

Record grant expands biomedical research network

Standing before a packed hall of students, researchers and area media last August in Pocatello, Boise State President Bob Kustra and his counterparts from the University of Idaho and Idaho State University together announced the largest single educational and research grant in state history.

The \$16.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health establishes the IDeA Network for Biomedical Research Excellence, or INBRE. It draws together nine Idaho higher education institutions and two research centers to pursue biomedical research.

The five-year INBRE grant expands on an \$8 million grant in 2001 that first drew together BSU, UI and ISU to establish the Biomedical Research Infrastructure Network. The expanded network will continue to focus on building an inter-

disciplinary research network focusing on cell signaling, increasing research partnerships, expanding outreach to



Idaho State President Richard Bowen (left), UI President Timothy White and BSU President Bob Kustra gathered Aug. 10 at ISU to announce a historic \$16.1 million grant.

other Idaho institutions and creating an educated work force. Students work with faculty

researchers at Boise State on a range of INBRE-supported projects, including studies involving Alzheimer's disease, breast cancer, artificial cartilage and chemotherapeutic drugs.

Science education established through the network also includes an annual summer science and math camp for minority and migrant youth run by the Boise State Center for Multicultural and Educational Opportunities.

Kustra notes that the INBRE program benefits students enrolled in colleges and universities throughout Idaho. "Working together, we will help bring biomedical research opportunities to students who otherwise could not have participated. This will help prepare them for important careers that also pay well," he says.

\$2.3 million grant will benefit GED program for farmworkers; BSU's proposal scores highest in nation

Boise State University is the recipient of a new five-year \$2.3 million grant to assist seasonal and migrant farmworkers or their children achieve the GED, a high school diploma equivalency. The ongoing program, part of the federally funded High School Equivalency Program, or HEP, works with individuals from across Idaho.

Boise State's grant application was the highest-scored proposal in the nation, says Scott Willison, director of Boise State's Center for Multicultural and Educational Opportunities and a professor of education.

Students accepted into Boise State's HEP program range from ages 16 to 60. They receive free instruction and assessments, along with all educational materials and, when appropriate, either residence hall or travel expenses. In the past decade, more than 1,000 students have been served by Boise State's HEP program.

Students who participate in the residential program on the Boise State campus live in residence halls and attend GED classes either in Spanish or English. There are also

commuter programs in Burley, Twin Falls, American Falls and Canyon County.

It can take people anywhere from two months to two years to earn their GED, says Willison. Students must pass tests in American government, social studies, science, reading, writing and mathematics.

According to Willison, funding for the HEP grant was especially competitive this year because of other federal funding priorities; representatives from the U.S. Department of Education told applicants that as a result many of the HEP programs across the country would not be funded. Willison says he was concerned because his program was competing with programs in Florida, Texas and California, all of which have large numbers of migrant workers.

"The program is the major source of support for seasonal farmworkers who receive a GED, and had the program not been funded there would have been a big void," Willison says.