

I/UCRC Annual Center Directors Meeting, Washington DC
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IAB Roundtable: How to Build a Committed IAB

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IAB Member of: Center for Identity Technology
Research (CITeR)



About My Organization

What is your position and interest area?

- Biometrics Program Manager, DHS Science & Technology Directorate
- Co-Chair, White House, National Science and Technology Council, Subcommittee on Biometrics and Identity Management

How long has your organization been a Center member?

- 10+ years

Why is your organization a member of the Center?

- Efficiency in use of R&D funds (\$40K leverages \$1M total funding).
- Cooperation/Leveraging of Federal/Industry needs.
- Support and Identification of STEM workers.

As an IAB representative, what is the attraction of I/UCRC membership?

- Center projects serve as low cost/low risk 'seedling' efforts.
- Projects are competitively sought, selected, and managed.



About Our Center

Our Center currently has 4 Sites:

Lead Site: Clarkson University

Additional Sites: West Virginia University, University of Arizona, and University at Buffalo. Fifth site proceeding through application.

Briefly state your understanding of the Center's vision and mission:

CITeR advances identification technology in the areas of biometric systems, security, and credibility assessment through cross-cutting research of emerging technologies, interdisciplinary training, and facilitation of technology transfer to the private and government sectors.

Other pertinent Center information:

- WVU was the Center founding site.
- Steady growth in number of sites and affiliates since inception.
- 11 of the 22 affiliates are Federal Agencies.



Making the Case for Membership

How does your organization evaluate external research funding decisions like an I/UCRC membership?

- Standard Federal Analysis of Alternatives, Determinations and Findings, and Justification/Approval process.

How do you make the case for Center membership?
What Center deliverables are most important in justifying funding?

- R&D that is directly applicable to operational initiatives.
- “The NSF Act” – NSF has the authority to do this work.
- STEM support.
- Leveraged research funds (\$40K buys \$1M research).
- University waiver of overhead fees (most projects are \$70 – 80K).
- Tools, evaluation datasets, and 100+ research studies.



About Our IAB

Number of IAB representatives at typical IAB meeting: 45

Percent of industrial members who send more than one IAB representative: 75%

How would you describe the norms/culture of your IAB?

- Highly cooperative and interactive through whole process.
- Critical review and discussion of proposals (briefings), ongoing work (posters), and final results (briefings).
- Open discussion and voting on new proposals by affiliates.
- Affiliates have funded numerous follow-on projects to transition work into operations.
- Researchers and students are directly hired by affiliates.



IAB Development

How has your IAB developed over time?

- Steady growth in sites, affiliates, and funding.

What center events had the most impact on the IAB?

- Events of 09/11 drove initial growth of Center.
- Competitive research targeting at needs of affiliates attracted others to the Center and maintained the growth.
- Products, Tools, Books, and over 100 Research Studies demonstrated the depth and breadth of research.

What Center characteristics help (or hinder) the IAB form an effective decision-making group?

- Cooperative Technical-based Community of Affiliates.
- “Centers of Excellence” tend to raise organizational walls.



What is a “committed” IAB?

How would you describe the motives of “committed” or helpful representatives?

- Interested in helping researchers understand their needs.
- Critical of research, but helpful in identifying other ongoing work or data that may be available.

Do IAB members see Center membership as a longer-term relationship or a set of shorter term project deliverables?

- Most technical members understand basic or applied research process and the length of time required to bring research to operational practice.
- Federal agencies (and industry) are being driven to transition much earlier or faster and researchers need to help with developing business cases and operational contexts that will support long-term agendas and participation by operational users that have funding.



What Helps Build IAB Commitment?

What can Center Directors do to cultivate lasting university-industry[-federal] relationships?

- Participate in applicable conferences and ‘sell’ the Center. Get away from ‘Research’ vernacular and use tight ‘Venture Capital’ points (numbers, market, business plan, briefing/pitch, Q&A).
- Develop a Senior Advisory Board of well known/connected persons that can reach out to attract new Affiliates. If the person has time to attend full IAB, then they are probably not the right person. Members need someone up their chain to want them to be there, so ask them who the Center Director can meet with.
- Develop cooperative nature within the Universities by encouraging cooperative proposals between sites and cross-research with other fields or new operational areas.
- Take credit for successes and make sure everyone is aware of them. You never know when an Affiliate may get asked for successes.



Opportunities for Improvement

What are the challenges of Center membership for you and your organization?

- Downturn in R&D and need for specific operational impact. Center's can help make sure the need for continued R&D support is understood at 'senior levels' and 'sell' the positive impacts they have had.
- Moving of funds between Federal agencies continues to grow in it's complexity and review processes. Federal Affiliates or prospective affiliates rarely know or understand the NSF-specific complexities and Center Director's should be ready with templates, talking points, and points of contact that affiliate members can provide to their legal/business operations staff.



Keys to Success

How can industry sponsors make the case for really committing to a Center?

- Access to Federal Affiliates (2 - 3 days discussing Federal technical directions and operational needs/requirements/policies/etc. is worth the Affiliate fee).
- Ability to pursue larger follow-on federal efforts outside Center in cooperation with University sites.
- Universities can collect data and handle privacy/civil rights implications much more efficiently than industry or government.
- Early access to technical successes (patents, research, etc.) and future potential staff.

What can Center Directors do to support these efforts?

- Encourage Affiliate presentations on needs/requirements in meetings.
- Leave time for dialogue and Q&A.



Closing Words of Wisdom

- The Center only works if a larger “Community” exists or can be developed. The Center does not provide independent peer review, so results need to be presented and juried in a larger technical community. Working with appropriate technical and professional associations (e.g., IEEE, SPIE) and industry associations (e.g., AFCEA, NDIA) can provide strong partners for review of Center research.
- For Federal Affiliates, the cooperative nature of the Center can ensure that funded R&D work is non-duplicative (the death of many programs), highly fiscally leveraged (the stuff bonuses are made from), and cooperative with Industry and Universities (best business and research practices) to ensure a successful RDT&E program.



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Questions?

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