

August 21, 2011

To: Liaisons, SDREC Affiliates
Re: SDREC Feedback (April – June 2011), Executive Summary
From: Michael Kalichman, Director, SDREC

Thank you again for your recent participation in one of nine interviews to assess the first 5 years of the San Diego Research Ethics Consortium (SDREC), and to plan for how best to move forward in the coming years. We found these interviews to be highly valuable and wanted to provide this summary of some of the high points of what we learned.

- **Overall consensus:** SDREC has “fundamental importance” in helping members comply with training requirements. As those requirements become more complex, SDREC’s worth will continue to grow. But SDREC has a greater and still-unrealized value: as a unique platform for peer engagement on common challenges and public/media engagement on critical issues.
- **Regional mark of distinction:** Members valued SDREC’s unique standing as the only regional alliance of its kind in the nation.
- **Keeping up with rules:** SDREC can stay current and help members stay abreast of ever-changing rules (NIH, CIRM, Dickey-Wicker, NSF).
- **Pro-active/constructive RCR training:** As an external entity, SDREC provides training in a manner that does not seem confrontational or institution-specific. SDREC instructors deliver required training in a lively and collegial manner, which has been a great asset.
- **Supplemental mentoring for trainees:** Aside from meeting requirements, SDREC training supplements mentoring on topics that PIs often can’t or don’t discuss with junior scientists.
- **Tracking:** The training model should include a robust tracking system.
- **Liability reduction:** Members view RCR training as akin to sexual harassment or OSHA training. Training not only decreases the risk of something going wrong, but you’re less liable if it does.
- **Public/media engagement:** SDREC’s public branding of the San Diego research community as having a shared commitment to research ethics and integrity has been a great advantage. Members could suggest topics for public forums and join an SDREC “speakers bureau.”
- **Peer engagement/networking:** Members value the opportunity to gather with peers at other institutions to discuss common challenges and exchange “best practices.” SDREC does some of this and could do more.
- **Resource for “afraid to ask” consultation:** SDREC could give new and junior scientists a risk-free venue for asking tough questions about complex issues.
- **Need for business model:** The SDREC should base its business model on a menu of services.