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September 13, 2011

The University of Colorado Board of Regents today unanimously approved creation of the systemwide CU Biofrontiers Institute, building on the success of what began in 2003 as a grassroots "experiment" in the organization of multidisciplinary sciences.

The University of Colorado Biofrontiers Institute evolved from the Colorado Initiative in Molecular Biotechnology (CIMB), which began in 2003 as a collaboration among CU scientists in an effort to break down academic barriers and work across disciplines on significant challenges in bioscience and translating new knowledge into biotechnology solutions. The Biofrontiers Institute's director is Nobel Laureate and CU-Boulder Professor Thomas Cech, and the chief scientific officer of the newly named institute is CU-Boulder Professor Leslie Leinwand (former director of CIMB). The new Institute includes faculty members from across multiple CU campuses, departments and disciplines, including: chemistry and biochemistry; computational biology and computer science; molecular, cellular and developmental biology, applied mathematics; ecology and evolutionary biology, mechanical, chemical and biological engineering; physics; and civil, environmental and architectural engineering.

"This is an unprecedented moment in science; we are at the frontiers of truly understanding biology and applying that new knowledge to improving human health, fixing environmental issues, and a host of challenges yet to come," Cech said. "But to seize this opportunity we must develop new kinds of scientific organizations that bring bright, ambitious and collaborative researchers from many traditional disciplines together with the resources they need to make a difference. That was the founding goal of CIMB under Dr. Leinwand's strong leadership, and continues to be the primary mission of the Biofrontiers Institute.

CU President Bruce Benson said the institute will continue to advance Colorado's Front Range as a world-class center of scientific research.

"CU has tremendous faculty expertise on the leading edge of disciplines that address pressing issues facing our state and beyond," he said. "By bringing together that faculty expertise from all our campuses, we are furthering collaboration at the confluence of discovery and innovation."

In addition to bioscience research and its applications to biotechnology breakthroughs, the Biofrontiers Institute is also focused on educating the next generation of interdisciplinary scientists, beginning with its recently launched Interdisciplinary Quantitative Biology Ph.D.

program.

The Biofrontiers Institute headquarters will be in the new Jennie Smoly Caruthers Biotechnology Building on CU-Boulder's East Campus, which is scheduled to open in early 2012.

For more information about the University of Colorado Biofrontiers Institute please go to: <http://biofrontiers.colorado.edu> [2]

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