



9.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Since 1998, NSF has funded only *multi-institution* Engineering Research Centers (ERCs) for two reasons: in order to gain the broadest possible impact in research and education, and to maximize the capabilities of research teams without limiting the Center's vision. This requirement means that to all of the day-to-day challenges of operating an industry-oriented, multidisciplinary Center on a university campus are added the extra dimensions—geographic, logistical, administrative, legal, cultural, and psychological—of requiring separate institutions to collaborate closely. This chapter focuses on the issues, challenges, and best practices that are unique to the multi-institution Center. Thus, it overlays and augments the other chapters of the Best Practices Manual, cutting across all the functional and program areas described there.

Loosely paralleling the structure of the Best Practices Manual as a whole, this chapter addresses the following topics. Links take the reader to that section.

2. [Organizational Structure and Center Management](#)
3. [Administrative Management](#)
4. [Research Program Management](#)
5. [Education Program Management](#)
6. [Industrial Collaboration and Technology Transfer](#)

The chapter was written by a task group of ERC staff members:

- Dr. Michael Silevitch (*chair*), Director, Center for Subsurface Sensing and Imaging Systems (CenSSIS)
- Ms. Jacqueline Wheeler, then Administrative Director, CenSSIS
- Ms. Janiece Harrison, Assistant Director, VaNTH ERC for Bioengineering Educational Technologies
- Dr. Fred Lee, Director, Center for Power Electronics Systems (CPES), with Ann Craig, CPES Administrative Director and Beth Tranter, CPES Administrative Director, Education and Outreach Director
- Dr. Amr Elnashai, Director, Mid-America Earthquake Center
- Ms. Sally Clement, then Education Coordinator, Center for Environmentally Benign Semiconductor Manufacturing
- Ms. Teresa Shaw, Industrial Liaison, CPES

The effort was coordinated by Mr. John Beaty, Program Manager at CenSSIS, with NSF consultant Courtland Lewis as overall project director. Please direct comments and questions regarding the chapter contents to Mr. Lewis at clewis@nsf.gov.

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