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Lilly Endowment announces an initiative to build opportunities for college graduates in Indiana

Increasing meaningful economic opportunities in Indiana is a key aim of a new initiative from Lilly Endowment Inc. The Endowment is offering up to \$40 million to Indiana colleges and universities to devise new educational programs that will lead to the identification and development of such opportunities in Indiana for college graduates.

Over the past several years, the Endowment has encouraged efforts to improve the unacceptably low educational attainment levels of Indiana's residents. It has funded research to learn more about the problem, provided support to strengthen Indiana colleges and universities, and approved grants to an array of institutions from colleges and universities to community foundations and from K-12 organizations to Goodwill Industries. This initiative builds on these efforts.

According to research sponsored by the Endowment and conducted by the Indiana Fiscal Policy Institute, Indiana is a net exporter of college graduates. Many observers believe the principal reason for this is that the Indiana economy does not have a sufficient number of attractive jobs for college graduates. A 2002 report from the institute states that from 1965 until 2000 Indiana's rank in per capital personal income declined more than any other state, and according to the Indiana Manufacturers Association, from 2000 to 2002, Indiana lost more jobs than any other state.

"Indiana is not well prepared to prosper in the future," said Sara B. Cobb, the Endowment's vice-president for education. "To help address this critical challenge, the

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Endowment through this initiative seeks to enlist the creativity and networks of Indiana's colleges and universities. Strategic collaborations among colleges and universities and businesses and community organizations are providing excellent experiential educational opportunities and showing promise as catalysts for economic growth in regions around the country."

The Endowment hopes that in developing proposals that fit the capacities and situations of the respective institutions, the colleges and universities will engage their alumni, faculties, students, staffs, donors, business colleagues and communities. The Endowment expects that many of the proposals will involve enhanced internship and placement opportunities, but it is open to any educational program that brings together innovative ideas with expertise and other resources for exploiting them in ways that advance economic opportunity in Indiana.

Although the initiative is not competitive, only proposals that show promise will be approved. The amounts of the grants to be offered will vary according to the number of students in the institutions, ranging from \$5.5 million for Indiana University and \$3.5 million for Purdue University to \$750,000 for many of the state's smaller liberal arts colleges. There is a possibility that additional funding may be provided for proposals that demonstrate exceptional collaborative aspects or merit in other ways.

Informational meetings for college and university representatives are scheduled for next month.