

## **IRDC Meeting - 1: Director's address to IRDC**

Four broad areas covered in Director's address include, a) research vision, b) quantum of funding/ nature of resources, c) administrative matters and, d) role of IRDC.

1. Director desires IRDC's role to be that of a consultative group in R & D. Its recommendations would be sought in matters such as thrust areas, new frontiers, funding agencies, and creation of Institute-level facilities.
2. The complexity of R&D administration has increased as the quantum of funding has moved from 2 crores (a decade ago) to the present funding of 84 crores. The Institute should aim for Rs. 100 crores in the golden jubilee year.
3. It is desired the faculty members will involve themselves in large collaborative projects that would have a national impact. At present, a simple ABC analysis of the distribution of projects reveals a large number of projects with a funding of Rs. 20 lakhs or less, typically supported by DST, MCIT, CSIR, and others.
4. Golden jubilee is expected to be a turning point and the Institute should take up large projects in the following areas: a) energy b) environment, c) materials, d) communication, e) computing (simulation), f) infrastructure, and g) health.

In order to have a global impact, one or more of the following models can be adopted:

- a) A large laboratory within the Institute (with an acute focus), for example Beckman Lab at UIUC; Draper Lab at MIT, Argonne National Laboratory, Chicago, Lawrence Berkeley laboratory, USA;
- b) Joint appointments of faculty in multiple departments;
- c) Streamlining the research ethos via creation of Centers – transformation of Centers to international laboratories;
- d) Creation of honorary research faculty positions to formally establish international relationship with renowned institutes such as MIT and UC Berkeley.

5. The strategy of IRDC would be to focus on developing new ideas which should create new research opportunities (inter/intra institute collaboration as well as to facilitate research with the available infrastructure).
6. IRDC is expected to be responsible for the following:
  - a) Review the activity of centers,
  - b) Suggest how to decentralize the work-load in R&D office by involving Departments in managing staff recruitment and contingency expenditure, c) Suggest policy changes to bring accountability/clarity of R&D administration processes. [Director has advised the Institute to avoid project appointments for duration longer than 5 years.]
7. The suggestions of the various faculty members are summarized in the following:
  - a) Create area-specific research space, R and D building.
  - b) Software based file tracking system (like SAP) to streamline R&D administration.
  - c) More linkages with Indian private industries through the involvement of Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).
  - d) Retaining good quality project staff with healthy salaries and good accommodation.
  - e) Establishment of visiting faculty scheme for experienced persons from non-academia, private industries, MNCs and PSUs.
  - f) Achieving career progression of research engineers/officers.
  - g) Assess periodically the deliverables/accountability of research projects.
  - h) A collaborative atmosphere to facilitate interdisciplinary research should be created.
  - i) The Institute should create a lab safety cell to monitor the disposal of hazardous waste as well as to ensure the necessary safety aspects in various experimental research labs.
  - j) It is suggested that Prof. P.M. Prasad of Economics department will prepare R&D guidelines (dos and don'ts) as a handy-guide to the incoming faculty.
  - k) The workshop facilities available across the institute should be strengthened to facilitate both large and small R&D projects.
  - l) Prof. S. Ganesh of the BSBE department has been requested to prepare a white paper on how to create Department Research Development Committee (DRDC), which should advise, among others, new faculty members for grant applications.
  - m) In IWD, a special cell should be established to facilitate civil/electrical works at research labs.

- n) To strengthen industry-institute interactions, senior executives from industries such as GE and GM may be invited as visiting faculty to IIT Kanpur.
- o) Provision of AMC charges in the project proposal involving large equipment is essential.

Any other matter: Dr. Bikramjit Basu was nominated as the Coordinator of IRDC for the period May 2008 to April 2010. Services provided by the outgoing coordinator, Professor Sarvesh Chandra were gratefully acknowledged.

The meeting ended on a very positive note.

Prepared by

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