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2015 SLAS Leadership Forum: Rethinking the U.S. Biomedical Research Model

SLAS convened expert panel to engage discussion of major issues in life sciences R&D at SLAS2015

CHICAGO – The Society for Laboratory Automation and Screening (SLAS) brought together a select group of researchers and executive management professionals to learn about, share perspectives and discuss topics of particular interest to life science research and development professionals at SLAS2015.

The inaugural SLAS Leadership Forum featured a panel:

- James Sterling, Ph.D., 2015 SLAS Leadership Forum moderator, and interim dean, College of Natural Sciences and director of Minerva Labs, Minerva Schools at the Keck Graduate Institute of Applied Life Sciences
- Donald Ingber, M.D., Ph.D., SLAS2015 keynote speaker, professor of bioengineering, Harvard University, and founding director of Harvard's Wyss Institute
- Alicia Löffler, Ph.D., associate provost, Innovation and New Ventures at Northwestern University
- Rob Nail, co-founder of Velocity 11 and associate founder of Singularity University

The panelists engaged some 50 SLAS Leadership Forum participants in discussion prompted by a 2014 paper that suggested the U.S. biomedical research system is broken. Forum participants represented a range of academic and industry organizations such as the Broad Institute, Genentech, Labcyte, Merck, Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute and the University of Kansas.

SLAS Leadership Forum discussion centered around current and emerging alternatives for funding innovative research; providing new opportunities for young scientists entering the field; and fostering collaborations among industry, academia and government for mutual benefit and for the advancement of life sciences research.

Panel moderator Sterling emphasized that the SLAS Leadership Forum “was a great beginning to exploring where our members are on these issues, how their organizations are approaching some of the problems related to biomedical research funding and the role SLAS can play in supporting and moving the scientific community forward.” As part of that support, SLAS President Dean Ho, Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, announced at the opening session of SLAS2015 that the Society is launching a new SLAS [Graduate Education Fellowship Grant Program with \\$1M in funding](#) to enable students to pursue advanced degrees, and ultimately careers, in quantitative biosciences.

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2015 SLAS Leadership Forum

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A [full recap](#) of the 2015 SLAS Leadership Forum can be found in the *SLAS Electronic Laboratory Neighborhood* e-zine, open to members and nonmembers alike.

Planning is underway for next year's SLAS Leadership Forum to be held at [SLAS2016](#), the Society's Fifth Annual International Conference and Exhibition, January 23-27, 2016 at the San Diego Convention Center in San Diego, California, USA.

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The Society for Laboratory Automation and Screening (SLAS) is an international community of more than 20,000 individual scientists, engineers, researchers, technologists and others from academic, government and commercial laboratories. The SLAS mission is to be the preeminent global organization providing forums for education and information exchange and to encourage the study of, and improve the practice of laboratory science and technology. For more information, visit www.SLAS.org. For more information on SLAS2015, visit www.SLAS2015.org