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JIM LANCASTER
CEO

Across more than three decades in medical devices, Jim Lancaster has led product development, global reconstruction, and platform technology initiatives within Zimmer Biomet while remaining closely engaged in Warsaw's orthopedic community. That experience has given him a practical understanding of how clinical needs, engineering, manufacturing, and market adoption must converge for innovation to create durable value. As CEO of the NSF IMPACT Engine in Indiana, he brings the industry perspective and regional knowledge needed to align the Engine's scientific ambition with the realities of execution.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY

Innovation

The NSF IMPACT Engine in Indiana – Launching a Bold New Era of Innovation

In this installment of our Thought Leadership Series, Jim Lancaster, the CEO of the NSF IMPACT Engine in Indiana, discusses how IMPACT and Indiana University are positioned to lead the industry in musculoskeletal and orthopedic innovation.



As chief science officer for the NSF IMPACT Engine in Indiana, IU researcher and director of the IU School of Medicine's Indiana Center for Musculoskeletal Health Melissa Kacena is helping connect academic and industry partners to advance musculoskeletal research and bring new innovations to patients. **Photo provided by James Brosher**

Q. What makes Indiana uniquely positioned to lead in musculoskeletal and orthopedic innovation?

Lancaster: Indiana's advantage comes down to three things: core assets, deep expertise and Hoosiers' collaborative nature.

Start with industry. Established companies like Zimmer Biomet, Cook Medical and Lilly are here. Some are focused purely on musculoskeletal (MSK) health, and others are increasingly moving their innovation into the space. Add the research and development strength of Indiana's top colleges and universities, and you have the foundation for world-class public-private partnerships.

Then there are the people. Hoosiers genuinely like working together to move things forward. Put it all together, and you have an environment that can drive MSK innovation with a pace and focus we haven't seen before.

Q. How is Indiana University uniquely positioned to lead in this key industry, bringing together 170+ organizations around this effort?

"One of our biggest challenges is simply awareness. Researchers, entrepreneurs and investors outside Indiana often don't realize how rich our ecosystem is..."

– JIM LANCASTER

Lancaster: IU is the right lead institution for the NSF IMPACT Engine in Indiana because it connects the academic, clinical and business communities, and it brings the research strength, infrastructure and partnerships needed to turn innovation into economic growth.

As Indiana's first billion-dollar research enterprise, IU ranks No. 15 nationally for NIH research support and is home to the nation's largest public medical school. With major investments in biosciences innovation through initiatives like IU LAB, the university is building momentum in translating research discoveries into new technologies, businesses and jobs.

"The university works across the state on workforce and economic development. That broad, intentional approach makes IU a natural home for an effort that brings more than 170 organizations together around a shared goal."

– JIM LANCASTER

IU's mission already reaches well beyond advanced education. The university works across the state on workforce and economic development. That broad, intentional approach makes IU a natural home for an effort that brings more than 170 organizations together around a shared goal.

Q. What challenges does Indiana's bioscience Industry face from reaching patients and markets today, and how does Indiana University solve for them?

Lancaster: One of our biggest challenges is simply awareness. Researchers, entrepreneurs and investors outside Indiana often don't realize how rich our ecosystem is, and closing that gap is a priority.

Resources like BioCrossroads, IU LAB, and Plug and Play Indiana, along with many others that are uniquely Indiana, make the state a prime place to discover and develop new technologies and to launch new companies. IU sits at the center of so many of those resources, which puts it in a strong position to tell that story well beyond our borders.

Q. How can companies collaborate with Indiana University, and what opportunities does the Engine create?

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– JIM LANCASTER

Lancaster: The best way for a company to get involved is to become an IMPACT member partner. There are several ways to join: direct financial support, in-kind support, or serving as a mentor or advisor across the ecosystem.

The opportunities in return are broad. The NSF IMPACT Engine in Indiana acts as a connector across the ecosystem, helps build public-private partnerships, and supports startups on their growth journey with resources from our partners.

Q. What does the future of innovation in MSK health look like in Indiana because of the NSF IMPACT Engine?

Lancaster: Innovation in MSK health is about to move faster than ever. Extensive clinical databases, AI tools, the convergence of medtech with MSK care, and new drug-device combinations will all reshape how we improve MSK health and wellness.

The NSF IMPACT Engine in Indiana is helping bring those pieces together to launch a bold new era of innovation. Indiana sits at the center of all of them, and we're uniquely positioned to deliver on that promise.●

Learn more about the NSF IMPACT Engine in Indiana at *mskimpact.org*