

## **Tulane grad student lands Silicon Valley biotech deal**

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Bioinnovation PhD student Nicholas Pashos explains his innovation that aims to transform breast reconstruction surgery.

A team from one of the nation's hottest biotech sectors tapped Tulane Bioinnovation PhD student [Nicholas Pashos](#) to join an intensive, four-month program in San Francisco to fast-track high-potential startups.

Biotech accelerator [IndieBio](#) will invest \$250,000 in Pashos' company [BioAesthetics](#) to help him develop his innovation that aims to transform breast reconstruction surgery. Pashos invented an experimental graft that he hopes plastic surgeons can use to regenerate a nipple and areola for complete breast restoration after cancer treatment.

"This is a fantastic opportunity for BioAesthetics," said Pashos, who begins the program on May 1. "It's more than just the money. The program encompasses quite a lot to get both the business and the science to the next level."

The deal includes access to an experienced team of industry mentors, lab space and connections to successful biotech entrepreneurs and West Coast venture capitalists. The program will help Pashos develop the product for clinical trials.

Pashos said he couldn't have developed his idea without the unwavering cross-campus support he's gotten at Tulane. As part of the interdisciplinary [Bioinnovation program](#), he's had help from the schools of medicine, science and engineering, and business; Tulane National Primate Research Center; the office of technology transfer and the New Orleans BioInnovation Center. School of Medicine Chief Business Officer [James Zanewicz](#), who brought IndieBio to Tulane to meet Pashos and others, said the team saw great potential in Tulane research.

“This opportunity validates the entrepreneurial spirit that many investigators at Tulane have,” said Pashos’ mentor, [Bruce Bunnell](#), director of the Tulane Center for Stem Cell Research and Regenerative Medicine. “It also demonstrates belief in the technology by folks at the forefront of biotechnology in the United States.”

Pashos is part of the first cohort in Tulane’s Bioinnovation PhD program, which provides career development opportunities at the boundary between academia and industry.

“Our process is specifically designed to foster Tulane's community of academic interdisciplinary innovation and entrepreneurship by linking laboratories across schools to work together towards the development of marketable technologies and devices,” said director [Donald Gaver](#), chair of Biomedical Engineering. “This is the first time we’ve had an investment of this type and magnitude for our students’ marketable technology. We are thrilled with Nick’s success and the indication it provides for the value of our program.”