



Education

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Research center inaugurated at Brown

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PROVIDENCE — Brown University on Monday inaugurated a new research center aimed at bringing mathematics and computer science closer together to build knowledge in fields ranging from Internet search engines to national security.

The Institute for Computational and Experimental Research in Mathematics (ICERM), funded with \$15.5 million from the National Science Foundation over the next five years, will open next fall with the first in a series of semester-long programs encompassing research, the education of future scientists and conferences expected to draw innovators from far and wide.

On Monday, Brown President Ruth Simmons and an array of public, corporate and academic officials celebrated the launch in the yet-unfinished space for the new ICERM on the top floor of a university-owned building at 121 South Main St., which boasts a panoramic view of the city.

U.S. Sen. [Jack Reed](#) said the center will pull together “the best minds in business and technology,” as well as help “reinvigorate the public schools.”

U.S. Rep. James R. Langevin said the work of the center will be “at the heart of innovation” and create opportunities for both students and workers “to be at the center of problem-solving.”

The research center has an educational advisory board that, among other things, will explore ways to improve elementary and secondary education in Rhode Island, according to the center’s director, mathematician Jill Pipher.

A separate scientific advisory board includes Microsoft, Google and IBM officials, who, along with representatives from academia, will help shape the scientific activities of the institute.

Reed, meanwhile, called the NSF a “great engine for science investigation and economic development.” NSF sponsored the basic research that eventually led to advances such as the cell phone, GPS and search engines.

Those developments, in turn, have created a new set of issues which call for yet more research.

“The future is ours if we out-educate and out-innovate,” Reed said, quoting President Obama’s commitment to increase funding for research and education.

U.S. Sen. [Sheldon Whitehouse](#) said he believes the new research center can have a role in protecting computer-dependent infrastructures which are “highly vulnerable” to attack, including the Internet, financial services and the electric power grid. Proposed cyber-security legislation would create research opportunities for Brown, the University of Rhode Island and the Naval War College, he said.

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