

Sunesis Promotes Gradon Knotts to Vice President, Business Development

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South San Francisco, CA, May 26, 2005 – Sunesis Pharmaceuticals, Inc. today announced the promotion of Gradon Knotts to the newly created position of Vice President, Business Development. Mr. Knotts joined Sunesis in May 2003 as Senior Director, Business Development, bringing more than fifteen years of relevant industry experience to the position. In his new role, Mr. Knotts will be responsible for overseeing all product and technology in-licensing and out-licensing activities and will report directly to Daniel Swisher, Sunesis' Chief Executive Officer.

“Gradon’s leadership in working with our partners, including Biogen Idec, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Johnson & Johnson and Merck, has greatly contributed to our success in managing our current portfolio. To date, Sunesis has received approximately \$57 million through payments resulting from collaborations,” said Mr. Swisher. “Strategic collaborations that allow us to take full advantage of our proprietary drug discovery engine, Tethering®, as well as the in-licensing of highly promising compounds that complement our existing internal portfolio of product candidates, are important aspects of our business plan.”

As Senior Director, Business Development, Mr. Knotts has been responsible for the implementation of Sunesis’ partnering strategy and has played a central role in the management of Sunesis’ internal portfolio review and prioritization process. From 2002 to 2003, Mr. Knotts served as Senior Director, Business Development for Xenogen Corporation where he set strategy and took a lead role in several deals for Xenogen’s biophotonic imaging product line. From 1995 to 2001, Mr. Knotts held positions of increasing responsibility, including Director, Strategic Marketing and Business Development for Roche Bioscience, playing a significant global role in strategic marketing and new product planning for all programs within the inflammatory diseases therapy area. From 1991 to 1994, Mr. Knotts conducted market, contract and financial analysis with Syntex Corporation. Mr. Knotts holds a B.S. in Finance from Brigham Young University and received an M.B.A. from the University of Notre Dame.

About Sunesis Pharmaceuticals

Sunesis is a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical company focused on the discovery, development and commercialization of novel small molecule therapeutics for oncology, inflammatory diseases and other unmet medical needs. Sunesis has built a product candidate portfolio through internal discovery and in-licensing of novel cancer therapeutics. Sunesis is advancing its product candidates through in-house research and development efforts and strategic collaborations with leading pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical companies. For further information, visit www.sunesis.com.

Forward-Looking Statements

This press release may contain forward-looking statements that involve substantial risks and uncertainties. Sunesis may not actually achieve the plans, intentions or expectations contained in such forward-looking statements. Actual results or events could differ materially from the plans, intentions and expectations contained in such forward-looking statements. Sunesis does not assume any obligation to update any such forward-looking statements.

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