

Illinois Hosts Scientific Speaker

National Public Radio science correspondent, Richard Harris, educated University of Illinois students and staff on the blunders in scientific research. Harris related his speech to information that he published in his new book titled "Rigor Mortis: How Sloppy Science Creates Worthless Cures, Crushes Hope, and Wastes Billions."

Richard Harris has been working as a science reporter for NPR since 1986. The writer has spent the last few years researching the biomedical research process. His research turned up less than spectacular results and Harris was willing to dedicate time to speak at Illinois on October, 9th.

For most of the duration of Harris' speech, he spoke on how scientific research is deteriorating. The lack of results and more importantly the lack of replicating results has been the biggest issue.

"In science you really want to reproduce things," said Harris.

Harris focused on how negativity in the world of science was creating a sense of failure. He touched on how even though the National Institute of Health was spending more money on research, the scientists were still getting the same poor results. Harris continued about how the head of the NIH noted that the checks and balances of science are hobbled.

Harris noted stat errors, bad designs susceptible to errors, and bad ingredients as main causes for mishaps during experiments. For example, not being thorough enough to clean a test tube before using it to record a blood sample was one of the errors Harris mentioned during his presentation.

Towards the end of his speech, Harris depicted a few ways that scientists can get back on track. The author feels that scientists should "incentivize" themselves during an experiment to keep their morale high. He also mentioned that scientists could validate their ingredients more, have more transparency, and have better training altogether.