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**Governor Patrick, Massachusetts Life Sciences Center, and CASIS Announce Grant Competition to Support Research on the International Space Station U.S. National Laboratory**

*“Galactic Grant Competition” will fund innovative industry research; grant will also fund STEM initiatives for Massachusetts schools*

**(November 13, 2014, Boston, MA)** Governor Deval Patrick, the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC), and the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS) today announced the “Galactic Grant Competition,” a new collaboration that will provide Massachusetts-based companies a unique opportunity to access the International Space Station (ISS) to conduct life sciences research. The grant competition, funded by MLSC, will be open for applications from December 1, 2014 through April 3, 2015 and will encourage companies to take advantage of the distinct attributes of the ISS research platform for life sciences initiatives. The microgravity environment on the ISS has profound and unique effects on biological phenomena and can enable discoveries with terrestrial applications, including drug discovery, development, delivery, and diagnostics.

This first-of-its-kind grant competition was announced today by Gov. Patrick at a press conference at the Museum of Science in Boston, alongside astronaut Dan Tani, and leaders from the MLSC and CASIS. Through the MLSC, Massachusetts is investing \$1 billion over ten years in the growth of the state’s life sciences ecosystem. These investments are being made under the Massachusetts Life Sciences Initiative, proposed by Gov. Patrick in 2007, and passed by the State Legislature and signed into law by Gov. Patrick in 2008. CASIS is the nonprofit organization responsible for managing and promoting research onboard the ISS U.S. National Laboratory. Through CASIS, U.S. based companies, non-NASA government agencies, and other research organizations are now able to access the ISS for novel and groundbreaking research.

“Massachusetts is the global leader in life sciences, so it is only fitting that we are the first state to promote life sciences experiments on the International Space Station,” said Governor Deval Patrick. “We are taking our spirit of collaboration to space in order to advance science, technology, education and economic development for Massachusetts and its residents.”

“This partnership is directly attributable to Governor Patrick’s Life Sciences Initiative,” said Susan Windham-Bannister, Ph.D., President & CEO of the MLSC. “Because of the initiative, Massachusetts is the first state that CASIS has approached about a collaboration. Now Massachusetts-based companies will have a unique opportunity to access the International Space Station -- a one-of-a kind platform for applied research projects that will help bring new therapies and cures to market.”

Interested companies and researchers are encouraged to attend information sessions that will take place December 2014 through February 2015. These information sessions will be announced and posted by the end of November. The winner(s) will be announced on July 7, 2015 as part of the ISS Research & Development Conference taking place at the Boston Marriott Copley. Up to \$500,000 is available for support of flight projects from any life sciences company with operations in Massachusetts. An additional \$50,000 will be invested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics education initiatives that will aim to connect Massachusetts students to the ISS with unique content and student research opportunities.

“We are thrilled to partner with the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center to help connect Massachusetts companies, schools, and research organizations to the ISS,” said Cynthia Bouthot, CASIS director of business development. “Through Governor Patrick’s investment initiative, Massachusetts has emerged as the global leader in life sciences, making the state a great partner for CASIS in promoting research on the ISS. Innovative organizations like MLSC are seeing the opportunity that now exists for space-based research and discovery on the ISS and the unique access that CASIS can provide.”

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**About CASIS:** The Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS) was selected by NASA in July 2011 to maximize use of the International Space Station (ISS) U.S. National Laboratory through 2020. CASIS is dedicated to supporting and accelerating innovations and new discoveries that will enhance the health and wellbeing of people and our planet. For more information, visit [www.iss-casis.org](http://www.iss-casis.org).

**About the ISS National Laboratory:** In 2005, Congress designated the U.S. portion of the International Space Station as the nation's newest national laboratory to maximize its use for improving life on Earth, promoting collaboration among diverse users, and advancing STEM education. This unique laboratory environment is available for use by other U.S. government agencies and by academic and private institutions, providing access to the permanent microgravity setting, vantage point in low Earth orbit, and varied environments of space.

**About the Massachusetts Life Sciences Center:** The Massachusetts Life Sciences Center (MLSC) is an investment agency that supports life sciences innovation, research, development, and commercialization. The MLSC is charged with implementing a 10-year, \$1-billion, state-funded investment initiative. These investments create jobs and support advances that improve health and wellbeing. The MLSC offers the nation’s most comprehensive set of incentives and collaborative programs targeted to the life sciences ecosystem. These programs propel the growth that has made Massachusetts the global leader in life sciences. The MLSC creates new models for collaboration and partners with organizations, both public and private, around the world to promote innovation in the life sciences. For more information, go to [www.masslifesciences.com](http://www.masslifesciences.com).

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