

# “The Cyberinfrastructure Building: Continuing the Journey”

## Cyberinfrastructure Building Dedication

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President

Indiana University

Marshal H. Wrubel Commons

Cyberinfrastructure Building

IU Bloomington

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### 1. WORLD-CLASS IT AT IU: A FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

Information technology is fundamental to every aspect of Indiana University from education to research to administration. Increasingly the best universities will be those that utilize IT in the best and most productive ways. The basis for conducting first-rate competitive research is to have first-rate competitive information technology infrastructure, and the basis for the most effective pedagogy these days and in the future intimately involves IT.

This magnificent new Cyberinfrastructure Building that we are dedicating today is a vital step in ensuring the provision of world-class IT services and facilities at IU in a stable and reliable manner.

The name of this building itself reflects this. Cyberinfrastructure is the complex integration using high speed networks of geographically distributed services, supercomputers, massive data storage devices, and a diverse array of research devices from high-powered microscopes to DNA sequencing arrays to radio and optical

telescopes. On top of all of this is an extensive set of research, educational, and administrative applications and services.

This building and its partner building in Indianapolis, the Information and Communications Technology Complex—or ICTC—Building, are the heart of IU's cyberinfrastructure.

Cyberinfrastructure, more broadly, is at the heart of all great research universities and research enterprises.

## 2. THE IU TECHNOLOGY CORRIDOR

The extensive expertise that will now be located here will also contribute to the foundations of IU's new Technology Park on the Bypass.

This area anchors one end of the IU Technology Corridor, which runs along the Bypass to IU's recently renamed Integrated Science and Accelerator Technology Hall at the northern end.

The Cyberinfrastructure Building provides a keystone for this developing area here at Tenth and the Bypass—IU Tech Park East—which also contains the IU Innovation Center and the IU Data Center.

These buildings represent one aspect of the future of Indiana University: a future of pervasive technology, innovation, and energetic and creative collaboration.

### 3. SPECIAL THANKS TO THE INDIANA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Let me recognize, at the outset, how grateful we are for the support that the Indiana General Assembly has given us over the years.

In addition to the \$16 million for this project, this has included generous support for the IU Data Center and the I-Light optical fiber network, the first of its kind in the nation, which provides the foundation of our cyberinfrastructure, is so important to the redundancy and security of IU's IT systems, and serves the higher education community throughout the state.

In difficult financial times it is often easy to forget that the relationship between public higher education and the representatives of the people of this state who are elected and who serve in state government is a partnership that has worked well for many, many years.

At IU, we value that partnership and look forward to doing our part to strengthen it in the years to come.

I would like to pay special tribute to Indiana Senator Vi Simpson and Indiana Representatives Peggy Welch and Matt Pierce, who have been strong advocates for this project and whose unwavering and strong support for higher education in this state over many years is deeply appreciated by all of us at Indiana University.

I would also like to recognize the transformative support of the late Senator David Ford, to whom I awarded the IU President's Medal posthumously, without whose efforts this state would not be where it is today with regard to information technology.

Would you please join me in thanking all of our state legislators?

#### 4. A VISION FOR INDIANA UNIVERSITY: IT AND OUR FUNDAMENTAL MISSIONS

Our state legislators join many people across the university who have had a vision for Indiana University: a vision for how IU can further enhance its status as an IT leader and thereby further support our academic and research missions; a vision for the role research plays in the economic life of the state; and a vision for how IU can better and more effectively serve the state of Indiana.

The Cyberinfrastructure Building is an important part of that vision.

This highly functional and reconfigurable space is already helping to further leverage IU's IT resources by consolidating many of IU's IT staff on the Bloomington campus into one building, enabling staff to collaborate more easily, share resources, and generate ideas.

These last three elements—collaboration, sharing resources, and innovation— are key to IU Tech Park East here at Tenth and the Bypass. We dedicated the IU Innovation Center and the IU Data Center within days of one another in 2009. And just last April, we rededicated the IU Integrated Science and Accelerator Technology Hall at IU Tech Park North, which accommodates three distinct groups owing their origins to the university's prolific research and technology accomplishments in physics: the Center for Exploration of Energy and Matter; the IU Health Proton Therapy Center; and IU Cyclotron Operations.

All of these facilities demonstrate the power of proximity in research and education— key attributes in attracting compatible private sector interest and investment along the Technology Corridor and subsequent job growth in our community.

IT at IU is among the best in the world because it is fully engaged with our research and educational missions while driving the efficiency and effectiveness of our administration.

This new facility cements and enables us to further enhance and expand our IT leadership, but we have never done IT for IT's sake. Every advance that we are making in terms of information technology—network computing, grid computing, cloud computing, E-Texts, open source software, digital libraries, cybersecurity, and numerous other areas—is closely linked with, and integrated into, our research and educational programs.

For nearly two decades, the level of innovation and effectiveness of developments coming out of IU in these and other areas has been so high that they have influenced the development of IT at universities across the country and around the world.

## 5. A BUILDING FOR AND ABOUT PEOPLE

As home to information technologists from across this campus, the new Cyberinfrastructure Building is truly a building for and about people. Let me recognize a number of people whose tireless efforts helped us reach this day.

Vice President and CIO Brad Wheeler has done a superb job in bringing this project through its final stages to reality.

I also want to recognize and thank a host of outstandingly talented people from University Information Technology Services, most of whom I worked with very closely over many years and who were intimately involved in what was an extremely complicated undertaking.

In particular, a special thanks goes to Laurie Antolovic, whose contributions to this facility cannot be overstated. This building has been her primary focus for two solid years, and she has paid attention even to the most minute of details.

In fact, I understand that when she was told there was a fee to unbolt and remove the chairs from the patio area outside for this ceremony, she decided she would do that herself to save the university money. Those of you who know Laurie know that story is probably true.

Let me also thank Sue Workman, who led the early conceptual planning for this building.

Please join me in thanking all of our colleagues for what have been outstanding contributions to this project.

## 6. A CONTINUING JOURNEY

Let me end on a personal note.

When I first came to Indiana University, IU's 16<sup>th</sup> President Myles Brand challenged me to make Indiana University a leader in the "uses and applications of information technology—in absolute terms."

I believe we achieved this goal many years ago. We set out to achieve it through a strategic plan. Mike Dunn, later IU's first Dean of Informatics, chaired the preparation of that plan, and Dennis Gannon, one of our honored guests today, chaired a key subcommittee in the strategic plan's preparation.

A further plan was developed a few years ago under Brad's leadership, and its implementation continues to this day.

A key part of the vision for the original plan was two buildings to be the fulcrum of IT at IU. We dedicated the ICTC Building at Indianapolis in 2004.

The plan for the building we dedicate today ironically started with it in this area, then it moved to 7<sup>th</sup> Street with a magnificent building designed by the architect John Belle, then moved to Walnut Grove Street opposite MSBII and David King worked on that design, and finally around 2005 back to this site as two buildings, the first of which was the Data Center.

A nearly 15-year odyssey finally finds us safely in harbor.

To me this building represents the end of a remarkable journey that commenced with Myles' vision in 1996.

But like Columbus, who first sighted America 519 years ago yesterday, there are many other voyages yet to make.