

(These notes were kindly put together after the fact by panel moderator Keith Gary, the energetic director of program development for the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute)

The afternoon session consisted of a panel discussion garnering opinions from researchers and grants officers/tech transfer specialists on building and maintaining interdisciplinary research collaborations. Keith Gary from the Kansas City Area Life Sciences Institute served as panel chair and moderator.

The group of scientists spanned a wide range of research areas, from bone biology and biocomposites to hard core engineering and nanotechnology applications. Specific research projects were not emphasized, rather the nature of the multi-disciplinary and cross institutional collaborations were the focus. A number of common themes emerged including identifying a central goal for the effort, maintaining good lines of communication, clearly defining expectations among collaborators, insuring the project is mutually beneficial, and maintaining an environment of trust. Investigator members of the panel included:

David Eick (UMKC)
Lynda Bonewald (UMKC)
Phil Fraundorf (UMSL)
Ron Dougherty (KU)
Alan Glaros (Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences)

As one might imagine, the Research administrators had some different perspectives to share. While noting the importance of maintaining a good collaborative environment, they were also focused on issues of intellectual property protection and effective technology transfer. There were some spirited discussions stemming from members of the audience regarding alternative approaches to the routine university process. Each participant was able to share some of the incentives and programs, in place or under development, to expedite the process within their own institutions. Research officer and administrator participants included:

John Baumann (UMKC)
Glen Marotz (KU)
James Coleman (UMC)
Nassar Arshadi (UMSL)
William Caskey (Children's Mercy Hospital)