



VISION 2020: INSTITUTE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

The rapid growth of knowledge in the last 50 years is a direct result of the interconnectedness of the global, scientific community. The wide availability of air travel, telecommunications, television, and the Internet have made it possible for people almost anywhere to quickly distribute information and share ideas. Tens of millions of people in the world who work in scientific research, business, government, education and the arts, are now linked together in a sort of collective consciousness where new ideas move at “mind” speed.

The interconnectedness of the world has had a dramatic effect on business. In the modern, global economy business is increasingly disrupted by the flow of technology streams that change the competitive landscape of entire industries almost overnight. New knowledge that is discovered in mathematics and physics is increasingly being applied to information and communication technology, materials science and medicine, and discoveries in those fields are in turn influencing the way goods and services

are being delivered in the economy. This flow has always been there, but it is now moving much faster.

Creative collaboration, the convergence of information and ideas from many different people and sources, is accelerating the process. Knowledge and insights from a variety of intellectual disciplines help to more adequately describe a problem so it can be understood and a solution found. By breaking down traditional disciplinary boundaries, invention is accelerated as the work of one researcher is reinvigorated with new knowledge from outside fields of study. At the national level this has been recently demonstrated by the human genome project, a project that was originally expected to take much longer than it actually did.

The Institute for Interdisciplinary Research (IIR) will be Wisconsin’s center for creative collaboration and technology innovation. It will manage Wisconsin’s technology agenda by bringing together the best and the brightest minds from



“Working across scientific disciplines improves the quality of ideas—and increases the speed at which they are put to work.”

>> *Carl Gulbrandsen, Managing Director
Wisconsin Alumni Research
Foundation*



The IIR will foster in Wisconsin the flow of information and ideas among academic institutions, companies, research centers, sources of investment capital and governmental agencies.

business, government and education in an organization led by a small group of futurists and thought leaders. The IIR will increase the flow of ideas from our research laboratories, where fundamental advances in science are discovered, to local businesses. The IIR will help break down traditional boundaries by creating interdisciplinary work groups that will draw people and ideas from all parts of the economy as they are needed to help solve problems as quickly as possible.

Working within the Institute, small interdisciplinary teams will gather pertinent information about business trends and open up redundant approaches to helping Wisconsin's businesses create valuable new, knowledge-intensive products and services for the global economy. By accelerating the successful transfer of new technology to new businesses, the IIR will encourage local business

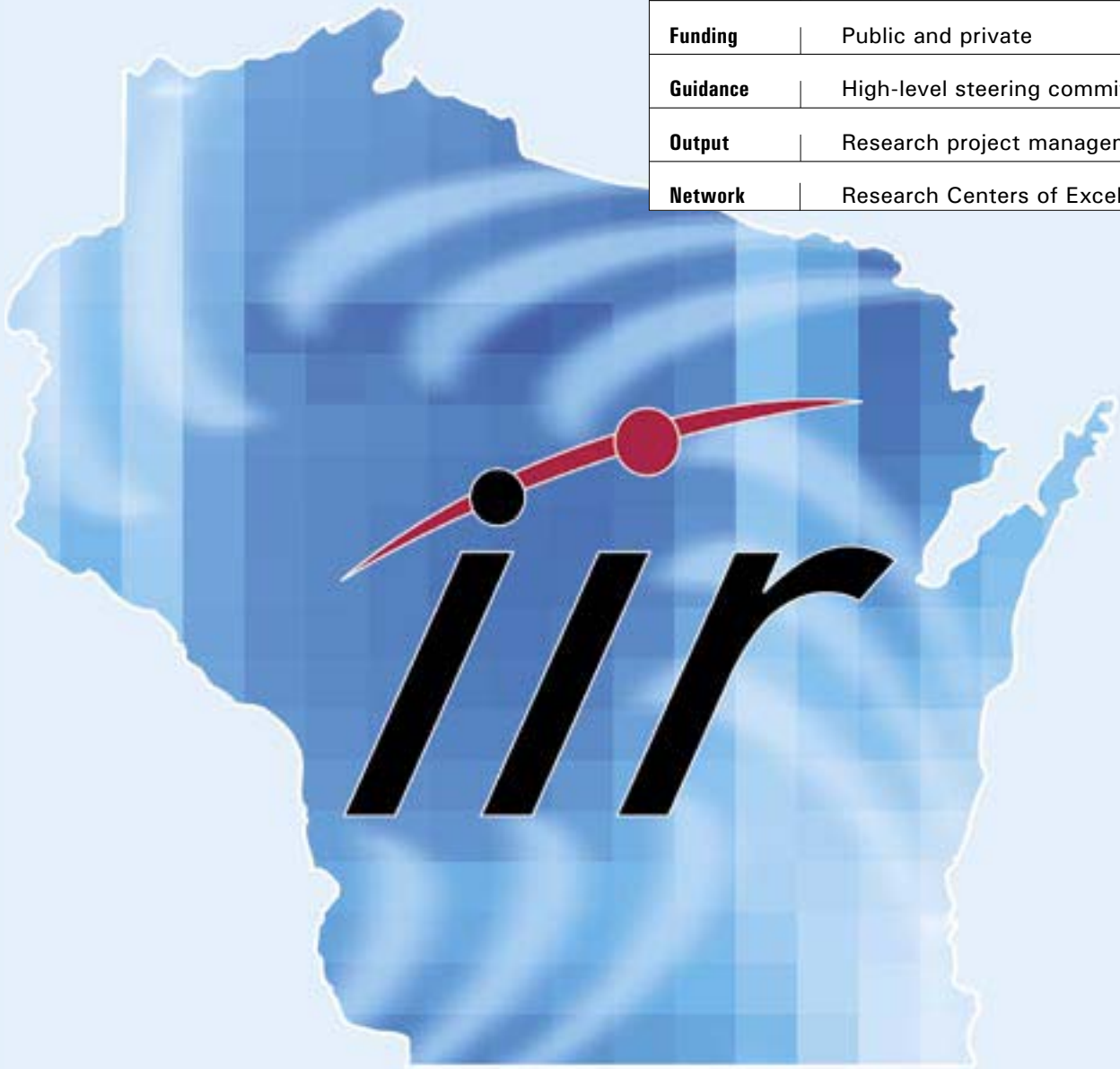
people to recognize the value of inter-disciplinary programs that rely on government-funded research and venture capital-backed start-ups. The IIR will conduct annual executive briefings to ensure that Wisconsin's leaders share a common understanding of the scientific and technical challenges facing the local, national and world economies.

The IIR has the potential to create a profound change in the basic structure and nature of the relationships between business, government and education in the Wisconsin economy. Similar organizations such as the Santa Fe Institute have helped to bring about significant change. Wisconsin's Institute for Interdisciplinary Research can help fashion unique solutions best suited to Wisconsin. In this effort, the IIR will serve as the research arm for the Wisconsin Technology Council. ■

VISION 2020

INSTITUTE FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

Structure	A virtual organization
Participants	Business, government, and education
Leadership	Five to six endowed fellows
Vision	Futurists and thought-leaders
Funding	Public and private
Guidance	High-level steering committees
Output	Research project management
Network	Research Centers of Excellence



*"The **value** of an idea lies in the **using** of it."*

>> Thomas Edison

