

The field of bioengineering is in its infancy – it is the only engineering discipline that developed post WWII. Later, in 2000, the National Institute of Biomedical Imaging and Bioengineering was established as a home for bioengineering at the National Institutes of Health. By the late 1960's, the first biomedical engineering departments were formed at the University of Virginia, Case Western Reserve University, Johns Hopkins University, and Duke University. Major trends in public health including rising health care costs, re-emerging diseases, and an aging population demanded a field equipped with tools to tackle these problems. The Whitaker Foundation played a key role in supporting the growth of the field, contributing more than \$700 million to schools and universities to develop their own biomedical engineering programs between 1975 and 2006. Willem Kolff, Ph.D. conducted research and experiments that led to the advent of kidney dialysis in the late 1940's. The beginning of the modern era of bioengineering was marked by the introduction of recombinant DNA technology (DNA produced artificially in the lab) in the 1970's. Towards the end of the 20th century, significant advances in technology spurred the development of the Human Genome Project and a revolution in biotechnology innovation around the world. The past three decades continued to solidify bioengineering as a discipline uniquely positioned to advance human health at the cutting edge of medical technology. For the future, individuals educated with an integration of engineering with biology will be able to contribute not only to advances in medicine, but also to other society problems such as energy, the environment, and food. The Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, which launched in 1998, immensely supported the biomedical engineering community for nearly two decades.