

The University of Chicago



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UNIVERSITY

UIC
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OF ILLINOIS
AT CHICAGO

**Memorandum of Understanding
between the
University of Chicago,
Northwestern University and
University of Illinois-Chicago
for Open Access to Research Core Facilities**

Executive Summary

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between the University of Chicago, Northwestern University and the University of Illinois at Chicago to promote and facilitate *open access* to research core facilities at each university. Open access means researchers at each university will be treated the same in regard to availability and pricing of services regardless of their home institution. Each university agrees to waive the indirect (F&A) costs of researchers wishing to use each other's core facilities. Open access is expected to enhance the utilization of and cooperation between faculty and core facilities across Partner institutions. The Terms and Conditions of this MOU are for one year from the date of signatures with the option of continuing if the arrangement is agreeable to two or more Partners.

Background

Central administrators overseeing research core facilities at each institution have been discussing ways to improve the operation and capabilities of their facilities without increasing costs. While some facilities are operating near capacity and are revenue neutral, others are underutilized and/or running deficits. Furthermore, each university has some core facilities that are unique and are of interest to researchers at the other universities.

One way to maximize these investments is to allow researchers to use each other's facilities regardless of their academic affiliation (*open access*). This would not only generate additional revenue for underutilized facilities, it would enable researchers to take advantage of services and instrumentation that are unique at each university.

During preliminary discussions, it became apparent that open access to and cooperation among core facilities could have additional benefits for faculty by enhancing collaborations, facilitating joint grant applications for high-end instrumentation, and fostering joint educational and outreach opportunities. Strategically, working together

could position these universities to compete for future funding opportunities that emphasize regionalization of research resources.

Rationale for MOU

There is widespread interest in and support for open access to research core facilities among these universities. This was documented by the 2010 Huron Report, an independent assessment by a highly respected educational consulting firm, which performed interviews with senior faculty and administrators at each institution, as well as core facility directors and staff. The Huron Report revealed that all key stakeholders were overwhelming supportive of this initiative. In addition, a survey at one of the institutions (NU, 127 responses) revealed that 85% of science and engineering faculty supported open access to research core facilities.

While there are a variety of issues (regulatory, institutional, practical) that influence the ease of performing research at another university, these issues are manageable. Indeed, use of research core facilities by external researchers is common practice in today's research environment. In fact, there is already substantial use of core facilities at NU, UC and UIC by researchers from each university. Nevertheless, a major obstacle to increasing this usage and other value-added opportunities is cost. Currently, external users are required to pay indirect costs (F&A) on top of direct costs creating a disincentive to work cooperatively.

Recently, central administrators overseeing research core facilities at each university formed an Inter-Institutional Core Advisory Committee to address these issues. The Committee is comprised of 5 senior faculty from each university, and they met on October 10, 2012, to discuss obstacles related to open access. It was the Committee's unanimous opinion that open access was a viable and worthwhile initiative and that dropping the indirect cost for one year was a necessary first step in fostering Inter-Institutional cooperation on core facilities. They also recommended that data be collected during the year that could be used to evaluate the impact of open access on core facilities. They agreed to meet after one year to help evaluate the data and make recommendations whether to continue the initiative.

Terms and Conditions

1. **Open Access** - This MOU condones and encourages open access to research core facilities by researchers at each partner university. Open access means that researchers at each university will be treated the same in regard to availability and pricing of services regardless of their home institution.
2. **Indirect Costs** - This MOU acknowledges that indirect (F&A) costs will be eliminated from charges for using research core facilities at partner universities.
3. **Enrollment** - This MOU applies to any core facility that accepts work from a researcher at a partner university. A core facility may opt out of this initiative by refusing to accept work from a partner university. Thus, enrollment is an all-or-none option for each core facility. If a facility chooses to opt out, then it may not accept work from any researcher at partner universities.


4. **Oversight** – An oversight committee shall be set up to evaluate and address issues of compliance and equitability. The committee is charged with identifying and resolving such issues as need arises.
5. **Duration** – This MOU shall be in effect for one year starting on the date at which all parties have signed it.
6. **Yearly Assessment** – The impact of this MOU will be assessed during the year by the oversight committee administrators overseeing core facilities at each university. They, together with input from the Inter-Institutional Core Advisory Committee, are charged with evaluating the impact of this initiative and determining whether it should be continued.

Signatories

This MOU is effective as of March 13, 2014 (date) as signed by the authorized officer of each of the parties below:


 Thomas F. Rosenbaum
 Provost, University of Chicago

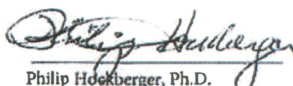
 *NEW*
 Daniel I. Linzer
 Provost, Northwestern University

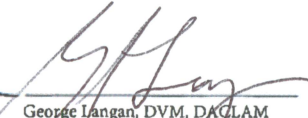

 Lon S. Kaufman
 Provost, University of Illinois-Chicago

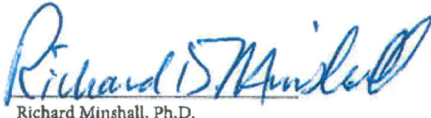
ADDENDUM

We, the undersigned, upon the recommendation of the Inter-Institutional Core Advisory Committee, agree to change the “Yearly Assessment” clause of this MOU as described below. This clause will be in effect starting January 1, 2018, and continue until December 31, 2020.

6. **Assessment** – The impact of this MOU will be assessed every three years by administrators overseeing core facilities at each university. They, together with input from the Inter-Institutional Core Advisory Committee, are charged with evaluating the impact of this initiative and determining whether it should be continued.


 Philip Hoekberger, Ph.D.
 Associate Vice President
 Associate Professor, Physiology
 Office for Research
 Northwestern University


 George Langan, DVM, DACLAM
 Associate Dean for Research Resources
 Professor, Department of Surgery
 Biological Sciences Division
 The University of Chicago


 Richard Minshall, Ph.D.
 Director, Research Resources Center
 Professor, Anesthesiology,
 Pharmacology, & Bioengineering
 The University of Illinois at Chicago