

# RAC/CUTC Region 1 Perspectives

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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

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

- 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.



- 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



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