

Another sign of vitality for UB

Its reputation is certainly not as a high-level research institution, but more is going on at the University of Bridgeport these days than meets the eye.

As a member of a group called the Applied Nanotechnology Consortium, the university is involved in a \$2.4 million U.S. Army project aimed at creating a camera that can transmit video as it hurtles — like a mortar round, say — through the air.

THE ISSUE

University has begun new high-level research.

OUR TAKE

Army contract a boost for once-struggling institution.

Also involved in the project is the University of Hartford, the University of Connecticut, the Connecticut Center for Advanced Technology Inc. and four private-sector companies.

The goal of the project is to create an unmanned device that will hold a miniature camera capable of transmitting video over large distances in real time. The device, compared in size to a soda can, would fly at a speed of about 150 mph for about 40 seconds, a tiny cousin of the unmanned drones that have been used so effectively in war zones like Afghanistan and Iraq. Someone monitoring the device would see what it sees, as it sees it.

The idea is for the device to be small enough that a soldier could carry two.

Tarek Sobh, dean of UB's engineering school, was understandably excited about participating in the Army project. Not only is the challenge something that any engineer would want to take on, but the prestige of participation will be an undeniable boost to the school's profile as a research institution.

UB, Sobh noted, has won some NASA grants and has worked on other sophisticated engineering project, but this Army project could be the gateway to bigger things.

This Army award is a pleasing development for a university that in the 1990's was fighting for its very survival.