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Acucela to Participate in an Upcoming Joint Panel of the Japanese Economic Foundation and the Center for Strategic and International Studies

BOTHELL, Wash. (January 20, 2010) – Acucela, a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on developing new treatments for blinding eye diseases, announced today that Ryo Kubota, M.D., Ph.D., Acucela’s chairman, president and chief executive officer, is scheduled to participate in the upcoming joint meeting of the Japanese Economic Foundation (JEF) and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), which will be held at 9:00 a.m. EST on January 27, 2010 at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. The event, titled “What is Next for the U.S. and Japanese Economies?” will focus on the future of the Japanese and American economies, and Dr. Kubota will participate in the panel titled, “Agenda for Bilateral Cooperation.”

“The current and future economies of Japan and America are significant not only to the people living in the individual countries, but also to the larger global economy,” stated Dr. Kubota. “We are excited to discuss the importance of synergistic relationships between global leaders such as Japan and America and the potential breakthroughs that can develop from collaborations between the two countries' innovative and emerging companies.”

Acucela has forged a strategic partnership with Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. to co-develop ACU-4429, the company’s novel visual cycle modulator (VCM), in dry age-related macular degeneration (dry AMD) as well as other potential indications in North America. Acucela and Otsuka are also collaborating on the clinical development efforts in the United States for Rebamipide, an ophthalmic suspension currently in late stage clinical development for the treatment of dry eye, with Acucela spearheading the regulatory strategy for this program. This partnership provides Acucela with full development funding for its two lead programs.

About the Japan Economic Foundation

The Japan Economic Foundation (JEF) was established in July 1981 to deepen understanding between Japan and other countries through activities aimed at promoting economic and technological exchange. JEF celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2006. With this goal in mind, JEF engages in a broad range of activities; it provides information about Japan and arranges opportunities to exchange ideas among opinion leaders from many countries in such fields as

industry, government, academia and politics in order to build bridges for international communication and to break down the barriers that inhibit mutual understanding.

About the Center for Strategic and International Studies

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) provides strategic insights and policy solutions to decision-makers in government, international institutions, the private sector, and civil society. A bipartisan, nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, DC, CSIS conducts research and analysis and develops policy initiatives that look into the future and anticipate change.

About Acucela Inc.

Acucela Inc. is a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on leveraging promising science in visual cycle modulation (VCM) to develop new methods for treating blinding eye diseases that affect tens of millions of people worldwide. The company's orally-delivered VCM therapies, which selectively target cells within the retina to protect visual acuity, have the potential to be used to treat several devastating eye diseases, including dry age-related macular degeneration (AMD), retinopathy of prematurity, Stargardt disease and diabetic retinopathy. Acucela is also developing, with Otsuka Pharmaceutical, Rebamipide ophthalmic suspension, a product candidate for dry eye. For more information, please visit www.Acucela.com.

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