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MEDIA RELEASE

Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology launches its Youth Research Program
Thirty students from Raffles Girls’ School and Raffles Institution get first-hand experience of a researcher’s life

SINGAPORE – As the Government directs its efforts in turning Singapore into a world-class biomedical sciences hub in Asia, many talented individuals have been recruited to lead the country in its drive.

Many job opportunities have opened up in the biomedical scene in recent years, and many more will surface as the Biopolis opens its doors later this month. One of the best ways of building our human capital in the biomedical industries is to make a long-term investment in our young.

The Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN) is strongly committed to nurturing young talents to meet the challenges of emerging industries.

Today, it kick-starts its Youth Research Program to introduce a group of 30 students from Raffles Girls’ School (RGS) and Raffles Institution (RI) to a career in research.

These students will spend two afternoons at our institute to get a first-hand experience of a researcher’s life. Besides receiving an introduction to IBN, they will get a chance to conduct experiments specially set up to represent the six key research areas at IBN under the supervision of the researchers.

These Secondary Two students will be able to gain an insight into the daily activities of a researcher, and share our passion in research work.

Next month, selected Secondary Four from RGS and RI as well as first year junior college students from Raffles Junior College will also get a chance to work on a research project at IBN, under the guidance of scientists at the institute.

This one-month, full-time research attachment will pair students with mentors, who will design the projects for their charges.
Recognizing that teachers also need avenues to inject fresh perspectives into their curriculum, IBN will be organizing attachment programs for teachers for the coming January.

As a start, teachers from the Raffles schools will work with IBN researchers to design interesting experiments in the fields of bioengineering and nanotechnology. These can then be incorporated into their classes and laboratory sessions.

There are also plans to involve schools such as Chinese High and Hwa Chong Junior College in the Youth Research Program.

IBN also participates in the Youth Outreach Program organized by the Agency for Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR). A*STAR works closely with the Ministry of Education to select junior college students for attachments at its 12 research institutes, including IBN.

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

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Annex A

About the Institute of Bioengineering and Nanotechnology (IBN)

The formation of IBN, formerly known as the Institute of Bioengineering, was endorsed by the International Advisory Council for Singapore’s Biomedical Sciences in March 2002.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology Professor Jackie Yi-Ru Ying, 37, was hand-picked by A*STAR chairman Philip Yeo to lead the institute as its Executive Director in March 2003.

Under her direction, IBN, one of the five biomedical research institutes at A*STAR, conducts research at the cutting-edge of bioengineering and nanotechnology. Its programmes are geared towards linking multiple disciplines across all fields in engineering, science and medicine to produce research breakthroughs that will improve healthcare and our quality of life.

Our six research areas are Nanobiotechnology; Delivery of Drugs, Proteins and Genes; Tissue Engineering; Artificial Organs and Implants; Medical Devices; as well as Biological and Biomedical Imaging.

IBN’s innovative research is aimed at creating intellectual properties in the emerging fields of bioengineering and nanotechnology. This will attract top-notch researchers and business partners to Singapore. Since the beginning of this year, IBN research staff has published 38 papers and applied for eight patents.

IBN will also play an active role in technology transfer and spinning off companies, linking its research institute and industrial partners to other global institutions.

As of October 2003, IBN’s staff strength stands at 90. By December 2006, it plans to expand to 250 staff to create a talent pool for new businesses and R&D centres. With its multi-national research staff, the institute is geared towards generating new biomaterials, devices, systems, equipment and processes to boost Singapore’s economy in the fast-growing biomedical sector.

IBN is also committed to nurturing young minds, and the institute will act as a training ground for PhD students and undergraduates. It is kick-starting a Youth Research Programme to open its doors to university students here, as well as students and teachers from various secondary schools and junior colleges.