MEDIA RELEASE

IBN opens its doors – and the minds of teachers
The Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology holds its first workshop for 57 secondary school and junior college teachers

SINGAPORE, 3 December 2004 – In line with the Government’s push to broaden a teacher’s experience outside the school environment, the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN) organized its first Workshop for Science Teachers today.

Attended by 57 teachers from 24 secondary schools and junior colleges, the workshop introduced participants to the cutting-edge work that is being conducted at IBN in varied fields such as drug and gene delivery, tissue engineering, biological and biomedical imaging, medical devices and nanobiotechnology. The workshop also provided them with the opportunity to interact with IBN senior scientists and gain hands-on experience working with sophisticated equipment in a research laboratory.

These teachers were encouraged to conceptualize teaching materials and experiments based on their experience at the workshop and exchanged ideas during a sharing session.

Minister for Education Mr Tharman Shanmugaratnam, who was the Guest-of-Honor at the IBN workshop, has been a proponent of teacher attachments and industrial training. He interacted with the teachers during a tea reception and also met with some 40 secondary school and junior college students currently on research attachment at IBN.

The teachers’ workshop is part of a series of youth outreach activities under IBN’s active Youth Research Program. In January to February this year, the institute kick-started its teacher attachment program with eight teachers from Raffles Girls’ School, Raffles Institution, Raffles Junior College and Hwa Chong Junior College. More recently, it held its first Open House for polytechnics and tertiary institutions on 26 November – an event that attracted 300 participants. It is currently hosting 60 students and 1 teacher on research attachment over this November to December school holidays.

Launched in October last year, IBN’s Youth Research Program aims to promote an active research culture amongst the young through career talks, Open Houses, workshops, and research attachments. To date, it has reached out to 2,800 teachers and students from more than 60 primary and secondary schools, junior colleges, polytechnics and universities in Singapore.

“Activities like the IBN Workshop for Science Teachers are aimed at giving teachers an overview of Singapore’s vibrant biomedical sector,” said IBN Director Noreena AbuBakar, who chairs the Youth Research Program. “The participants can gain an appreciation of the skills required in today’s cutting-edge research facilities and allow them to return to their classrooms with fresh perspectives in teaching.”
She added: “Our Youth Research Program has been conceptualized with the objective of drawing as many young Singaporeans as possible into the exciting world of research. We believe that teachers can make a great impact on the lives of our youths, and we always welcome any teacher who would like to take up a research attachment at IBN.”

In the coming months, IBN will continue to expand the reach of its Youth Research Program through Open Houses for the North, South and East neighborhood school zones (The IBN Open House for schools in the West zone was held on 6 September 2004). The institute will also continue to participate in career talks at the junior colleges, the National University of Singapore, Nanyang Technological University, and National Institute of Education.

About IBN's Youth Research Program

IBN started its Youth Research Program in October 2003 with the objective of exposing young Singaporeans of all ages to the immense possibilities in scientific research. The Program aims to give students a first-hand experience in research and to help teachers introduce biomedical applications in their school curriculum. To date, IBN has reached out to over 2,800 students and teachers from the Primary School to the University levels through activities such as open houses, visits, talks and research attachment programs.

About the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN)

The Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN) is a member of the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR). Established in 2002, the institute’s mission is to establish a broad knowledge base and conduct innovative research at the interface of bioengineering and nanotechnology. Positioned at the frontiers of engineering, IBN is focused on creating knowledge and cultivating talent to develop technology platforms that will spur the growth of new industries. IBN also fosters an exciting, multidisciplinary research environment for the training of students and young researchers to spearhead biomedical advancement in Singapore. For more information, please visit: www.ibn.a-star.edu.sg.

For more information on IBN, please log on to: http://www.ibn.a-star.edu.sg

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Annex

IBN Workshop for Science Teachers

List of Participating Schools
1. Anglo-Chinese Junior College
2. Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)
3. Bukit View Secondary School
4. Catholic High School
5. Catholic Junior College
6. The Chinese High School
7. Commonwealth Secondary School
8. Convent of the Holy Infant Jesus (Katong)
9. Fajar Secondary School
10. Henderson Secondary School
11. Nan Chiau High School
12. Nanyang Girls’ High School
13. Unity Secondary School
14. Paya Lebar Methodist Girls School
15. Punggol Secondary School
16. Queensway Secondary School
17. Raffles Institution
18. Shuqun Secondary School
19. St. Andrew’s Junior College
20. Swiss Cottage Secondary School
21. Tampines Secondary School
22. Victoria Junior College
23. Yishun Junior College
24. Yuying Secondary School

Participant break-down
Biology teachers: 12
Chemistry teachers: 21
Physics teachers: 23
General Science teacher (lower secondary): 1
Total number of participants: 57