PRESS RELEASE

INDIANA UNIVERSITY WINS $1.6M GRANT FROM DEPARTMENT OF NAVY FOR STEM EDUCATION

Indiana University, August, 2015: Indiana University has been awarded a $1.66M, 5-year grant from the Department of Navy to develop a robust and innovative model to train diverse STEM researchers at Indiana University in partnership with an alliance of minority serving institutions (MSI). The initiative is aimed at strengthening the pipeline of graduates with the preparation and interest needed to pursue STEM careers by inspiring, engaging, and educating the next generation of scientists and engineers.

Indiana University’s MSI STEM model will capitalize on existing strengths of the university’s STEM academic departments, including the addition of engineering degrees at IU Bloomington, the individuated nature of education at MSIs; an engaged, proactive faculty; and the university’s success in developing specialized research programs with diverse participants. “The importance of preparing new talent for the STEM fields remains a national priority and Indiana University is well positioned to take a lead in developing a model that will expand student research opportunities as well as strengthen the future STEM workforce,” said lead project investigator Dr. James Wimbush, Indiana University’s vice president for the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs.

Indiana University was selected by the Department of Navy, in part, due to its successful STEM initiative with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). This initiative includes a partnership with 12 HBCUs, creating a pipeline that has increased the number of African American students equipped to enter and succeed in masters and Ph.D. STEM field graduate degree programs.

“A component of the initiative’s success is the STEM Summer Scholars Institute, an eight-week summer research program for high-ability students from our partner institutions,” said Dr. Jack Schmit, assistant dean of the University Graduate School and co-project investigator. Dr. Schmit continued, “Indiana University’s HBCU STEM initiative will be used as the foundation for the MSI STEM model. The grant will allow us to maintain our current partner relationships while we fully develop the new model.”

Central pillars of the initiative include extending Indiana University’s STEM alliance from 12 to 20 minority serving institutions; creation of a Faculty Research Development Institute; support for faculty/student exchanges between IU core campuses and the partner minority institutions; development of faculty-
student digital collaboration; and engagement of Naval Surface Warfare Center Crane Division (NSWC Crane) researchers and laboratories to support minority and underrepresented student research opportunities.

Department of the Navy HBCU/MI program director Anthony Smith said, “This program will provide an excellent opportunity for HBCUs and MIs to experience the importance of collaboration early in their scientific career. As scientists and engineers, all of what we do and accomplish, centers around working with a diverse team of individuals that possess vast areas of expertise. We, the DON HBCU/MI Program, are excited about the IU-MSI STEM Initiative and looking forward to years of success.”

This initiative will significantly increase exposure of naval programs, research support, and career opportunities to a broad range of students and faculty. Kirk White, Indiana University assistant vice president and military liaison said, “This latest agreement builds on the long-standing partnership between Indiana University and NSWC Crane and works to encourage a diverse range of Hoosier students to pursue STEM careers while contributing to our national security.”

“The creative research partnerships will have an impact for years after the grant concludes,” said Dr. Yolanda Treviño, assistant vice president for strategy, planning, & assessment, Indiana University’s Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs and co-project investigator. Dr. Treviño continued, “Faculty productivity and multiple collaborations will be the game changing solution that will have a far reaching impact for all institutions and STEM education far into the future.”

About the Office of the Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Multicultural Affairs (OVPDEMA)

OVPDEMA strives to foster an inclusive environment that promotes and nurtures diversity, broadly defined, on all campuses of Indiana University. To fulfill its mission, the office strategically focuses on the recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students; the promotion of a welcoming and positive campus climate; and engagement in outreach and advocacy locally and nationally.

OVPDEMA IU Bloomington academic support and diversity units:
21st Century Scholars Programs, Academic Support Centers; Groups Scholars Program, Hudson & Holland Scholars Program, Mentoring Services and Leadership Development, and Overseas Study Program

OVPDEMA Indiana University communities and culture units:
African American Arts Institute, Asian Culture Center, First Nations Educational and Cultural Center, GLBT Student Support Services, La Casa/Latino Cultural Center, Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center, Community and Student Engagement, Community and School Partnerships, IUAA Diversity Programs