

# NEWS RELEASE

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## Connecticut Science Center, Connecticut State University System launch collaboration; “i<sup>4</sup> Initiative” will highlight science education & research applications

The Connecticut Science Center and the Connecticut State University System (CSUS) today announced a partnership that will bring science applications developed by university faculty at Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Connecticut State Universities to Connecticut Science Center visitors.

The new “i<sup>4</sup> Initiative” will showcase science research and applications underway at the four universities, and highlight career paths for young people pursuing scientific fields. Initial applications to be featured include geology, genetics, navigation and technological simulations.

Science faculty from a range of academic disciplines will be included on a rotating basis each year. Leaders of both organizations say the i<sup>4</sup> initiative, as the collaboration is called, will help to ignite a fresh look at science by students and citizens across the state.

“The initiative is all about the innovation, ingenuity, imagination and invention that’s taking place right here at Connecticut’s state universities,” said Matt Fleury, president and CEO of the Science Center. “Exposing our visitors firsthand to these superb CSUS faculty and



students helps achieve our mission of elevating the profile and knowledge of science and scientists here in Connecticut.”

“Yankee ingenuity is alive and well in a new generation, and this partnership is a dynamic opportunity to shine a spotlight on what is happening and what can happen in Connecticut,” said CSUS Chancellor David G. Carter. “The i<sup>4</sup> initiative will illustrate the excellence of the research being done, encourage young students to pursue careers in the sciences, and make connections between science education and Connecticut’s future.”

The universities will provide new application demonstrations each year, beginning this summer, culled from proposals developed by university faculty and connected with the Connecticut Science Center’s diverse exhibit galleries. The partnership will include university graduate and undergraduate students in a range of capacities, including working directly with student visitors in hands-on science.

The i<sup>4</sup> initiative has been in development for more than a year. Faculty proposals are reviewed by a peer committee and presented to CSC education staff. Selected faculty projects receive the support of the universities and the CSC for their completion.

The initial programs developed through the i<sup>4</sup> initiative are:

- **Life’s Common Thread - Genetics** will provide a basic understanding of genetics, techniques for analyzing DNA, and research applications that illustrate how genetics is

used to understand health and in tracking ancestry. It builds off the research of a team of Connecticut high school students who helped identify the genetic marker for a mutation that results in curly hair. Visitors to the Science Center will have the opportunity to analyze DNA and explore research applications that illustrate how genetics are being used to understand health and physical traits. The research program is led by **Patricia Szczys in the Department of Biology at Eastern, Thomas King in the Department of Biomolecular Sciences at CCSU, and Denise Mathews, who teaches at Eastern in the Communications Department.**



- ***The Dynamic Earth - Geology*** will provide a basic understanding of geology, promote increased knowledge of erosion, explain how scientists examine historical data to interpret land changes, and provide a unique artistic look at the topic. **Professor William Jones, in the art department at Eastern,** has developed an artistic application to scientific study of changes in the landscape and geological processes. He is joined by **Cynthia Coron in the Earth Sciences Department and SCSU** and **James Hyatt in Eastern's Department of Environmental Earth Science.** Science Center visitors will get an overview of Connecticut's unique geology and then examine historical data sets to assess weathering, erosion, plate tectonics and the human-influenced changes on the land.
- ***Finding Our Way - Navigation and Remote Sensing*** will present a historical perspective of multicultural navigation, as **WCSU's Theodora Pinou and SCSU's Scott Graves** have developed a unique a wii-based tracking devise that will help visitors explore navigation and how past cultures have solved the problem of understanding where they were, how to get to someplace else, and return again. Within the Science Center, visitors will use the device to experience remote sensing. Research on satellite tracking of marine turtles around the globe, for example, present real-world applications to remote sensing technology and how it is increasing our understanding of earth systems.
- ***Simulating the Human Body*** will demonstrate how a sophisticated, computer-controlled machine can simulate the human body's responses and create experiences close to human patients. **SCSU Department of Nursing Professor Barbara Glynn** is an expert in utilizing state-of-the-art simulators to allow students to put theory into practice through hands-on realistic experiences. Connecticut Science Center visitors will be able to interact with the simulator as well as observe and understand the work of nurses in health care settings.

"We have been thoroughly impressed with the caliber of the proposals, and we are excited about bringing them to the people of this state and region, said Louise Feroe, senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs. "The initial round of exhibits is only the first step in this relationship, and we are looking forward to building on this foundation."

Officials plan to include videocasts and podcasts in addition to on-site demonstrations by faculty from CSUS, which is Connecticut's largest university system with nearly 36,000 students. Students from the four universities working towards education degrees may also participate in the initiative, collaborating with science educators in working with students visiting the Science Center.

The Connecticut Science Center, slated to open in downtown Hartford this June, is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing science education throughout the state of Connecticut, providing learning opportunities for students and adults of all ages, and engaging the community in scientific exploration.

“There is a lot to discover, right in our own backyard, at the CSUS universities and in the Connecticut Science Center, and that is good news for Connecticut’s future,” Carter added. To learn more about the Connecticut Science Center visit [www.CTScienceCenter.org](http://www.CTScienceCenter.org). Additional information about the **i<sup>4</sup> initiative** is on the web at [www.ct.edu/i4](http://www.ct.edu/i4).

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