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Charles Jones, PhD, Chief Executive Officer, Abcombi Biosciences
How UB builds a winning partnership

Abcombi Biosciences is on the verge of a vaccine revolution. The company, launched out of a UB lab, takes a novel approach to attacking diseases caused by bacteria. Traditional vaccines attack bacteria when it tries to colonize in the human body, and if the bacteria survives, there is nothing left to combat it. Abcombi’s vaccine attacks the bacteria only when it has been disturbed and transformed into its virulent state. Founder, Charles Jones said, “There are close to 100 variants of the pneumococcal bacteria. The current vaccine tackles only 13 variants. We can cover all of them.” Embraced by UB he said, “The reality is that UB, and Buffalo in general, is a highly supportive entrepreneurial ecosystem.” Disappointed with other universities and the cursory and cold financial review he received, Jones states, “We found that other universities are not grounded in reality with their valuations. It’s about the money. Although there is a financial motive at UB, there seems to be a genuine desire for the companies to succeed.”

How industry wins

“It’s hard for me to envision a future, or where we are today, without UB’s assistance,” Jones said. Abcombi utilized many programs available through UB, including funding from the Bright Buffalo Niagara business competition, Critical Path and National Science Foundation (NSF) programs. “All the key events for the company were all initially orchestrated by the university,” Jones said. Abcombi, still active with UB’s research labs, is developing an alternative to Tamiflu.

How the region wins

Jones pays it forward. He searches out venture capitalists to come to Buffalo. “I am actively recruiting,” Jones said. He explains to them how working in Buffalo brings “the most bang for the buck,” including lower rents and salaries. “They hear that and they perk up,” he said. “We want to stay in Buffalo. It’s the most efficient deployment of the capital that we have.”