



University of Houston-Downtown

Faculty Senate: Indirect Costs (IDC)

September 3, 2024



Indirect/Facilities & Administration Costs

- A portion of grant funds eligible for recovery by an institution to support the research enterprise, cover the cost of research facilities, compliance, and grant administration (Indirect Costs: IDC).
- Follow rules established by the OMB 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Guidance for Federal Awards).
- Not all external grants are eligible for recovery of IDC, and the ability and rate of IDC recovery is set by the funding agency.
- Institutions negotiate their IDC rates with the federal government every 4-5 years; UHD Current Rate = 39% of salaries and wages excluding fringe benefits.

UHD IDC Capture Model

- Until recently, UHD utilized:
 - the adjunct rate to capture IDC on course releases for faculty during the 9-month academic year.
 - One month salary to capture IDC on research salary/wages during a summer months.
- Faculty teach 7 courses as part of their 50% teaching effort during the academic year; the other 50% effort is divided between service and scholarship.
- At most, IDC recapture should be 1/7 of 50% effort (7.14% of one annual salary) for one course release during the academic year.
- The adjunct rate of \$3200 per course to replace a faculty member in the classroom for a course release has been a long-standing tradition for both faculty pay structures and for IDC capture during the 9-month academic year at UHD.

Campus Research and Student Thrusts

- **Campus Research**

- Average annual grant profile of \cong 40-55 active grants for \cong 250 - 270 T/TT faculty historically
- \geq \$4 Million in new grant dollars annually; slowly increased over 2015 - 2022
- \$1.4 Million in federal research expenditures and \$2.2 Million in total research expenditures in 2019 (NSF HERD)
- Approximately 50% of annual external funding focused on student support and programming

- **Research & Student Thrusts**

- Student support and programming; TRIO programs; diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)
- Criminal justice; social justice; social sciences; environmental sustainability
- Teacher preparation; public deliberation
- Computer science and artificial intelligence
- Equipment and infrastructure
- Non-medical STEM
- Undergraduate research, community engagement, and service learning

Challenges Facing UHD in Scholarship

- High teaching load for T/TT research-active faculty (21 contact hours per academic year).
- Lack of research infrastructure and graduate student Research Assistants.
- Grant culture and expectations not uniform across colleges and disciplines.
- Grant writing and awards not uniformly recognized and rewarded in faculty merit and promotion & tenure.
- Historic lack of the institution supporting the Research Enterprise in budget and planning.

Why Higher IDC Capture Model Hurts Faculty

- Faculty at UHD:
 - Teach more than research-intensive universities;
 - Paid less than peer and research-intensive universities;
 - Do not enjoy research infrastructure and support offered at research-intensive universities;
 - Do not have university-supported, research-focused graduate students to assist with research projects;
 - Need a higher % of grant budgets to carry out grant programming to include UHD students in the Research Enterprise;
- A higher IDC rate will:
 - Suppress faculty from submitting grants where release time is required;
 - Inhibit faculty from including students in grant budgets;
 - Consume a higher % of budgets in smaller grants to detract from grant execution (will essentially stop most CHSS faculty from pursuing grants);
 - Will inhibit productive partnerships between UHD faculty and peer institution faculty on joint grant proposals.

Questions:

- What is your understanding of the context and historical decision to use the adjunct rate for IDC capture in UHD grant budgets?
- Why has there been a sudden change in this IDC recovery practice without:
 - Conversations with faculty that would potentially be impacted?
 - Consultation with faculty and faculty leadership in the spirit of shared governance?
 - Transparency in communicating this change in practice?
- What is the motivation for increasing IDC capture to rates of research-intensive institutions when UHD is not a research-intensive institution?