



Building Research Centers of Excellence

Partnerships, Incentives, and Capacity-Enhancing Strategies

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Session Agenda (75 Minutes)

Welcome and
framing (10 min)

Partnerships and
collaborations
(15 min)

Compensation
and incentive
models (15 min)

Subawards,
compliance, and
operations (15
min)

Faculty
development
and capacity
building (10 min)

Discussion and
takeaways (10
min)

Why Research Centers Matter

Centers as engines for
institutional research
competitiveness

Scaling
infrastructure, talent,
and external funding

Aligning faculty
incentives with
institutional strategy

Strategic Partnerships: Purpose

Expand

Expand capacity
beyond a single
institution

Share

Share expertise,
infrastructure,
and risk

Position

Position centers
for long-term
sustainability

Strategic Partnerships: Models

- University-community partnerships
- Inter-institutional research collaboratives
- Government, nonprofit, and industry partners



Compensation and Extra-Compensation Models

Why
compensation
design matters
for engagement

Balancing base
effort, stipends,
and supplemental
pay

Transparency and
equity
considerations

Defining Eligibility and Accountability

- Clear role definitions tied to center activities
- Performance-based eligibility criteria
- Regular review and documentation

Subawards and Subcontracts: Why They Matter

- Enable distributed center operations
- Support partner engagement and capacity
- Introduce compliance and risk considerations



Designing Effective Subaward Workflows

- Clear review and approval points
- Defined roles for finance, compliance, and Pis
- Monitoring, reporting, and close-out



Preparing New Faculty for Center-Based Research

- Early onboarding to Center expectations
- Hands-on training in grants, compliance, and team science
- Mentorship and peer learning

Faculty Incentives and Recognition

Align

Align incentives with research productivity

Recognize

Recognize collaborative and center service work

Create

Create visible pathways for advancement

Session Outputs and Takeaways

- Draft collaboration plan with defined partner roles
- Sample compensation and incentive framework
- Subaward workflow template
- Outline of a new-faculty onboarding module

Discussion and Reflection

- What center challenges are you navigating?
- Where are incentives misaligned?
- What capacity gaps need immediate attention?

Key Takeaways

- Centers require intentional design, not ad hoc growth
- Partnerships, incentives, and operations must align
- Faculty readiness is central to long-term success