

## **Interdisciplinary Research at LSUHSC: Current Status, Impediments, and Recommendations**

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**Definition:** Interdisciplinary Research is defined as research encompassing scientific approaches at many levels from reductionism to integrative science. Interdisciplinary research includes translational research, but is not restricted to only translational problems. Although some investigators use interdisciplinary research in single grants, the focus group concentrated on interdisciplinary research in program or center grants.

**Approach:** Identify leaders of program and center grants and query them about the reasons that underscored their success, and the problems that had (and have) to overcome.

**Current State:** Interdisciplinary research is underdeveloped at LSUHSC. There are currently 3 COBRE grants, and 5 Center and PPG grants.

## **Impediments To Development Of Interdisciplinary Research**

1. Lack of Leadership in Clinical Departments and Divisions (there are a few exceptions) that supports and encourages research.
2. Insular views on the sharing of indirect costs in program and center grants among the involved Schools and Departments
3. Lack of an Office of Interdisciplinary Research that would facilitate development of programs and expedite data gathering
4. Lack of money to develop new programs
5. "Can't Do" attitudes in HSC Administration that offers obstacles to getting grant accounts established, creation of per-1 for new positions, and merit raises for staff. There is also an opaque modus operandi about how indirect costs are used.

## **Recommendations**

1. New Leaders (Department Heads, Division Directors, Senior Physician-Scientists) must be recruited in clinical Departments to change the culture to one that actively encourages, supports, and expects research.
2. Indirect costs from Program and Center grants should be shared by Schools and Departments when a Project Leader or Core Director is from a Department or School different from that of the PI.
3. Creation of an office of Interdisciplinary Research to facilitate program development.
4. The Chancellor and the Deans should increase the return of indirect costs to the Department or Departments engaged in interdisciplinary programs. These funds would provide a source of support for preliminary studies in new areas. This increase should be standardized across the board.
5. Change the culture in HSC administration from a "can't do" to a "can do" attitude to expedite change and programmatic development. Increase the transparency of the use of indirect cost dollars by HSC Administration.