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Indiana University Statehouse visit to focus on life sciences research

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BLOOMINGTON, Ind. -- Seven of Indiana University's leading scientists will be at the Indiana Statehouse on Wednesday (March 1) to discuss the progress they are making in life sciences research -- research that could have an impact on new treatments for cancer, diabetes and neurological conditions. They will be joined by Michael A. McRobbie, interim provost and vice president for academic affairs at IU Bloomington. The exhibit will run from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. A reception is scheduled from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in the north atrium of the building.

"Indiana University's highly talented life sciences faculty, combined with the bold and innovative goals established in the life sciences strategic plan, will provide a competitive edge in applying for major research grants," IU President Adam W. Herbert said before the Statehouse visit. "The continued growth of our life sciences research activities, especially in Bloomington and Indianapolis, will provide the foundation for an expanded life sciences economy throughout the state of Indiana. We are proud to share with the legislative community how Indiana University is making a difference in improving the health and prosperity of Hoosiers."

On Feb. 3 the university announced its comprehensive Life Sciences Strategic Plan that aligns all existing and new initiatives. The plan outlines how Indiana University can position itself as one of the nation's top research centers in six areas of the life sciences, including analytical chemistry, cancer biology, diabetes and metabolic disorders, neuroscience, organic chemistry and model systems in biological research.

"Indiana University's bold vision, innovation and talent in life sciences research will provide the university a competitive edge in applying for major research grants, while supporting a new economy in the life sciences for the state of Indiana," McRobbie said. "We invite the legislative community to learn how Indiana University is making a difference in improving the health and prosperity of Hoosiers."

Participating IU scientists include Dr. Robert Bacallao, associate professor of medicine, and associate

professor of anatomy and cell biology, Indiana Center for Biological Microscopy; Katy Börner, associate professor of information science, adjunct associate professor of informatics, and core faculty of cognitive science; Kay Connelly, assistant professor of computer science and associate director of IU's Center for Applied Cybersecurity Research; Linda Malkas, professor of medicine, Vera Bradley Chair in Oncology and co-founder of csKeys LLC; Dr. Susanne Ragg, assistant professor of pediatrics and director of the Center of Excellence in Computational Diagnostics; Olaf Sporns, neuroscientist and associate professor of psychology; and Julie Stout, associate professor of psychology and neural sciences.

"Indiana University researchers and clinicians are making excellent contributions to the life sciences, and it is only the beginning," Malkas said. "This is our time to shape the kind of future we want for ourselves and our children. With local, state and national partners, we can make a difference."

IU will continue to build on life science research activities already taking place by recruiting top research professionals for IU's Bloomington and IUPUI campuses; doubling research grant and contract awards; matching laboratories in Bloomington with those at the IU School of Medicine; adding laboratory, office and teaching space for dedicated life sciences research; and continually enhancing its networking and supercomputing capacity.

"With a shared vision among IU's campuses, this plan will foster more opportunities for collaborative research among our campuses and scientists in multiple disciplines," McRobbie said. "Together, these scientists can build upon the research strengths of IU Bloomington -- occurring at the bench of several laboratories -- and the research and clinical strengths of the IU School of Medicine."

To support the growth of life sciences research and to build a new economy in Indiana, in 2003 the university opened the Biotechnology Research and Training Center and established the Emerging Technology Center to serve as a technology business incubator for entrepreneurs.

Indiana University's most recognized life sciences initiatives, funded by the Lilly Endowment, include:

- Indiana Genomics Initiative, INGEN, which is building a world-class biomedical enterprise on the existing strengths at the IU School of Medicine and the IU Office of Information Technology, making new discoveries to cure diseases and improve human health.
- Indiana Metabolomics and Cytomics, METACyt, which centers on research that will enable scientists to understand the metabolism and the inner workings of cells through the genetic information, and will help answer key questions about cancer and other diseases, leading to faster diagnoses and more effective treatments.

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