

April 18, 2022

## Space station builder to lease space in Winston-Salem regenerative medicine accelerator

AXIOM SPACE

REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

SPACE EXPLORATION

WFIRM



*Image credit:*

*Axiom Space*

**WINSTON-SALEM** – The company behind the world’s first commercial space station is setting up an operation in Winston-Salem.

The focus of the Axiom Space’s presence in the region is on regenerative medicine, and is in partnership with two Winston-Salem organizations. It aims “to advance in-space regenerative medicine biomanufacturing,” according to a news announcement on Monday.

[Axiom Space](#) will partner with the [Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine](#) (WFIRM) and the [RegenMed Development Organization](#) (ReMDO). The company will also lease space in the ReMDO Innovation Accelerator.

That tenancy sets the company up to accelerate the “translation of regenerative medicine technologies to patients,” according to an advisory. Axiom Space will also be able to access the [test bed](#) that the Innovation Accelerator provides, and WFIRM will provide “a supportive research environment,” according to the media advisory.

The collaboration will “expand the commercial space economy and support biomedical commercial innovations and manufacturing for biomedical applications in low orbit.” The space station developed by the company will sit 250 miles above the surface of the Earth, meaning that the research conducted on the space station “will be free from the constraints of gravity, providing great potential and benefits.”

“This partnership paves the way for an entire commercial industry on board Axiom’s space station that will enable our scientific research teams to advance biomanufacturing to bring new treatments that cannot be developed on Earth and treatments for conditions that affect the human body when exposed to the harsh environment of space travel,” said Dr. Anthony Atala, the director of WFIRM. “We can literally take the regenerative medicine field to a whole new level.”

## SPACE MISSION IN PROGRESS

The company [launched its Ax-1 Mission](#), a private 10-day mission to the International Space Station (ISS), from NASA’s Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Friday, April 8. According to a [statement](#), the four crew members “will spend eight days on the ISS conducting more than 25 scientific research and technology demonstrations.”

“This robust portfolio opens more opportunities to scientists and researchers around the globe and will provide vital data in preparation for Axiom Station, the world’s first commercial space station,” the statement notes.

The company said that the space station “will eventually replace the International Space Station which NASA will decommission in 2031.”

According to Christian Maender, the director of in-space manufacturing and research at Axiom Space, regenerative medicine is an important focal point for commercial space initiatives. The collaboration provides “new hope for breakthrough treatments,” Maender noted in a company statement.

# WINSTON-SALEM A HUB FOR REGENERATIVE MEDICINE

Earlier this year, Winston-Salem-based [Precise Bio raised \\$15.5 million](#) to advance its technology. The company was co-founded by Atala, according to the company's [SEC filing](#).

A grant from the National Science Foundation in 2021 is expected to [provide workforce development opportunities](#) to establish a skilled workforce in the field of regenerative medicine. And a team of researchers affiliated with Wake Forest University won a NASA challenge focused on [developing lab-grown human vascular tissue](#) last year. A second team of researchers from Wake Forest also participated in the challenge, and finished in second place, according to NASA.

The RegeneratOR Test Bed, opened in June 2021, as a partnership between WFIRM and ReMDO. The project's focus is to launch startups, [advance the regenerative medicine ecosystem](#), and spur economic development in Winston-Salem.

“As a member of the Innovation Accelerator, Axiom Space brings exciting capabilities that exist nowhere else in the world,” said Josh Hunsberger, PhD, CTO of ReMDO, in the statement. “In addition to our initial focus, we anticipate other opportunities will result from this collaboration that will lead to regenerative medicine breakthroughs.”

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