

Greetings from IUPUI

November 2009

We chose sustainability as the inaugural Common Theme this year.

The Common Theme Project promotes conversation on timely issues that connect IUPUI to central Indiana and the world. Each year, IUPUI will choose one book for sustained discussion across campus. Common Themes will change every two years.

This year's common book is Bill McKibben's *Deep Economy: The Wealth of Communities and the Durable Future*, in which he asserts that we have reached the environmental limits of a growth economy.

With the 350.org worldwide campaign, McKibben is leading grass-roots efforts for nations to make a commitment to set 350 parts per million as the safe upper limit for carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, as recommended by scientists.

Bill McKibben was featured at two free public events this month.

As part of IUPUI's involvement in the Spirit and Place Festival, McKibben was the keynote speaker at the IUPUI Campus Center, where his message captured the attention of nearly 1,000 students, faculty, staff, and community members on how to rethink and rebuild our economy for prosperity and sustainability. He also joined a panel of experts at the Indiana State Museum, to discuss, "Can Local Food Feed Indiana and the World?"

Through such forums, IUPUI will debate controversial issues and pursue action on matters for which we can take responsibility, such as recycling and building design.

The Eugene and Marilyn Glick Eye Institute, now under construction, is expected to meet the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Gold specification. The four-story, 70,000-sq. ft. building that will house the IU School of Medicine's Department of Ophthalmology is designed to use energy efficient systems and collect storm water to irrigate surrounding green space. It includes an outpatient clinic, optical shop, research space, classrooms, offices, meeting rooms, and room for program expansion.

The Richard G. Lugar Center for Renewable Energy at IUPUI also is a key part of university efforts to find solutions to sustainability and climate change.

At the opening of the Lugar Center for Renewable Energy at IUPUI in 2007, Senator Lugar framed the case that energy is a national security issue. Using energy wisely would allow America to eliminate

dependence on unfriendly countries. He called for faculty researchers to inform policy makers about strategies and solutions.

The Institute for 21st Century Energy, an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, issued an Open Letter last year, calling for better policy as well. An especially important point made was that policy judgments should be based on facts and the best science and that the nation needs to "resist efforts to approach energy policy in a piecemeal manner" that is "too concentrated on any single source" of energy. If this advice is followed, it will mean that faculty researchers—whether focused on wind, solar, nuclear, or other energy sources—will have free rein to do their work without being frozen out by competition or narrowly focused biases that steer funding to one area and not another.

Last August, IUB and IUPUI researchers joined in a two-day intensive conference to build collaborations aimed at applied energy research.

More than 200 participated in the conference with plans to develop a comprehensive energy research plan at IU. At our Lugar Center alone, areas of research include renewable energy through fuel cell technology, renewable hydrogen, bio-fuel production, advanced battery technology, and hybrid electric vehicles—as well as policy and societal issues.

In a *New York Times* editorial last month, Tom Friedman wrote:

"The world is on track to add another 2.5 billion people by 2050, and many will be aspiring to live American-like, high-energy lifestyles. In such a world, renewable energy—where the variable cost of your fuel, sun or wind, is zero—will be in huge demand."

Noting that the renewable energy industry in Germany has meant some 50,000 new jobs and is now second only to its auto industry, Friedman states that China is also ready to make renewable energy its next global industry. The U.S. is barely in the game!

With the new strategic approach to energy research under development at IU, IUPUI's Lugar Center for Renewable Energy is among those poised to help bridge that gap and set Indiana up for leadership.

Charles R. Bantz
Chancellor

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