

## Former UMBI Institutes Launch July 1 as Newly Aligned Research Centers at Partner USM Campuses

Adelphi, Md. (July 1, 2010) - Research centers previously aligned with the former University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute (UMBI) officially begin their realignment today with other institutions within the University System of Maryland (USM).

This restructuring, approved by the USM Board of Regents in June 2009, is expected to pave the way for more multi-disciplinary and collaborative research across the system and increase access to outside funding for research. It is also expected to yield a higher level of technology transfer, commercialization, and business start-ups, and thereby advance economic development statewide.

The action followed the recommendations of an ad hoc committee of regents appointed by Board Chairman Clifford Kendall in February 2009 to review UMBI's mission and organization as well as consider alternative organization options.

Following is a summary of the newly created centers, once based at the former UMBI.

• Institute for Bioscience Biotechnology (IBBR). The IBBR is a research collaboration among the University of Maryland, College Park (UMCP), the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). The IBBR will build upon the resources and strengths of the former Center for Advance Research in Biotechnology (CARB) at the Universities at Shady Grove (USG, one of the USM's two system-wide regional centers) and the former Center for Biosystems Research (CBR) at UMCP.

Under IBBR's inaugural director, Donald L. Nuss, Ph.D., the center will focus predominantly on three complementary research areas: nanobiotechnology, drug and vaccine discovery, and pathobiology (the study of disease processes). UMCP will have administrative responsibility for the joint research center. The center will be headquartered at USG.

- Institute of Marine and Environmental Technology (IMET). IMET is a joint USM research center at which the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC); the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (UMCES); and UMB will share facilities and resources. The partner institutions will collaboratively advance research and create technologies for the protection and restoration of marine systems and watersheds, sustainable use of their resources, and improvement of human health. Yoni Zohar, Ph.D., a UMBC faculty member, will serve as IMET interim director. Russell Hill, Ph.D., an UMCES faculty member, will serve as IMET interim associate director. The center will be based at the Columbus Center in downtown Baltimore at the former Center of Marine Biotechnology (COMB).
- Medical Biotechnology Center (MBC) at UMB. The MBC is affiliated with the UMB campus, home of the University of Maryland School Of Medicine. The center's research will include health-related aspects of molecular biology and biotechnology, molecular medicine, and molecular genetics. In addition, research here will be enhanced by collaboration with the

bioengineering and computational faculty at UMCP. W. Jonathan Lederer, M.D., Ph.D., a professor in the School of Medicine, will serve as interim director. The center will be based at the UMB campus.

- Institute of Fluorescence (IOF). UMBC will have administrative responsibility for this former UMBI institute. Research is centered on the development of new leading-edge and existing fluorescence phenomena to resolve clinically, biologically and industrially important questions, such as technologies to facilitate early and rapid detection of bio-warfare agents. The institute will be based at the Columbus Center in downtown Baltimore. Chris D. Geddes, Ph.D., will serve as director.
- Towson University Center for STEM Excellence. The center's main goal is to provide statewide leadership in supporting the USM's STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) initiatives. This center will integrate Towson University's STEM education programs to establish the Baltimore Excellence in STEM Teaching (BEST) program. It will be based at the Columbus Center in downtown Baltimore.

"With a focus on collaboration--across disciplines and across institutions--and with recognition of the exceptional talent within the UMBI community and the system's other institutions, this action positions USM to take fuller advantage of its system-wide strengths in the biosciences and to fuel the state's knowledge economy even more," said Kendall, the board chair.

A subcommittee of regents in 2009 reviewed UMBI's history and structure. It also solicited the views of individuals and groups, including UMBI administrators, faculty, staff, and graduate students; members of the UMBI Board of Visitors; external scientists and administrators from higher education and government; and representatives from business and economic development organizations.

As a result of its comprehensive review, the committee found that "the organization of UMBI as a geographically dispersed, free-standing entity has created intractable problems." These included the lack of scale of UMBI programs, isolation among UMBI's research centers, lack of a critical mass of graduate and undergraduate students involved in UMBI research, and administrative inefficiencies.

The board directed the USM office to complete the restructuring by June 30, 2010, the end of the 2010 fiscal year. The regents charged USM Chancellor William "Brit" Kirwan to work with the UMBI center directors and the appropriate institutional presidents on memoranda of understanding (MOUs) outlining details of the future operations and collaborations. The chancellor presented the MOUs to the board as they were negotiated during the fiscal year. The first approval occurred in October 2009 and all MOUs were approved by February 2010.

"The launch of these realigned centers provides a tremendous opportunity for the University System of Maryland to increase the volume and impact of its basic and applied research in the biosciences," Kirwan said. "This restructuring has the potential to double the research productivity of UMBI's current assets within five years. Once these assets are joined with activities system-wide, USM will play an even greater role in positioning the State of Maryland as a national and international leader in the biosciences."

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