

From the Desk of the Chancellor – August 7

A lot of scientific attention has been paid lately to an organ that tips the scale at about 3 pounds and represents only about 2 percent of the average person's weight. That organ is the human brain. Although the brain has been an object of fascination since earliest recorded history, we are only just beginning to learn how it functions in Alzheimer's, Parkinson's disease, Lou Gehrig's disease, traumatic brain injury, mental illness, and other neurological disorders. Knowing how cells send and interpret signals holds the answers to these and many other questions about brain activity.

Establishing the study of neurosciences and the treatment of brain disorders as a core research priority across the IUPUI campus began more than a decade ago. Neuroscience research took another great stride forward on Monday, August 6, when we broke ground for the Neurosciences Research Building, to be located at 16th Street and Senate Avenue next to IU Health's brand-new neurosciences building. By locating with the IU Health Neurosciences facility and across the street from IU Health Methodist Hospital, there will be more opportunities for translating research into clinical practice.

A philanthropic gift set in motion the chain of events that has led to rapid advances neurosciences. In 2000, the late Paul Stark, and his wife, Carole, made a \$16 million gift to establish the Stark Neurosciences Research Institute. In 2002, Gerry Oxford, one of the top neuroscientists in the country, was recruited from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to be its executive director. In 2003, the Stark Institute moved into the newly dedicated Research 2 building.

One key advantage of the creation of IUPUI is bringing together research and teaching across schools. Thus in addition to the School of Medicine-based Stark Institute, the Research 2 building, partnership with clinicians at IU Health, other schools have grown the expertise and capacity to serve both workforce needs and understanding neurosciences. In 2002, the Department of Psychology in our Purdue School of Science began offering a concentration in behavioral neuroscience for undergraduates. This fall, its new Bachelor of Science program in neuroscience at IUPUI will begin accepting students.

In 2011, the interdisciplinary Indiana Center for Brain Rehabilitation, Advanced Imaging, and Neuroscience (CBRAIN) received three-year funding under the Signature Centers Initiative Grant Program. The center will conduct cross-disciplinary studies that will accelerate the translation of research into clinical practice. In addition to consulting faculty from more than half-dozen departments across campus, the new center includes such community partners as the Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana and Roudebush Veterans Administration Center.

Part of developing the know-how is having the right facilities and equipment for conducting research. We are proud to celebrate the construction of the new Neurosciences Research Building, which will bring together in one place many existing collaborations—such as the Institute of Psychiatric Research and the Stark Neurosciences Research Institute—and encourage even more. To understand the most complicated of organs, collaborations are essential!

Comments? Write_chancellor@iupui.edu.