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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Cutting edge surgery training tools net UWO researcher OCE Martin Walmsley Award**

**TORONTO** – The development of synthetic models that actually mimic human tissue that can be used for surgical practice and training has earned a University of Western Ontario (UWO) researcher the Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Martin Walmsley Fellowship for Technical Entrepreneurship.

Leonardo Millon, who holds a PhD in biomedical engineering from UWO, leads a team that is developing the synthetic anatomic models to provide realistic surgical experiences without the obvious risks of operating on live patients.

Through a research project supported by OCE, Millon developed models of different tissues and organs such as the aorta and coronary arteries. They are made from a novel proprietary material that is non-toxic and has a very similar composition to soft tissue.

“We are proud to honour Leonardo with the Walmsley Fellowship which will accelerate this technology to help him achieve the next level of commercial development,” said OCE President and CEO Mark Romoff, who presented the \$50,000 award at OCE’s Annual General Meeting in Toronto. (The full award includes \$100,000 over two years.) “His technology could have a profound impact on surgical training, giving surgeons the chance learn procedures faster and with more accuracy.”

Traditionally, surgical training is conducted in two ways. It is performed on living patients which carries with it medical, legal and ethical risks. Human and animal cadavers are also used for surgical training but it has a host of limitations, the main one being that it does not replicate living tissue.

Millon believes his models will give surgical trainees a head start on developing their skills because they have the ability to practice over and over. He has founded start-up company LifeLike Bio Tissue Inc. to provide these surgical training materials to medical schools in Southwestern Ontario, beginning with his alma mater. In the future, it’s possible these materials will be used in medical schools across Canada, North America and globally.

The Martin Walmsley Fellowship for Technological Entrepreneurship facilitates the transition of OCE-funded university-based research into innovative business ventures. An expert panel selects the candidates, who are judged on criteria including strength of technology, commercial viability and sound business planning. The Fellowship honours the vision of Dr. Martin Walmsley, who was instrumental in founding the Ontario Centres of Excellence program in 1987.

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*Ontario Centres of Excellence (OCE) Inc. drives the commercialization of cutting-edge research across key market sectors to build the economy of tomorrow and secure Ontario's global competitiveness. In doing this, OCE fosters the training and development of the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs and is a key partner with Ontario's industry, universities, colleges, research hospitals, investors and governments. OCE's Centres work in communications and information technology, earth and environmental technologies, energy, materials and manufacturing and photonics. OCE is funded by the government of Ontario and is a key partner in delivering Ontario's Innovation Agenda. OCE through its Centre for Commercialization of Research (CCR), an initiative supported by the Networks of Centres of Excellence of Canada, also acts as a catalyst which allows innovative businesses to grow and achieve sustainable, commercial success and global competitiveness.*