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**THE DOE NANOSCALE SCIENCE RESEARCH CENTERS
*AN EXPERIMENT IN UNIVERSITY-GOVERNMENT LABORATORY PARTNERSHIPS***

In response to the Presidential Initiative on Nanotechnology, the US Department of Energy (DOE) has announced that it intends to create three to five Nanoscale Science Research Centers (NSRC) to be colocated with major DOE user facilities. The challenge put forth in the DOE call for proposals was to “Maximize resources and promote multidisciplinary interaction, to enable research of a scope and depth beyond current national capabilities.” The premise is that current scientific infrastructure is not well suited for research or education at the Nanoscale. The NSRCs will address the national need for a proper balance between synthesis and fabrication of novel materials on the nanoscale and advanced characterization capabilities available at the major user facilities.

Three NSRCs were approved in May 2001: The Molecular Foundry at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the Center for Integrated Nanotechnologies (CINT) at SANDIA/Los Alamos National Lab, and the Center for Nanophase Materials Sciences (CNMS) at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Each NSRC has a different focus and mode of operation, but all three are charged with creating partnerships with the University Community. I will briefly describe the programs at CINT and the Molecular Foundry and outline in detail the proposed mode of operation of CNMS, workshops that have been held, and workshops that will be held. Defining the areas of focus for the National Center for Nanoscale Science will also be discussed. The challenge is to create an integrated partnership with universities and the private sector while still maintaining and protecting the creativity and originality of the individual investigator. Can big science serve the needs of the nation while simultaneously fostering the creativity of the individual, which is the foundation of science in the United States?