who had gone to Silicon Valley and he was looking to come back to the region.”

Glenna Bett, PhD, Founder and CEO, Cytocybernetics
How UB builds a winning partnership

Two UB professors, Glenna Bett, PhD, and Randall Rasmusson, PhD, launched Cytocybernetics and designed a machine called the CytoCyte that delivers a missing electrical charge to newly created heart cells, making it possible to test the impact of new drugs on the heart. The process can save hundreds of millions of dollars in the drug discovery process. “We found there was a piece of machinery that didn’t exist, so we made it,” Bett said. After describing the device at an annual meeting of the Biophysical Society, people asked where they could get one, “So we came back to UB and started a company,” she said. The university assisted with applying for a patent, getting grants and even providing entrepreneurial training, all of which made the company possible. “We’ve really benefited and it has been one super supportive journey with UB,” Bett said.

How industry wins

“Without having the support, it wouldn’t have been possible,” Bett said. UB has helped in securing UB CAT grants, encouraging the new company to apply to the 43North business plan competition and getting the company into the START-UP NY program, which helps Cytocybernetics recruit because employees pay no state income tax for 10 years. Between grants and contest winnings, the company has raised nearly $2 million.

How the region wins

The company is helping build the region’s life sciences economy and creating high paying, technical jobs. “I am very proud to say our first employee was a Buffalo native who had gone to Silicon Valley, and he was looking to come back to the region,” Bett said. “We’ve always felt good about that.”