RAC/CUTC Region 1 Perspectives
July 25, 2019

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My UTC Experience

• UTCs supported me in graduate school (at 3 universities)
• UTC co-PI as a junior faculty
• Managed a Regional UTC (Region 3, 6 universities, 4 states)
• Former CUTC member
Today

- Brief UTC 101
- Non-funded UTCs
- Working with UTCs is Different (than conducting research with a non-UTC university)
- Vermont’s Experience
UTC 101

• USDOT funded University Transportation Centers (UTCs) are in each authorization bill
• Giant competitions (52 applicants for last 2 national UTCs to be awarded—reducing congestion and infrastructure durability)
• Current centers need to fit within USDOT specified themes
• Currently: 7 National, 10 Regional, 20 Tier 1 Centers
• Multiple universities are encouraged. Historically minority universities are encouraged.
UTC Themes

- Improving Mobility of People and Goods
- Preserving the Environment
- Promoting Safety
- Reducing Congestion
- Improving Durability and Extending the Life of Transportation Infrastructure
- Preserving the Existing Transportation System
UTCs Require Match

• National and Regional UTCs require 100% Match
• Tier 1 UTCs require 50% Match
• Match:
  – Non-federal sources BUT SPR-B funds can match
  – Can be cash
  – Often are faculty salaries, overhead reductions, assigned to data or borrowed equipment, indirect costs of soft match, etc.
UTCs have Tech Transfer Plans

• Workforce development
• External advisory boards
• Train students
• Multiple university collaborations
• Tech Transfer
  – Should be disseminating research results
    • Websites, webinars, project briefs, emails
  – Step towards implementation
Non-Funded UTCs

- CUTC includes centers that apply whether or not they have USDOT UTC funding (USDOT funded UTCs must be members of CUTC)
- Many centers without current funding had USDOT funding at one time
- Many centers keep spending USDOT funds long after the initial allocations
Working with UTCs is Different

- Projects need to fit within a theme
- Universities are looking for match
- Tech transfer requirements
- Multiple universities on one project
- Mixed emphasis on filling State DOT need
Vermont’s Experience

• UVM was a National UTC
• UVM part of a National UTC
• New Region 1 UTC at U of Maine (started June 2018)
UVM was a National UTC

- National UTCs get $2M+/year; VT research budget is $1.1M/year → UVM had to look much further than VT AOT for match
- Center functioned for years in order to complete match paperwork for USDOT
UVM is part of a National UTC

• Theme: environmental preservation
• Limited interest of topic or projects among VTrans staff
• Identify a possibly-fitting VTrans project and they call it “match” with minimal notification to VTrans
  – Advantage: little hassle, generally after project ends
  – Disadvantage: minimal UTC benefit to VTrans
• Emphasize results that can be put to use by agencies: message was clear from US DOT (Caesar Singh, UTC Director) and fully supported by TIDC Director
• Each project has a technical champion and communications between P.I. and champion greatly encouraged
• Advisory Board has members from each N.E. DOT
• Base-funded projects – some are focused well on addressing DOT challenges/ others are not so much (these projects were included in UTC application with little coordination with state DOTs)
• Competitive projects – focused on DOT needs (all proposals ranked by AB members)
• More work needed on other areas (per US DOT requirements) like employee development & technology transfer.
New Region 1 Center at U of Maine (EP)

• Emphasis on filling State DOT needs is refreshing/a contrast to other UTC experiences
• Personally fulfilling
• Infrastructure durability is an easy theme
• Nothing is perfect
• Growing pains