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Contact:
Francesca T. Nolan
Director, Corporate Communications
Acucela Inc.
Phone: (206) 805-8308
Email: francesca.nolan@acucela.com

Acucela Inc. to Participate in Upcoming Symposium on U.S.-Japan Dialogue to Promote Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation

Seattle, Washington (January 16, 2012) – Acucela Inc., a clinical-stage biotechnology company focused on developing new treatments for blinding eye diseases, today announced that Ryo Kubota, M.D., Ph.D., Acucela’s chairman, president and CEO, is scheduled to participate in the upcoming symposium, U.S.-Japan Dialogue to Promote Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Job Creation, to be held Wednesday, January 25, 2012, from 14:00 – 17:30 at Mita Kaigisho (Mita Conference Hall) in Tokyo. The event, titled “New Era: Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Japan” will focus on entrepreneurship, the Japanese and American economies and opportunities for private-sector cooperation between Japan and the United States in fostering high-growth businesses. Dr. Kubota will participate in the first panel, titled “Entrepreneurship in a New Decade – Leaders and Trends.”

“In today’s global economy, it is essential to have ongoing dialogue between international leaders such as Japan and America, and this symposium offers a unique opportunity to foster collaboration between our two countries' emerging companies,” said Dr. Kubota. “I am excited to be a part of this event and look forward to participating in an open and engaging discussion with other entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and business leaders.”

The symposium is being held in connection with the third meeting of the bilateral dialogue and the launch of the U.S.-Japan Innovation and Entrepreneurship Council and one that Dr. Kubota has participated in the past. It is hosted by the Japan Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State; the Japan Academic Society for Ventures and Entrepreneurs; Stanford Project on Japanese Entrepreneurship (STAJE); the Stanford Program on Regions of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SPRIE); the University of Tokyo and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

About Acucela Inc.

Acucela Inc. (www.acucela.com) 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 compounds, which selectively target cells within the retina to protect visual acuity, have the potential to treat several devastating eye diseases, including dry AMD, for which there is currently no treatment options, retinopathy of prematurity, Stargardt disease and diabetic retinopathy. ACU-4429 for dry AMD is being co-developed by Acucela and Otsuka Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. in North America, and the companies are also co-developing Rebamipide for dry eye and OPA-6566 for glaucoma in the United States. Acucela was founded by Ryo Kubota, M.D., Ph.D., a pioneer in ophthalmology and the discoverer of the gene that causes glaucoma.

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