

Playing in the Sandbox

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RESEARCH INSTITUTE

UNANSWERED
QUESTIONS

UNQUESTIONED
ANSWERS

M. Morris

Universities are conservative by nature

- this is both good and bad

Canadian universities don't take chances

- there is no mechanism for it
- even CFI (innovation?) doesn't
- SFU is probably a little better than average

Many talk the talk - few walk the walk

- cross appointments at SFU?
- exactly 2 of 261 at assistant prof level

What is IRMACS?

- interdisciplinary research in the mathematical and computational sciences
- 200+ people
- dozens of research projects
- imaginative use of equipment
- imaginative use of space
- scores of events
- dozens of conferences
- takes advantage of SFU's advantages

An amazing amount of ...

Principals of IRMACS

- interdis/multidis only works when the players are getting something they really want. And it furthers their careers/passions.
- there must be a culture of interdis but not at the expense of the traditional University

All about facilitation

- can't force inderdisciplinarity but can foster and reward it

Teaching, Research and Scholarship aren't that different

- as a national/international endeavor

Key ingredients

- people
- communication, communication and still more communication

Space really matters

- physical
- virtual
- intellectual

Support really matters

- VERY short of non academic HQP
- many people in this room should be hired - but don't fit a standard mold
- the University is pretty inflexible

Neither fish, nor fowl, nor good red herring

- money, money, money
- flexibility, flexibility, flexibility
- money, money, money

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” Many talk about multi-disciplinary collaboration, but few are actually successful at sustaining attempts to see what will happen. Even strong partners often lose interest because they cannot get along well enough or long enough to see the fruits of the collaboration.”

