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New School Leases Offices in Martinsville

MARTINSVILLE, July 14 – The newly named Institute of Integrated and Applied Studies announced today that it will locate its headquarters in downtown Martinsville at the West Piedmont Business Development Center at 22 East Church Street. The institute will rent a suite of seven offices and share the business center’s videoconferencing space, classrooms and other support facilities.

The Institute of Integrated and Applied Studies (IIAS) is the result of The Harvest Foundation’s initiative to bring higher education to Martinsville and Southside Virginia. Earlier this month, the foundation approved a \$2 million grant to develop IIAS, under its new name. IIAS president, Dr. Ronald E. Carrier, who suggested the name, is overseeing its development.

With the crucial support of The Harvest Foundation, Dr. Carrier, who is president emeritus at James Madison University, moved quickly to secure offices for IIAS in downtown Martinsville. He was also authorized by the foundation to hire personnel for IIAS in order to begin the first phase of the institute’s strategy for development.

That strategy calls for drafting an innovative and cost-effective model for delivering higher education to the Martinsville area, with a special emphasis on attracting disadvantaged students from the region. If successful, the Martinsville model could be duplicated in rural locales throughout the nation, according to Dr. Carrier.

“IIAS will combine traditional classroom instruction with online and distance learning technologies and feature an integrated and individually tailored curriculum for its students,” said Dr. Carrier, who actively promoted the creation of JMU’s College of Integrated Science and Technology during his presidency there.

Dr. Carrier will present a formal plan for IIAS and its curriculum to the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and the General Assembly early next year with an aim toward securing the state’s financial backing for the school. The Harvest Foundation has pledged \$50 million towards establishing IIAS if the state provides matching funds.

West Piedmont Business Development Center is a regional small business incubator serving the counties of Henry, Patrick, and Franklin and the city of Martinsville.

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