

Copyright 2005 PR Newswire Association LLC.
All Rights Reserved.
PR Newswire US

November 14, 2005 Monday 2:00 PM GMT

LENGTH: 759 words

HEADLINE: Zell Lurie Institute's Wolverine Venture Fund Makes Latest Round of Investments;

Pioneering Student-Run Venture Fund Provides MBA Students Real Investment Experience and Drives Significant Business Returns

DATELINE: ANN ARBOR, Mich. Nov. 14

BODY:

ANN ARBOR, Mich., Nov. 14 /PRNewswire/ -- The Wolverine Venture Fund (WVF), the first student-run venture fund in the United States and a signature program of the Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for **Entrepreneurial** Studies (as part of the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of **Michigan**), today announced its latest portfolio investments. Rounding out its investment portfolio to six companies, the WVF invested \$50,000 each in Direct Flow Medical, Inc. and Nanocerox. The WVF is nationally recognized and invests primarily in early-stage, emerging growth companies with the active involvement of MBA students, faculty and an advisory board comprised of professional venture capitalists and entrepreneurs. The Fund typically provides \$50,000 to \$200,000 in seed and first-stage funding rounds in a syndicate with other venture capital funds and angel investors.

Direct Flow Medical, Inc. is a medical device company headquartered in Santa Rosa, Calif. that is developing a stent-less system for percutaneous (passed through unbroken skin) replacement of the aortic valve. Nanocerox is an emerging producer of mixed-metal oxide nanoscale ceramic powders based in Ann Arbor, Mich., with a wide variety of applications, including military armor, paint pigments, lighting components and sensors. The WVF investment was part of a recently completed \$2.5 million round of funding by Nanocerox. MBA students performed the necessary due diligence on these companies before making their recommendation to the advisory board, and upon approval, invested in each company.

"The Wolverine Venture Fund is not just a classroom exercise -- it is a real fund with real investment capital and consequently, real risk," said Timothy Faley, Ph.D., managing director of the Wolverine Venture Fund and the Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for **Entrepreneurial** Studies. "First- and second-year MBA students work to research and evaluate all of the companies, meet to discuss their potential, and make the final investment decision. As the first fund of its kind, the WVF continues to provide MBA

candidates with 'real world' venture capital experience while at the University."

"This is a true University of **Michigan entrepreneurial** success story," said Steve Swanson, CEO of Nanocerox. "The Wolverine Venture Fund's investment in Nanocerox is a testament to the caliber of **entrepreneurial** training available at the University of **Michigan**. It's a full-circle event -- to have a company that was founded at the University and later invested in by its students. We view the WVF as an important partner and welcome the investment as a significant part of a \$2.5 million round of funding that will move our business forward."

WVF Highlights

Launched in 1997, the WVF was the country's first student-led venture fund and set the precedent for other universities, business schools and **entrepreneurial** centers to follow suit. Over the course of its investment career, WVF has not only provided students with a unique first-hand experience but also helped launch emerging companies and position them for success.

Recent WVF portfolio company achievements include:

* October 2004, the WVF received a \$1 million return on its investment when IntraLase Corp., a University of **Michigan** spin-off technology company, became a publicly traded company.

About the Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for **Entrepreneurial** Studies

Formed in October 1999, the Institute actively engages the nation's most successful entrepreneurs and offers an outstanding faculty comprised of both academic researchers and practitioners in entrepreneurship. The Institute's mission is to focus the capabilities and resources of the top-ranked Ross School of Business at the University of **Michigan** to provide education, and experience in entrepreneurship; serve as a catalyst for new venture development; and contribute research in the field of entrepreneurship. Members of the Advisory Board include Samuel Zell, Chairman of Equity Group Investments; Michael Hallman, former COO of Microsoft Corporation; and Eugene Applebaum, Founder of Arbor Drugs, Inc. For more information, visit the Institute at <http://www.zli.bus.umich.edu/> .

CONTACT: Erin Muhlhan of FitzGerald Communications, +1-617-585-2226, emuhlhan@fitzgerald.com ; or Mary Nickson of Samuel Zell and Robert H. Lurie Institute for **Entrepreneurial** Studies, +1-734-615-4424, mnickson@umich.edu

Web site: <http://www.zli.bus.umich.edu/>

SOURCE Samuel Zell & Robert H. Lurie Institute for **Entrepreneurial** Studies

URL: <http://www.prnewswire.com>