groups of National Student Leadership Conference (NSLC) students, ages 14-17 and hoping to pursue a biotechnology- or biomedical-related major in college, toured IBBR in mid-June. The tours were part of an itinerary of interactive site visits designed to provide the students with a behind-the-scenes look at biotech organizations. "Our goal is to provide them with exposure to a range of the potential fields that interest them," said Gita Golonzka, NSLC Program Director, "and over several years of having IBBR as part of our tour itinerary, the students' experience visiting the Institute has been above and beyond expectations. We look forward to visiting IBBR every year."

The NSLC offers pre-college, summer enrichment programs to selected, outstanding high school and middle school students with the mission of providing a safe and supportive environment that encourages students to explore their academic and career interests while developing leadership skills essential for their success. The students come from all over the United States and the world to participate in the program.
IBBR's interdisciplinary faculty, broad research scope, and an impressive array of bioanalytical instrumentation make it a popular stop on the NSLC tours. Following a brief slide presentation outlining some of the research undertaken at the Institute, the 150 visiting students met with and watched IBBR scientists at work, learned about the research discovery process, and saw some of the state-of-the-art laboratory equipment employed by the scientists. The students posed questions to IBBR personnel ranging from career paths available at the Institute to inquiries about the real-world applications of the research they witnessed in the labs. They learned about graduate and post-graduate training, as well as undergraduate and high school internships, offered at IBBR. Asked what surprised him the most about the day, one student noted that he had a new appreciation of the equipment and research investment needed to discover, test, and advance new pharmaceuticals to the marketplace.

"A key aspect of IBBR's mission is to provide an exceptional environment for specialized training and education and to mentor tomorrow's biomedical and biotechnology workforce. It is our great pleasure to welcome the NSLC students to the Institute each year," said Dr. Thomas Fuerst, IBBR Director.

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