The Ups and Downs of Recruiting and Retaining Members to your I/UCRC

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Membrane Applied Science, Engineering & Technology (MAST) Center
Our Center was established in 2010
Our Center currently has 2 → 3 sites:
  Lead Site: **New Jersey Institute of Technology**
  Additional Sites: **U. Colorado Boulder (UCB) & U. Arkansas (new)**
We are in I/UCRC **Phase I**
Current number of members: **14**
Our annual membership fee is: **$50,000**
Who is responsible for recruiting? **Center Directors**
Other pertinent information:

**1990-1999: Center for Separations Using Thin Films (CSTF)**  
Single-site center at U. Colorado Boulder

**2000-2009: Membrane Applied Science & Technology Center**  
MUC with U. Colorado Boulder (Lead) & U. Cincinnati
Recruitment/Retention History

Year

# New Member

# Members Gained

# Members Lost

# Members

# Sites


CSTF  MAST 1  MAST 2

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
The Impact of IAB Chemistry

- Our Center has been substantially influenced by a core group of long-time members that
  - Have very similar interests;
  - Are competitors in the marketplace;
  - Are very strong supporters of the Center.

- Interestingly, this core group has helped shape a Center culture in which sponsors do not usually
  - Take a major role in identifying potential new sponsors;
  - Connect potential new sponsors with the Center directors.

- The influence of our core-group and thus our culture may well change significantly with the recent addition of new sponsors that have different and a much larger range of interests.
Keys to Success

- **Sponsor Recruitment:** “Reasonable” and Stable Membership Fee
- **Sponsor Recruitment:** Guaranteed research project of choice for a new sponsor
- **Sponsor Retention:** High-quality research that addresses sponsor needs
- **Sponsor Retention:** The “between-meetings” meeting
Opportunities for Improvement

- **Recruitment**: Utilize “professional,” i.e., non-director, recruiter
- **Recruitment**: Expand marketing and enhance communication
- **Retention**: Encourage stronger connections between Center and Sponsors
- **Retention**: Build a “multiple champions” culture
Closing Words of Wisdom

- Easier to retain a current member than recruit a new sponsor.
- Obtain continual feedback to determine sponsor satisfaction and take action to address any concerns.
- Recruiting, retention and other major center activities: Experienced directors accommodate change.

*It is not the strongest of the I/UCRCs that survive, nor necessarily the largest that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.*

With apologies to Charles Darwin