

Minutes of IRDC Meeting held on 30th January 2009 at 2.30 pm at FB 212

Members Present: Director S.G. Dhande, Deputy Director R.K. Thareja, Registrar S. Kashalkar, Dy. Registrar (Accounts), Asst. Registrar (Stores & Purchase), Audit Officer, Asst. Registrar (RPG), Asst. Registrar (R&D), R.K. Garg EE (IWD); Dr (s). K. Muralidhar (Chairman), B. Basu (Convener), B. Prakash, A. Chandra, N. Verma, S. Qureshi, Kumar R. Priya, D. Kundu, A. Kushari, V. N. Kulkarani, Anoop Singh, Runa Sarkar, Ashok Kumar, Jitendra Kumar, Satyaki Roy, Anjali Kulkarani, Subrata Sarkar

I. Golden Research Complex

The Director addressed IRDC on the proposed **Golden Research Complex (GRC)**. The Director expressed his vision that a transformation of IIT Kanpur from a renowned engineering institute of repute in undergraduate teaching would take place into an internationally renowned research university in the next 25 years. Necessarily, the Institute should encourage and facilitate greater interdisciplinary research. Such vision has been particularly relevant as IIT Kanpur celebrates its Golden Jubilee during 2009-2010.

An important step towards progressively moving towards a organization of repute is the availability of a state of-the-art research complex. Internationally, examples can be found wherein a frontier research laboratory is nested within an academic campus. One can name a few such as Brookhoven National Lab, Draper Lab, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, and the Argonne National Lab.

Director pointed out that the last one decade has seen the initiation of interdisciplinary research in the Institute with success in terms of joint guidance of students, joint projects and publications. The example of Samtel Center (established in 1999) was given. The proposed GRC is expected to boost such activity to a much higher intensity and will bring a new dimension to interdisciplinary research activities.

Following the Director's address, the following suggestions/comments were made by members of IRDC:

1. In view of the societal as well as national needs, the thrust areas of proposed research center, i.e. GRC will include Energy, environment, communication, computation, and materials. Director however emphasized that it is *broad based research programs* and not the *research project* that drive activities in GRC. This should enable the researchers to pursue creative path-breaking ideas in an interdisciplinary environment.
2. In addition to housing state-of-the-art experimental research facilities, it is to be emphasized that substantial space area will be provided for theoreticians. It was mentioned that reputed institutes, like Cornell University has a unique *theory center*. Director also suggested that colleagues from HSS and IME departments can contribute to research by preparing lead-papers and policy making documents for the Indian Government.
3. Director set out the size of GRC as a large establishment, to be built over an area of around 25,000-30,000 m² floor area. However, he stressed upon the fact that once the concept of GRC is clear, the specific architectural details can be worked out with the help of Institute building committee and architect. While a number of IRDC members expressed that clean rooms (of varying grades for 100 to 10,000) will be housed inside GRC, specific needs have to be spelt out.
4. It was suggested that space be allocated for test bed facility where prototype fabrication and product development can be carried out.
5. It was suggested that some laboratories of GRC could be operated jointly by IIT Kanpur and private companies. However, private companies cannot use the facility as *space for rent*. This concept will be in sharp contrast to the establishment of the Rs 100 crore worth Research Park at IIT Madras, where private companies maintain individual research laboratories with complete disconnect from the parent Institute.
6. If necessary, a delegation from IIT Kanpur may visit different reputed laboratories around the world, prior to the formulation of the layout.
7. Director suggested that a **concept paper** needs to be ready and such concept paper should clearly highlight the philosophical aspects of transformation of IIT Kanpur from an educational organization to a high quality research institution. This concept paper should also mention the research agenda, manpower requirement, and facility aspirations of the faculty, research engineers and student community.
8. Once the concept paper is ready, IRDC should organize the open house with colleagues from various departments.
9. Apart from MHRD for initial financial support, the newly established National Science and Engineering Research Board (NSERB) will be approached for necessary funding of the operational aspects of GRC.

II. Administrative changes at DORD office

Mr. K. V. Satya Murty presented various aspects of administrative changes at R & D office. It was mentioned that the office of Dean, R&D is currently handling 320 sponsored projects, worth of more than Rs 50 crores. Briefly, his presentation focused on the aspects of governance structure for R&D management, research infrastructure development, human resource strategy for research staffing, strategy for research excellence as well as evolution of R&D division as a Strategic Business Unit (SBU) through a process of transformation. Mr. Satya Murthy also presented the strengths, weakness, opportunities, Threats (SWOT model) for DORD office. His presentation was highly praised by Director. Following his presentation, the following suggestions were made by the Director as well as by IRDC:

1. A number of IRDC members emphasized that the institute should procure a state-of-the-art project management software. Director suggested that a coordinating officer at DORD will be available as an interface with office automation.
2. It was largely felt that more space is required for effective working of DORD office. IRDC was informed that once DOAA and GATE office will move out by April'09, the entire space of those divisions will be provided to Dean, R&D.
3. Also, the periodic training of staff members will be organized at regular interval and IRDC members need to participate in such endeavourer. The participation of some IME faculty members would be helpful.
4. Also, clustering of people for doing the paper work for specific departments (e.g. one person for CHM, CHE and MME together) should be arranged. Each department needs to provide one person to R&D office.
5. It was also suggested that e-mail statement for each Principal Investigator for individual project should be sent after each month.
6. An open house for PIs will be organized soon, preferably on a Saturday. The feedback from the PIs on the proposed administrative changes will be sought.
7. The above changes are particularly relevant in the wake of the increased requirements by a number of funding agencies to show more detailed records, such as manpower of asset details, for example, now routinely required by DBT.
8. It was envisaged that with the proposed changes, DORD office will perform with a better speed and accuracy and as a result, each PI will be benefited.

The meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Prepared by

Bikramjit Basu

IRDC Convener

9th February 2009