

## Center/University Management Relations Discussion Session

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1. Overhead Issues: The issue of overhead exemption continues to be an issue at some universities. Research administrators raise questions about why this program requires the overhead exemption (25% return from memberships to program) when other NSF divisions and other federal agencies do not make such requirements.

Responses: The general response that seemed to satisfy most is that this (I/UCRC) program is unique in that it emphasizes a partnership between NSF, universities, industries, and in some cases the States. The granting of the overhead exemption (25% return) is one small way of getting the universities and (if state university) the State's to participate.

2. NSF's Support Level: Several in the room believe that the NSF support is too low in that it does not cover the administrative costs to start-up and operate a center. Some universities are requiring that the director's salary be covered by the grant while others continue to support the director and some staff assistance with internal funds.

Responses: Most were of the opinion that the NSF level of support is too low, but the group was not able to come up with a dollar amount to suggest. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) fashioned their centers program after the I/UCRC's and that they fund planning grants in the amount of \$50,000, and first few years of the award are \$450K per year with the amount decreasing over the ten-year life of the grant. Some mentioned that originally the NSF support was substantially higher in the earlier years (about \$250K).

3. Other Sources of Support: Funding for the center's is not expected to be only from industry memberships. Many center have substantial other federal funding and some conduct very lucrative workshops that generate extra funds. General consensus was that center's should be aggressive in seeking other sources of funding especially during the final few years of NSF support. The opportunity for "TIE" projects and International Projects is another source of funding from NSF.