

University of South Alabama
Imaging Institute Meeting
June 3, 2009

Meeting Attendees: See attached Roster of Participants.

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Russ Lea at 12:05 p.m. Dr. Lea thanked everyone for their continued participation and for sharing their collective thoughts in support of this initiative.

Introductions

As participants represented a broad spectrum of disciplines, they each were asked to introduce themselves to the group.

Dr. Lea began by stating that this would likely be the last *free-flowing* meeting. After this meeting, committee work, seminars, etc. will likely begin. Questions that should be addressed are 1) Do we want an Imaging Institute? 2) What should be the components? 3) What is it that we know and don't know?

Dr. Lea then presented a series of slides [Exhibit 1] to assist in determining what needs to be done in order to put up a "stand-up" facility. A period of discussion ensued which focused on those slides. It was noted that an institute should benefit the larger community, the institution, and faculty, and should include tangible benefits to all.

Questions posed were: 1) What are the common attributes of institutes? 2) What challenges need to be addressed? 3) What changes need to be made? 4) What should be the academic infrastructure? 5) What should be the hiring practices? 6) What type of institute evaluation should be done? and 7) What are the key components for success?

Interdisciplinary Research Institutes result in the development of specialized knowledge and new disciplines (i.e. nanotechnologies), with all participants benefiting from informal interactions. Regarding the funding of institutes, it was noted that initialization usually comes from outside sources and many institutes begin with private funding. It was further noted that, from a social-science aspect, little effort has been put forth to document the differences between the success and failure of interdisciplinary teams.

There should be healthy competition between institutes within an institution. Incremental changes need to occur to grow a successful institute. Considerations should be provided to faculty who work in an institute, and they should not be penalized, when it comes to promotion and tenure, for work performed within or for an institute. The scales are beginning to tip on the side of faculty.

The quality and prestige of an institution come from its faculty. Students will continue to be well taken care of as things continue to change. Students should be enrolling at USA for the quality of our faculty and the scholarship. This is what binds a campus together.

The academic infrastructures need to be addressed as well as hiring practices (dual appointments, salary splits, release time, and the benefits of joining an institute). There are roles for social sciences, humanities, and information science within an interdisciplinary institute. The importance of performing institute evaluations, both internal and external, was also discussed.

It was decided that the focus of the next meeting should be the identification of common problems as they are integrated with leadership. It was stated that this process should lead to a vision statement.

Dr. Lea again asked the participants to provide listings of imaging equipment within their departments/labs to Sandy Corry at scorry@usouthal.edu.

Infrastructure for Proposed Physical Facility

Participants were provided with a document produced by Dr. Leavesley which listed some of the infrastructure requirement for a physical facility at USA [Exhibit 2]. The uniqueness of facilities within an institute was discussed. It was stated that this document would be a good listing on which to build. It was stated that the emphasis of this document was on instrumentation, and that there would be many other considerations to be added, among them, a very large computer requirement with significant hardware and software components, additional AC requirements, increased power supply, and a significant storage requirement.

There will also be a need for expertise; defined imaging capabilities; and additional tools, technicians, and technologies. Among the primary reasons for an institute, are innovations, tools, and the collective benefit.

The inability to videoconference from within individual offices was noted, as well as a need for high-performance computers. There was mention of National LambdaRail (NLR) which provides an innovative platform for a wide range of academic disciplines and public-private partnerships by offering unrestricted usage and bandwidth, cutting-edge network services and applications, and customized services for individual researchers. However, it was noted that NLR has no terminal in Mobile.

NIST – National Institute of Standards and Technology

A summary of Recovery Act information was provided to the participants [Exhibit 3]. It was noted that the due date for a Letter of Intent is no later than 3 p.m. EST, Thursday, June 25th, and the full proposal must be received no later than 3 p.m. EST, Monday, August 25th. Although this is a short timeline, it was felt that these time limitations would be workable. It was stated that these awards will be widely distributed and that NIST/DoC anticipates awarding eight to twelve projects in the \$10 million to \$15 million range.

It was noted that our purpose must be defined prior to preparing the Letter of Intent. Architectural Line drawings will be required at the time of proposal submission in August. There must be collaboration and commitment. We must show competitiveness and a desire to succeed. We must show what will go into the center. And, Computer Center involvement (Academic Computing) will be required.

By a show of hands, the consensus was to go forward with this initiative and work for a major physical institute.

Suggestions

Gaps need to be addressed. Justification for our own institute rather than using another facility should be provided. USA's purpose must be clarified and our need for an imaging institute well defined. Common problems and needs must be identified. We must define whether the image is for another purpose, or if the image is the goal—is it *image research*, or is the *image needed for research*?

There was a suggestion that participants meet in small groups to discuss individual needs and to identify common needs and goals.

Dr. Lea agreed to provide a list of questions to the participants to assist in fine tuning this initiative.

Action Items

- 1) With the LOI deadline of June 25th in mind, participants were asked to submit written statements to Dr. Lea setting forth their expectations for an imaging institute.
- 2) Participants were again asked to provide listings of imaging equipment within their departments/labs to Sandy Corry at scorry@usouthal.edu.
- 3) Within the next few days, Dr. Lea agreed to provide a list of 5 or 6 questions to all participants to further define USA's need for an imaging institute.
- 4) Dr. Lea added that he will meet one-on-one with anyone wishing to discuss this initiative further with him.
- 5) It was agreed that Mr. Andy Lightbourne, Associate Director, Computer Center/Academic Computing, would be invited to attend the next meeting to provide input with regard to Computer Center capabilities and the added capabilities needed to support an imaging institute.

With agenda items covered, the meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sandra S. Corry
Recorder