

MGHPCC Receives \$4.54 Million Grant from MLSC for Computer System for Life Sciences Research

HOLYOKE, Massachusetts, Thursday, Feb. 28, 2013 – The Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) has received a \$4.54 million grant from the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) for a computer system to be used for research in the life sciences.

The grant ensures a strong life sciences program at the MGHPCC, which is operated by Boston University, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University and the University of Massachusetts. Developed with financial support from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Cisco and EMC, the MGHPCC was conceived to support research by university faculty across all scientific disciplines and encourage collaboration among the participating institutions.

The new MLSC-funded system, called the Commonwealth Computational Cloud for Data Driven Biology, will be dedicated to enhancing life sciences research through large-scale computation and big data analytics.

"This will allow Massachusetts life science practitioners to harness digital data in new ways in many areas, spanning basic investigations of neural structure and cellular systems biology to new computationally aided tools in clinical practice," said Christopher N. Hill, principal research engineer at MIT's Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences and leader of the MLSC proposal team. "The mixing and matching of different Commonwealth research endeavors under a single virtual and physical roof is just the sort of thing the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Consortium was established to catalyze."

"Biomedical sciences are in the midst of a revolution, where many of the challenges are becoming large-scale data problems. This investment will poise the state of Massachusetts as a leader in the development of computational methods to make new discoveries and a catalytic force in applying these discoveries to improve health care," said Manuel Garber, associate professor in the Program in Bioinformatics and Integrative Biology at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

Through the MLSC, Massachusetts is investing \$1 billion over 10 years in the growth of the state's life sciences supercluster. These investments are being made under the Massachusetts Life Sciences Initiative, proposed by Governor Deval Patrick in 2007, and passed by the State Legislature and signed into law by Governor Patrick in 2008.

"This investment will help keep Massachusetts at the forefront of computation-enhanced life sciences research," said Susan Windham-Bannister, the president and CEO of the MLSC. "We want to leverage the resources of the MGHPCC to expand our capacity for genomics research and personalized medicine, two promising fields where advanced computing capabilities are essential."

Specifically, the new computer system funded by the MLSC – to include hardware, software and applications -- will:

- Boost individual and collaborative work in big data-enhanced life sciences research by the MGHPCC's participating universities.
- Provide on-demand, big-data-enhanced life sciences capabilities to the start-up and enterprise community across Massachusetts.

- Connect commercial enterprises and the research community, and encourage the exchange between them of ideas and innovation in big data-enhanced life sciences.

About the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center

The Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center (MGHPCC) is a ground-breaking collaboration of five of the state's most research-intensive universities, state government and private industry — the most significant collaboration among government, industry and public and private universities in the history of the Commonwealth, and the first facility in the nation of its kind. The 90,000-square-foot computing facility in Holyoke, Massachusetts, opened in November 2012. Funding was provided by the five member universities - Boston University, Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Northeastern University and the University of Massachusetts -- the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Cisco, EMC, and the Federal New Markets Tax Credit program. The member universities will fund the ongoing operation of the MGHPCC. For more information on the Massachusetts High Performance Computing Center, visit <http://www.mghpcc.org>.

About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center

The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is a quasi-public agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts tasked with implementing the Massachusetts Life Sciences Act, a 10-year, \$1-billion initiative that was signed into law in June of 2008. The MLSC's mission is to create jobs in the life sciences and support vital scientific research that will improve the human condition. This work includes making financial investments in public and private institutions that are advancing life sciences research, development and commercialization as well as building ties among sectors of the Massachusetts life sciences community. For more information, visit www.masslifesciences.com.

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