On Wednesday, April 18, under a chilly but sunny sky, the Institute for Bioscience and Biotechnology Research (IBBR) welcomed honored guests to a dedication of its recently installed solar canopy. Funded by a grant from the Maryland Energy Administration and completed in cooperation with the UMD Facilities Management Department of Engineering and Energy, WGL Systems, and SGC Power, the canopy is not only a renewable energy source helping to reduce the Institute’s carbon footprint, it also includes two charging stations for electric cars and is providing shade and weather protected parking for staff members.

As a leader in renewable energy, the University of Maryland published its first Climate Action Plan in 2009 and created the Office of Sustainability to facilitate development and implementation of sustainable policies and practices for the campus community. Over the past 10 years, the University has reduced its carbon footprint...
by 27% with the goal of being carbon-neutral by 2050. It has also driven sustainability deeper into its service, teaching, and research.

IBBR's new 680 solar panels are a visible example of its alignment with the University’s commitment to sustainability and renewable energy. The solar panels provide about 3% of the electricity needed to operate the facility, one of many incremental steps being taken toward implementation of sustainable energy technologies. Since 2009, IBBR’s partnership with College Park on energy projects has yielded a net reduction of 17% in energy consumption with a goal to reduce its consumption an additional 30% by the end of this year. The ultimate aim is for IBBR to become one of the most efficient labs in the nation, and possibly the first net-zero greenhouse gas emissions facility within the University of Maryland campus community.

Second photo: Event speakers, shown left to right: Dr. Thomas Fuerst, Director of IBBR, Jim Johnson, Director of Facilities and Laboratory Services, IBBR, Mary-Ann Ibeziako, Director of Engineering and Energy Department, at the University of Maryland at College Park, Richard Walsh, Program Lead, Clean Energy Solutions, WGL Energy, and Gregory Williams, Chief of Staff, Maryland Energy Administration.