

AU dedicates center for analyzing materials of the future

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New products for energy, environmental, and medical applications depend on development of new materials, many of them ceramic-based. Alfred University (AU), with its international reputation in ceramics, glass, and materials science, is helping to create those new materials.

And a new Center for High-Temperature Characterization of Materials, dedicated Friday (Oct. 5) afternoon, will help researchers analyze the new materials and their characteristics, an integral step in development of new products.

State Sen. Catharine Young joined Alfred University President Charles M. Edmondson and Doreen Edwards, dean of the Kazuo Inamori School of Engineering, to dedicate the Center for High-Temperature Characterization at Alfred University.

“We are here today to thank Sen. Young for her assistance in creating this unique facility; there is nothing else like it in the world,” said Edmondson. “It took a person of vision to see the possibilities in what we were talking about when we first went to Albany to seek funding. Sen. Young was that person. She understood what we were trying to do.”

“It’s always a great day when we can cut a ribbon,” said Young. “It’s a special day when we can cut a ribbon for a facility that is so high-tech, so unique, and so crucial to the economy of New York State now, and in the future.”

Facilities like the Center for High-Temperature Materials Characterization not only help to keep jobs in New York State, but “actually bring projects from companies outside the state to Alfred, NY,” said Young.

She congratulated the students on hand for the ceremony “for choosing Alfred University, for having the initiative and the talent” to earn their degrees from AU. The Inamori School of Engineering offers undergraduate degrees in biomedical materials engineering science; ceramic engineering; and glass science, as well as in mechanical engineering and renewable energy engineering, a brand-new major just approved by the state.

“You will have endless opportunities in the future because of what you are doing here,” Young told the students.

The Center contains five suites of highly specialized equipment for analyzing materials that are either processed or used at very high temperatures (1300-degrees C).

Sen. Young was instrumental in securing the original \$4 million allocation from New York State. The Western New York Regional Economic Development Council awarded an additional \$2.9 million for the equipment in the first round of funding through the state’s new process of allocating funds for economic development projects.

In the past year, the Center for High-Temperature Characterization has been critical in Alfred University researchers securing about \$3 million in highly competitive grants from the National Science Foundation, the federal Department of Energy and the Defense Department.

Additionally, General Electric received \$2 million in New York State Energy Research and Development Authority funding for NY-BEST, the state's battery initiative. GE, in turn, has contracted with Alfred University to undertake characterization and analytical work on the new battery materials at a cost of \$1.2 million.

In addition to the research projects, the high-temperature materials characterization center is doing analytical work for New York State companies including Corning Inc., Corning; TAM Ceramics, Niagara Falls; Cummins Engine, Jamestown; Dal-Tile and Cooper Power, Olean; Free Form Fibers, Saratoga Springs; Air Flow Catalyst Systems, Rochester; and Ceragen, Alfred.