Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur
Institute Research and Development Committee

Minutes of the IRDC Meeting held on 25th April 2009 in PBCEC

Members Present: Drs. K. Muralidhar (Chairman), B. Basu (Convener), Pradip Sinha, A. Chandra, R. Moona, Nishith Verma, S. Qureshi, Kumar R. Priya, Anoop Singh, K. Poddar, S. Sangal, J. Subramaniam (representative of regular scientific/Design staff), Ms. Rashmi Parihar (representative of Project Associates working for sponsored projects), and Mr. K. Sudheendra Rao (representative of PhD students).

1. Co-PI in sponsored research projects: Convener mentioned specific comments of some IRDC members in reference to the DORD announcement on the issue of Co-PIs. In today's meeting DORD further conveyed to IRDC the nature of discussion held in the Deans' group meeting, where it was stated that it is desirable to have a co-PI ideally in a normal sponsored project. This is particularly relevant as the Institute desires its faculty members to carry out research on complex challenges or on experimental topics of inter-disciplinary nature in a time-bound manner. Having a co-investigator with complementary research interest is expected to result in intellectual property enhancement, a factor that is also of considerable significance to students. DORD also mentioned that DST, in a recent communiqué, emphasized the need of co-PI for projects to be submitted to different PACs under Engineering Sciences within SERC. Such a decision on the part of DST is due to various reasons, including discharge of administrative and technical responsibilities especially in the absence of PI usually for period in excess of 3 months. DBT often advises PIs to have co-investigators prior to the approval of task force projects. After a long discussion on the subject, the following recommendation is being proposed:

   i. PIs are encouraged to have co-investigators in sponsored projects.
   ii. Projects that are equivalent to awards (e.g., Swarnajayanti) will not have co-PIs.
   iii. Consultancy projects can have a single project investigator.
   iv. For DST proposals to be submitted to Engineering Sciences, it is obligatory to have Co-PIs.
   v. In case of faculty/academic staff due to retire in the next four years, Co-PI is mandatory for DST proposals, irrespective of the discipline.
   vi. All proposals will necessarily be forwarded first by the Head of the Department.

A note in this respect will be circulated to the academic staff of the Institute.

2. Summary of inputs from Golden Jubilee Research Complex (GJRC): The Convener informed IRDC that input from a number of departments, including Chemistry, HSS, IME, BSBE, MME, ME, and CHE and an individual opinion of Dr. Mahendra Verma (on behalf of the *Advanced Mechanics* group) has been received. Along with the summary of all the inputs, it was mentioned that IRDC desires to strongly recommend the GJRC proposal for an in-principle approval from Board of Governors of IIT Kanpur. However, it was suggested that the formation to interdisciplinary research groups across the institute must commence so that the design of the building is linked to the requirement of interdisciplinary research groups. The construction of the building would take another year or more (upon Board's approval). It is important that these groups should start informal interaction and come up with clear thoughts on **complex** research problems of multidisciplinary nature.

The slide presentation on conceptual framework for GJRC was also suggested. While a large funding from MHRD for the proposed GJRC is feasible, it was mentioned that some fraction of such funding can be spared to revamp existing research facilities and laboratory space.

3. **Concept paper on seeking MHRD support:** IRDC Convener informed the committee that inputs on the concept paper seeking MHRD support have been received from BSBE, AE, CHE and MME. The faculty in general expressed very positive opinion on the concept note. It was clarified that the funding of Rs. 500 crores and 200 additional laboratory staff members, as mentioned in the concept paper, is meant for all IITs. Also, a National Advisory Board of MHRD would monitor the expenditure of such funds to bring accountability/transparency.

4. Office Automation software: Mr. Abhishek and his team from Shinsei bank, Japan presented the R&D module of the *Academic Administration System* (**AAS**) on 18th April at the Outreach Center. This presentation was attended by a number of faculty colleagues and a few IRDC members. The team was told that R & D modules should have sufficient compatibility with frequent upgradation depending on the users' newer requirement and satisfy legal issues. IRDC was informed that the ASS model has already been successfully implemented in Shinsei bank, Japan.

Following the presentation, the team also met the Institute officials, including Director, Deputy Director and Dean, R &D. It was suggested to the team that the trial version of the

software be run at DORD office for a limited number of projects in parallel with the paper-work. Based on the input from the users, further discussion would be held prior to the implementation of the software. A core team of faculty consisting of Drs. Rajat Moona, Amitabha Bandyopadhyay, Satyaki Roy, B. V. Phani, Deepak Gupta/nominee and Mr. K.V. Satya Murty has been formed to have an effective communication with the AAS software provider as well as to convey specific/detailed requirements of PIs. It is expected that core faculty members will take input from PIs prior to detailed discussions with the software provider.

5. Scheduling of IRDC meetings: It was decided that regular IRDC meeting in the next semester would be usually held on the first Monday (barring MS-I/MS-II/MS Recess and National Holidays) of each month between 5 and 7 pm. However, special IRDC meetings to discuss important agenda items may be called as and when required on other days in a week.

During 2009-2010-I semester, the schedule of regular IRDC meetings, to be held during 5 – 7 pm, is as follows: 3rd August (Mon), 7th September (Mon), 5th October (Mon) and 3rd November (Tue).

6. Issues related to User Charges for CARE and other Institute facilities: IRDC was informed about the arbitrariness of the charges for CARE and other Institute Central facilities. During discussion on this issue for around 45 minutes, it was mentioned that high user charges (in excess of Rs 3,000/- for some) have become bottlenecks for faculty members and researchers, who do not have sponsored projects. A number of IRDC members encouraged rationalization, transparency and priority access/usage to PhD students need to be followed for all the CARE/Institute facilities. Also, faculty members responsible for such facility can be requested to provide justification (mentioning consumable expenses, AMC expenses and/or regular maintenance expenses, manpower) in support of the user charges. DORD announced that CARE funding, in the future, would provide funds for consumables along with the cost of equipment. As on date, Institute R & D account does not have any possibility to provide equipment maintenance support.

IRDC has recommended that PhD students (whose forms have been forwarded by the respective Heads of Departments) should be given priority access with reduced charges. The charges towards the usage by PhD student for each facility should be paid from departmental

budget. This is expected to create sufficient incentive for a rational use of the facility by PhD candidates.

In conclusion, it was decided the user charges need to be reduced and be commensurate with the expense incurred on one hand and availability of resources with the users, on the other. In addition, it was recommended that the scientific details (example, basic principles and technical specifications), availability and the basis of charge computation for CARE equipment be made available on a website. Such a website can provide information on non-CARE facilities as well.

7. Keywords for Project Classification during registration: DORD mentioned the need for project classification for better dissemination of information to the outside world as well as for archival purposes. It was decided the project registration form will be appropriately modified so that PI can mention relevant keywords during project registration as well as write a few lines of abstract (in layman's language – abstract for the tax payer) so that such information can be displayed against each sponsored project.

8. Faculty classification in terms of expertise in broad research areas: After a brief discussion, it was decided that all IRDC members will compile information for the respective department/IDP about their area of expertise (broad, e.g. Energy, Environment, Materials, Simulation, Communication as well as narrow research domains) along with the personal website and email addresses so that such collected information will be useful for wider dissemination. A suitable search engine will use this information in the database to generate responses to queries frequently received from the outside world. The departmental representative in IRDC is requested to follow up. The format is to be circulated by Convener, IRDC.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.

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Prepared by

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and
Revised on 3rd May, 2009