

**I/UCRC Annual Center Directors Meeting, Washington DC  
January 9-10 2014**

# **IAB Roundtable: How to Build a Committed IAB**

Uwe Beuscher  
W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

IAB Member of  
Membrane Science, Engineering and Technology Center  
(MAST)



# About My Organization

## W.L. Gore & Associates, Inc.

Founded in 1958

Privately held

9,000+ associates

Unique business culture

Recognized as a “Best Company to Work For”

World leader in fluoropolymer materials

Best known for the Gore-Tex® brand of apparel

Thousands of unique consumer, industrial, electronic,  
medical and surgical products



# About My Organization

My role is the Global Separations Technology Leader.

We are interested in membrane materials for filtration and separation applications.

Gore has been a member of the MAST center since 2007.

Gore joined this I/UCRC center because of the alignment with our research interests

- Effective avenue for research and problem solving

- High quality research

- Networking

- Recruiting opportunities



# About the MAST Center

The MAST Center currently has 3 Sites:

Lead Site: New Jersey Institute of Technology  
Additional Sites: University of Colorado  
University of Arkansas (joining)

We currently have 9 (13) industrial members.

The MAST Center's main goal is to:

Advance membrane technology in separation processes  
through research and development

Some history:

Center started in 1991

Multi-university status in 2001 with the University of Cincinnati

New start in 2010 with NJIT as lead site

University of Arkansas will join 2014



# Making the Case for Membership

## Why do research externally?

Will give access to skill sets and capabilities that are not available internally.

## Advantage of the MAST center - a wide variety of capabilities:

Not just one researcher or one group

But multiple faculty across multiple departments and universities

Strong reputation in the membrane separations field for decades

Cost effective

## Solutions for sponsor defined issues

### IP guidelines are given by the NSF.

I/UCRC conducts pre-competitive research

The research should be about defining a problem.

## Networking

Suppliers, competitors, customers

Personal relationship building: learn about each other's needs.

## Recruiting

See other students twice a year and follow their technical, communication, and interpersonal skill development



# About Our IAB

Number of IAB representatives at typical IAB meeting: ~10

Percent of industrial members who send more than one IAB representative ~40%

MAST center IAB culture:

Very open culture and communication.

Many IAB representatives have been attending the center meetings for many years.

Almost feels like a company internal meeting (for most)



# IAB Development

How has your IAB developed over time?

The center always had ~10-12 members.

About half have been the same, the other half fluctuates  
(single term members, 2-3 years)

What center events had the most impact on the IAB?

Lost a couple of members when University of Cincinnati left  
2 year members coming through SBIR program

Not fully integrated into IAB

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

Open communication / personal relationships

Long term IAB representatives

Common interests



# What is a “committed” IAB?

How would you describe the motives of “committed” representatives? What do they do that helps the Center?

- Long term view

- Attend the meetings and participate in discussions

- Put center interest before own interest

  - A successful center brings benefits to the company

  - Look beyond own research project(s)

- Participate in discussions outside of the center meetings

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

- Those members with short term project deliverables leave after one term (3 years).



# What Helps Build IAB Commitment?

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

Provide an appropriate environment to build trusting relationships

Well organized meetings, committed directors, well run center

Set expectations during recruitment of new members

It's not just about the first project!

Have PI's/researchers reach out to the IAB

Provide the right balance of common and diverse interests



# Opportunities for Improvement

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

There will always be economic challenges

- Industry will re-evaluate membership every year

- Keep membership fresh

Run a financially responsible budget

- Costs are increasing but membership fees may not

Keep the research interesting

- Find the right balance between common and diverse interests

Provide an opportunity for other benefits

- Networking, recruiting, personal relationships, other?



# Keys to Success

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

Find the right balance between cost and benefit

Will be different for different organizations

Think about a long term commitment

What can Center Directors do to support these efforts?

Work on improving benefits without increasing costs

Foster the open environment and promote long term commitment to the center



# Closing Words of Wisdom

Most important is a committed and motivated center director (and program manager)

BUT the director's interest is not necessarily the same as the industry members

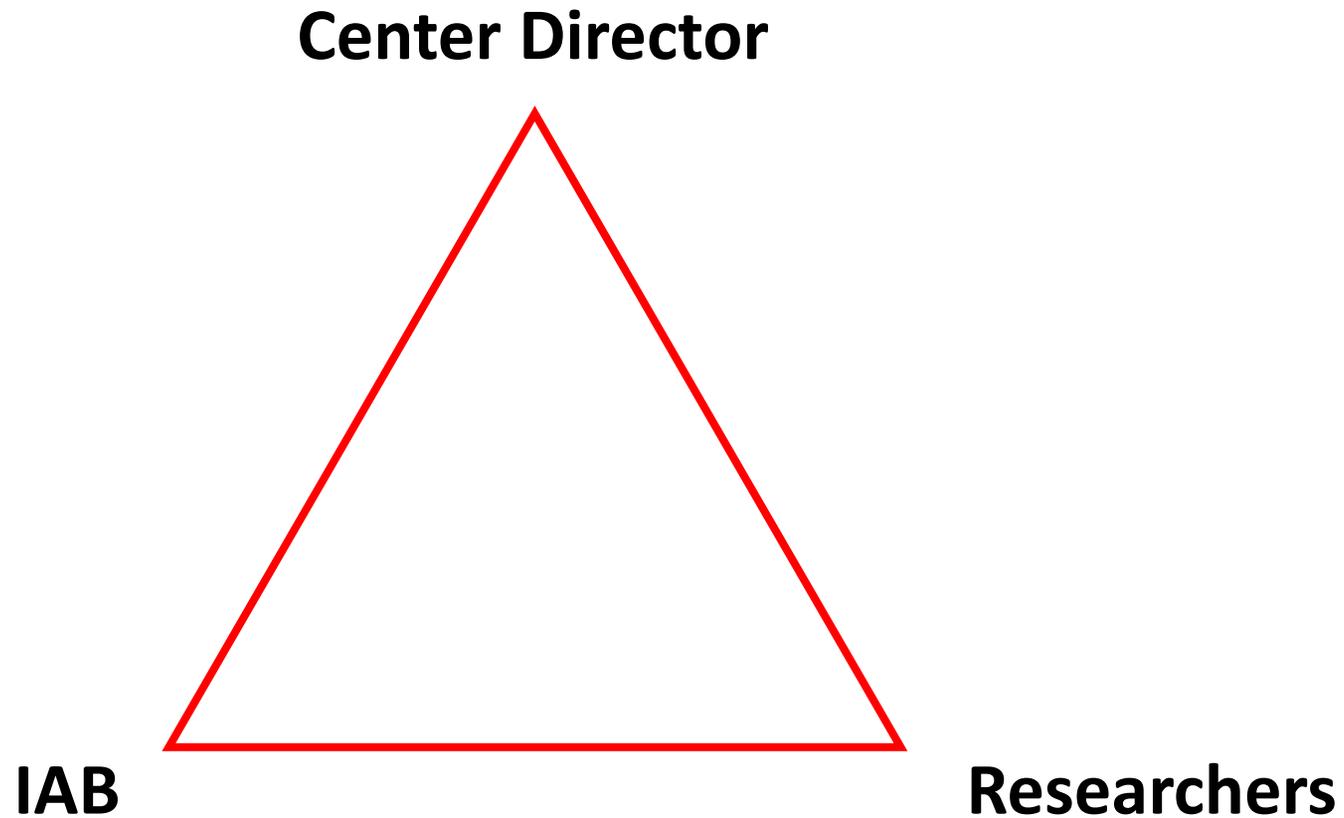
Need a committed and motivated IAB chair

Communication with the PI's/researchers is critical

I/UCRC research is about defining a problem, not solving a problem



# Closing Words of Wisdom



# Keys to success

- Effective and relevant research program
  - Provide high quality proposals
  - Identify fair and balances project selection process
  - Frequent communication and feedback during project
  - Industry steers into the direction of their interest
  - PI/researcher/student frequently summarizes progress and reports out



# Keys to success

- PI's/researchers
  - Provide quality proposals
  - Keep industry interest in mind
    - Don't focus (too much) on previous work/area of interest
- Technical work needs balance between
  - Researcher vs industry interest
  - Diversity of topics
  - Center sites
  - Departments and individual PI's



# Keys to success

- Committed center director
  - Point of contact
  - Pro-active and motivated
  - Lives and breathes the I/UCRC program
- Support on site by program manager
  - Takes care of details and finances
  - Pro-active and motivated
  - Well organized meetings and processes
- BUT
  - Interest of directors is different from interest of industry
  - Need a good counter-balance => committed IAB chair



# Keys to success

- Effective IAB
  - Open communication
  - Need to get beyond IP concerns
    - “pre-competitive research”
  - Common interests
  - Diverse interests
  - Build relationships
    - With center directors, researchers, students
    - With other IAB members
  - Long term IAB representatives (>3 years)
  - Committed and pro-active IAB chair
  - Put center before own interest

