

IDC Distribution Committee Report Final Report

In February of 2013 Vice President Bose assembled a committee to develop a recommendation to support the strategic use of IDC. The fundamental question was how is the campus IDC distributed to support research activities, including: faculty start-ups; facilities construction and renovation; development of interdisciplinary core facilities, their maintenance and equipment; and matching requirements for large center grants.

The committee collected and reviewed materials which can be found on the website:

<http://www.uh.edu/af/committees/idc.htm>

The materials assembled included:

- Scholarly discussions on the use of IDC
- IDC policies for other universities
- Peer data on distribution of IDC
- UH data on IDC distribution
- UH college policies on IDC distribution

The committee met three times in 2013 and also conducted discussions by email. Based on a review of the materials and discussion amongst the members the committee reached the following conclusions:

- Based on an examination of peer policies and data, we could find no standard or common practice for distribution of IDC (see COGR Data).
- A review of the UH data on distribution of UH IDC revealed that there was information available on how UH IDC is actually used by the various units.
- A review of the expenditures confirmed that the uses appeared appropriate for support of research.
- There was limited documentation of criteria available at the unit level on the choices and priorities guiding the specific uses.
- We found no consistent distribution policies and criteria used by the units.
- The committee could find no documentation of college distribution policies and asked the Provost to inquire of the deans. The result of the survey (posted on our web site) confirmed that there is no single or consistent policy across the units.
- Policies and practices have been developed to fit the needs and circumstances of the individual units.

At the same time the committee was working on the question of IDC distribution, the Faculty Senate RSC committee was also examining the question. The RSC considered the same questions, independently conducted discussions with VP Bose and also discussed the policies of the centers and colleges (posted under College Policies).

After a discussion of these findings the IDC committee concluded that:

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- The discussion the uses of IDC needs to be on-going, transparent and conducted at all levels and all units.
- The Office of Research should maintain and update the web site created by this committee and all units should be required to provide their policies and criteria for distribution
- That the various units have unique needs and circumstances regarding their use of IDC and should continue to have their own policies and practices.

The committee discussed the RSC proposal to change the UH IDC distribution policy to create a direct distribution to PIs beyond the current University, college and center policies. While committee members supported the discussion and resolution of the question of direct distribution to individual faculty members, the committee could not identify any standard practices of our peers or data available on which to base a recommendation.

- We found that some UH units make such distributions directly to faculty.
- We found no rationale for a uniform policy across all units.

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