

Centre for Innovation in Life Sciences receives big investments

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A new life sciences lab at Seneca will power a significant increase in applied research for the diagnostics and cosmetics industries, while providing advanced learning opportunities for hundreds of Seneca students and recent graduates.

The Seneca Centre for Innovation in Life Sciences (SCILS) will conduct industry-partnered, applied research in life sciences diagnostics and novel cosmetics formulations overseen by Seneca's [School of Biological Sciences & Applied Chemistry](#) – home to Canada's first graduate certificate program in [cosmetic science](#).

SCILS has been funded by \$2 million from the National Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, \$1 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation and College Industry Innovation Fund and \$1 million from the Ontario Research Fund, with the remaining \$5.4 million coming from support from industry research partners and institutional investments.

“Seneca is grateful to the federal and provincial governments and our industry partners for helping to make SCILS a reality for our students, faculty and regional innovation ecosystem,” said Seneca President David Agnew. “The much-needed applied research conducted at the centre will help small- and medium-sized Canadian companies enhance, refine and test life sciences diagnostics technologies, and develop safe, marketable cosmetics products.”

Located at the Seneca@York Campus, the 279 m² centre will feature a bio-safety lab and a Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certifiable clean room. It will support product development, enhancement and validation, while providing industry partners access to talent and expertise from students and faculty.

“We're committed to supporting product development, enhancement and validation,” said Ben Rogers, Dean, Seneca Innovation. “SCILS provides applied research partners expertise from students and faculty, as well as access to industry-grade infrastructure.”

Applied research at SCILS focuses on life sciences diagnostics, which includes metabolomics testing, biochemical diagnostics, immunodiagnostics and molecular diagnostics – used in either clinical or industrial settings. It also helps companies develop safe cosmetic products.

These research activities offer employment and experiential learning opportunities to close to 500 Seneca students and recent graduates. Work at SCILS will also help address the severe labour shortages being reported in bioscience companies.

As part of this strategy, and to introduce the SCILS to the broader community, Seneca and the Ontario Bioscience Innovation Organization are hosting an insight session on the state of talent development within the Ontario life science manufacturing sector. This event takes place Thursday, Nov. 17 at [Seneca Downtown](#).

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