



The NSF Industry/University Cooperative Research Centers (I/UCRC) Program: Building Innovation Capacity through Partnerships

Q&A Session Responses

Rathindra (Babu) DasGupta and Larry Hornak, NSF:

Question	Answer
In the case of a new center—who initiates and picks the industry / sector focus? Does NSF put out an RFP to which university and /or industry partners respond by getting together? Or is there a bottom-up mechanism for applying to NSF to create a new center?	Universities initiate new centers.
Where does one find information on developing an I/UCRC proposal? We have a Center, we have industry partners, and I think we can tie into the objectives of the program.	See NSF solicitation 12-516 .
As a junior faculty, how I can join with a center to contribute and also to buildup research in my early faculty career? A short description of the guideline/approach needs to be taken would be great.	For information on this topic, contact Babu DasGupta or Larry Hornak at NSF [Contact information on pg 4].
Why would one form an I/UCRC Center as opposed to private relationships with one or two industry partners?	I/UCRC embarks on pre-competitive research; besides, the IDC is restricted to 10% of membership fees. Call Babu DasGupta or Larry Hornak [contact information on pg 4] to discuss other advantages.
Are tech transfer/commercialization offices ever involved in establishing these centers?	No.



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Question	Answer
Members have NERF rights to IP while they are members. What if new IP has partially been developed prior to a company's initial membership? Would the center's bylaws have to address this?	Yes.
What mechanism should be used to transfer membership fees collected at the Center site to a Leading institution to fund research performed at the lead institution? Or the idea is to use fees collected at the certain site to fund research performed at site? Wouldn't it make more sense to pool all member fees at the lead institution that then redistributes funds based on IAB decisions/selections of projects?	Research is conducted at all sites concerned. There must be a MOU amongst all sites for transfer of membership funds if these funds are collected only by the lead institution.
What are most common sources beyond initial funding?	Membership fees (private and federal).
How long does it usually take to grow membership to 10-20 full members? It seems like the first few members are the hardest to recruit.	For a multi-university center, getting 10 members may not be a challenge. However, getting to 20 members does require a lot of marketing skills and time.
What fraction of proposed centers that get to a planning meeting end up getting funded?	~75%
What is major incentive for a University to specifically use I/UCRC?	For information on this topic, contact Babu DasGupta or Larry Hornak at NSF [Contact information on pg 4].



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Dennis Fortner, Northrop Grumman:

Question	Answer
<p>What happens to IP coming out of this precompetitive research?</p>	<p>Any resulting potential IP that may be disclosed by the University team in an I/UCRC is offered to the Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) member (Industry) participants for consideration. But because there may be many that have interest, the IP is offered to all on a Non-Exclusive basis (see also NSF solicitation 12-516). This means the University retains ownership (assignee) with Inventors listed from participating Universities. Industry must then share in the costs to file, prosecute and maintain the IP. If however, only one company expresses interest in the IP then they may obtain an option to License the IP on an Exclusive basis covering the fees above. If the Disclosure of potential IP is not of interest to any IAB member then the lead University (or both) have the right to go forth and file themselves (at their own cost) and ultimately seek third party Licensees.</p>
<p>Regarding centers, has Northrop Grumman participated in any that involve its competitors?</p>	<p>Many, in fact most if not all Centers that are attractive to Northrop Grumman can be similarly attractive to its competitors. But remember the model behind the I/UCRCs is to attract like businesses for cooperative engagement amongst industry competitors. Because the technology we see is so early stage and because applications of it are completely undefined, companies generally have no issues helping to guide research projects. It is up to them (IAB members) to ensure that none of <u>their</u> confidential information is exchanged in any group discussions or evaluations of research projects as generally there are no NDA's in place amongst each of them and really not necessary.</p>
<p>Any trouble negotiating with Universities on the Royalty for IP that the company would like? How is this handled?</p>	<p>In general, I find that Royalty rates for Research is quite easily negotiable. Most Universities want an upfront License Issue Fee with Royalties, a maintenance fee, and us achieving certain development milestones (particularly if it is licensed on an Exclusive Basis). So rates are in the 2 to 3 % range for the most part. The more contentious area is to define the "Licensed Product" by which the Royalty rate is then based off of and of course as you would suspect the Licensee wants that to be very very specific and the Licensor (University) wants it more broadly defined. I also develop a number of Master (Umbrella) Research Agreements where most (95%) of the License Agreement is negotiated in advance over a multi year period. The missing 5% is what is negotiated at the time the technology product is fully defined and tech transfer is ready to occur.</p>



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Question	Answer
<p>What is the major incentive for a University to specifically use I/UCRC?</p>	<p>In developing a research product, the better one can “align” that product toward something that will be both new, novel and unobvious to someone familiar in the field and to best again “align” that technology for broad market applicability is much better achieved by having a team of experts engaged in reviewing progress on its development and guiding its progress toward one or more of their interests. THAT is the real value of having an engaged IAB providing input to you and your research staff along the way. This is something that will be much more limited in scope (and costly) by having one company oversee Sponsored Research done by one University.</p>

Contact Information

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