

Minutes of the IRDC meeting held on April 13, 2010

Members Present: Drs. K. Muralidhar (Chairman), N. Verma (Convener), A. Kushari (co-convener) B. Basu, D. Kundu, S. Qureshi, V. N. Kulkarni, D. Philip (in place of B. Phani), Utpal Das, Avinash K. Agarwal, Jonaki Sen, A. Bandyopadhyay, A. Garg, Sandeep Verma, Kumar Ravi Priya, Satyaki Roy, Deepak Gupta, J. Subramaniam, B. Lohani, Ms Rashmi Parihar, Mr. K. S. Rao, and Mr. K.V. Satya Murty

1. Convener welcomed all IRDC members to the meeting.
2. The minutes of the IRDC meeting held on March 11, 2010 were confirmed.
3. Dean, R&D announced that effective April 1, 2010, the new procedure of hiring persons via manpower agencies recognized through empanelment is in place and the current procedure of employment through work-assignment has been terminated. A new on-line software package to professionally handle the Work Assignment through Agency system is now available on the R&D webpage.

Dean, R&D also announced that the foundation of the six-storied RA-hostel was laid on April 12, 2010. The hostel having 255 rooms should be ready for allotment in the middle of the next year, 2011.

32 units of Type-I houses have also been made available to the R&D office for the allotment to research personnel (e.g. RAs).

Mr. K.V. Satya Murty, Asst. Register will be leaving IIT Kanpur to join IISER, Bhopal around the middle of April, 2010. Mr. R. K. Sachan has joined in his place. The exemplary service of Mr. Murty was appreciated by all IRDC members and put on record.

4. Dr. Bharat Lohani gave a presentation of the 3D Virtual Model of the IIT Kanpur campus. All members were happy to note the capability and several features of the model, especially in the animated 3D virtual mapping of the campus, which includes the buildings, streets, and landscapes. It was felt that such software will help the prospective faculty and students, as well as the visitors to the campus, say, during conferences, in locating various buildings within the campus. The members appreciated the effort of Dr. Lohani and his team in creating such package and suggested a number of improvements, including the incorporation of sound effects in the VIDEO. Dr. Lohani sought for additional suggestions across the departments. The IRDC members thanked Dr. Lohani for his time and effort. A sample video can be seen at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jUA8gHYP7to>

5. Dr. Bikramjit Basu gave a presentation on the proposal for a *Research Complex*. Dean, R&D assisted in the presentation to inform the members about the reason for re-visiting the presentation.

The members were informed that the proposal for constructing the aforesaid complex was envisaged last year, when the institute was hoping to receive a substantial grant from the MHRD on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Institute. The main purpose of having such a significant complex was to create well-endowed laboratory space that can be given on demand for conducting inter-disciplinary research projects. It is envisaged that the research complex would have a collection of research personnel, and basic infrastructure and equipments, a working environment very much similar in spirit to the Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory at the University of California and Argonne National Laboratory at the University of Chicago.

Dean, R&D, further informed that despite a delay in the sanction of funds, it is highly desirable to mark the *research & development* space in the Master Plan so that future construction is possible when the initiative materializes. In this respect, the R&D office (and IRDC) will give a presentation to the Institute Space Committee about the requirement of space for such a complex.

All IRDC members enthusiastically supported the idea. It was unanimously recommended that laboratory space equivalent of 30,000 m² be clearly marked in the master plan. A possible site could be near the air strip, though verticality of the construction would be essential.

IRDC members cautioned that a comprehensive and careful planning is required for conceiving the vision, architecture and construction of the building. An Institute vision on future research directions would be necessarily required. At the time of working out the details of the construction, the matter should again be brought to the IRDC for discussions and collective feedback from the Departments and programs be solicited.

6. Dr. Amitabha Bandyopadhyay, BSBE gave a presentation on the proposed research support from the Institute for consumables and maintenance of equipment on a need basis.

It was pointed out that more and more faculty colleagues are undertaking sponsored research projects that are timely, important and interesting. Research activity almost invariably requires some funding for equipment, personnel, consumables, and maintenance of the equipment. Most PIs raise the funding for these activities from extra-mural sources. It is conceivable that for reasons beyond the control of the administration, principal investigator(s) or researchers, funding from extra-mural sources may not always arrive in time of need. It is also possible that for a particular short span of time, a particular investigator may not be able to attract extra-mural funding for a certain activity. In either case, discontinuity in funding even for a short span may have catastrophic consequences both in the short and the long term.

Another particularly difficult scenario arises when equipment breaks down for which one may not have a back-up. This situation causes loss of precious time for the students, researchers and the PI.

Therefore, this is to propose that a flexible spending account be created to provide support to PIs and mitigate contingencies arising out of situations that makes, financially, conducting research impossible for a specific period of time. The quantum of the support should be adequate to help the PI tide over the difficult period.

The IRDC members appreciated the proposal. It was suggested that the Institute should also create a cadre of highly qualified research personnel paid from R&D funds who could be assigned to large collaborative projects. For implementation of such a proposal, it was decided to constitute a committee, consisting of Dr. Amitabha Bandyopadhyay as convener, and Drs. Sandeep Verma, CHM and Avinash Agarwal, ME as the other members. The committee was requested to prepare a one-two page proposal outlining the objectives and the rules for the implementation of the proposal. The document will require the approval of the Director.

7. Continuing further discussions in the meeting on the current existing research infrastructures in the Institute, it was also decided to constitute a committee with Dr. Ashish Garg, MME, as the convener, to prepare a document focusing on the theme *Institute Infrastructure and Facilities: Status, Prospects and Possibilities*. A brochure on the collection of equipment available at the Institute on date can be prepared. Dr. Garg, in consultation with the IRDC conveners may nominate the other members of the committee to include the faculty across various disciplines and programs, and submit the document to the IRDC for further discussions.

Prepared by



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Forwarded by



Dean: R&D

23rd April 2010