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Indiana University will use \$53 million Lilly Endowment grant to boost life sciences in Indiana

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- Indiana University President Adam W. Herbert announced today (Dec. 16) that the Lilly Endowment Inc. is giving IU Bloomington \$53 million to broaden and intensify its life sciences research, retain its distinguished scientists, attract new world class scientists and contribute to the state's economic development by transferring technology to new and existing life science businesses. The grant is the largest IUB has ever received.

These funds will be focused on metabolomics and cytomics, emerging fields that are bringing an explosion of genetic information to bear on scientists' understanding of metabolism and the inner workings of cells. The new Indiana Metabolomics and Cytomics (METACyt) Initiative will build on the foundation of genomic and proteomic research already taking place at IUB and complements the 2001 Indiana Genomics Initiative at IU, also funded by the Lilly Endowment. As life scientists get closer to putting human genome information to use, metabolomics and cytomics research promises to answer

Media may contact:

IU Media Relations
812-856-3342

Larry MacIntyre, Director

812-856-1172

Imacinty@indiana.edu

Susan Williams, Asst. Director

812-855-8773

sulwilli@indiana.edu

Contact Information

- David Bricker
IU Media Relations
brickerd@indiana.edu
812-856-9035
 - Gretchen Wolfram
Lilly Endowment Inc.
wolframg@lei.org
317-916-7304
-

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key questions about cancer and other diseases, leading to faster diagnoses and more effective treatments.



Photo by: David Bricker

A biologist uses her own eyes to examine those of a fruit fly. IU Bloomington is a major center for fruit fly genetics.

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"IU is now poised to establish international intellectual leadership in these new areas of life sciences research," Herbert said. "We at IU are deeply grateful to the Lilly Endowment for recognizing the quality of our life sciences research program and investing in its bold expansion."

Lilly Endowment Vice President for Education Sara B. Cobb said, "This forward-looking initiative will significantly advance Lilly Endowment's efforts to build the intellectual capital in our state, which we believe is so vital to the future prosperity of Indiana."

One of the Indiana METACyt Initiative's goals is to ensure that life sciences discoveries result in a full range of scientific, educational and related economic benefits for the state of Indiana. To that end, the Indiana METACyt Initiative will encourage IUB life scientists to stay in Bloomington while simultaneously attracting top research talent from around the world. The initiative also will spur innovation and intellectual property development,

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and drive an increase in research income from federal agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Health.

The Indiana METACyt Initiative also will support technology transfer derived from basic research and encourage the founding of new businesses based on initiative discoveries. Working with the IU Research & Technology Corporation, IUB life scientists will be able to bring useful laboratory discoveries to the Indiana private sector.

The grant will support one of President Herbert's strategic objectives: to double IU's external research funding by the end of the decade. In FY 2004, IU set an internal record with \$413 million in external funding.

"This extremely generous grant from the Lilly Endowment will ensure that IU Bloomington's outstanding researchers in biology, chemistry, psychology, informatics and other areas will be able to fully contribute to the state's dynamic efforts to build an internationally competitive capability in life science research," said IU Vice President for Research and Information Technology Michael A. McRobbie, who led the development of the Indiana METACyt Initiative.

Scientific investigation by members of the Indiana METACyt Initiative will be focused on five areas: microbial systems, cell signaling and differentiation, molecular neurosciences, molecular evolutionary and developmental biology, and analytical technology development. Research in these areas often will be multidisciplinary, bringing together biologists, chemists, physicists, medical researchers and specialists in

computer science and informatics.

An intimidating stream of raw genetic information produced by the human genome and other projects has led to increased demand for informatics and computer science experts who can bring meaning and order to the data.

The Indiana METACyt Initiative also includes Integrating Science and Technology Centers that will employ scientists and technicians who will support and collaborate with investigators by performing biochemical, functional genomics and computational cytomics analyses, as well as chemical imaging and assaying.

The Lilly Endowment grant also will provide money for greenhouses, nuclear magnetic resonance equipment, facilities for the study of gene expression in mice and an expansion of IU's advanced information technology infrastructure.

A life sciences boom is already underway in Bloomington. Simon Hall, a 140,000-square-foot research and teaching facility funded by the state and members of the Simon family, is currently under construction. Life scientists, recently surveyed by *The Scientist* magazine, named IU one of the 10 places they'd most like to work.

"Basic research is the font of all technological and clinical advancements," said College of Arts and Sciences Dean Kumble R. Subbaswamy. "This grant is like an infusion of rocket fuel into the machinery of basic life sciences research at IU. It will help keep Indiana competitive in this rapidly evolving field of global significance."

**To speak with Michael A. McRobbie
or Dean of The College Kumble R.
Subbaswamy or an IU life scientist,
please contact David Bricker at 812-
856-9035 or brickerd@indiana.edu.**

**To speak with a representative of
the Lilly Endowment Inc., please
contact Gretchen Wolfram at 317-
916-7304 or wolframg@lei.org. A**

**Webcast of the announcement of
this gift from the Lilly Endowment
Inc. can be viewed at [http://www.
broadcast.iu.edu](http://www.broadcast.iu.edu).**

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107 S. Indiana Ave. Bloomington, IN 47405-7000
812-856-3342

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