Guest Speakers

Dr. Rick Van Kooten
Executive Dean,
The College of Arts and Sciences
Professor of Physics
Indiana University

Rick Van Kooten, who first joined IU Bloomington as an assistant professor in 1993, became the executive dean of the IUB College of Arts and Sciences on July 1, 2019. Before this appointment, he served for five years as chair of the Department of Physics and four years as the IU Bloomington vice provost for research.

An award-winning teacher, Rick has taught a wide variety of undergraduate and graduate courses. He remains firmly committed to the importance of a liberal arts education in the College of Arts and Sciences, both for its inherent value and for building the foundational skills of creative, collaborative, and critical thinking and communication.

Rick has been a WonderLab supporter since 1998. He is the designer and fabricator of the “Cosmic Ray Telescope” at the entrance to the Museum. He is a current member of WonderLab’s Board of Directors.

Dr. Irene Garcia Newton
Associate Professor, Biology
Director, Microbiology Graduate Program

Irene is an associate professor of Biology at Indiana University in Bloomington. Her lab is broadly interested in host-associated microbes. In 2019, she received a grant to study how a microbial symbiont of the honey bee protects against major stressors such as pathogens, pests and poor nutrition. She serves as editor for the journals Environmental Microbiology, Applied and Environmental Microbiology, and the International Society for Microbial Ecology Journal.