June 8, 2010
Interview Guide, TREC Center Directors who are NOT Training Core Directors – Anonymized

INTRODUCTION
(Script:) **Thanks, again, for agreeing to participate in this interview. Before we start, I wanted to mention our goals for these interviews.**

As we described on the TREC Evaluation WG Call: The NCI feels the TREC initiative has made important contributions to our understanding of how to successfully implement cross-disciplinary research and training in energetics and cancer. This summer, the NCI Science of Team Science team is conducting interviews with TREC center participants and TREC program staff at the NCI, to record strategies for success and lessons learned from TREC. We'll be using the results of these interviews to showcase the TREC initiative, and produce a manuscript highlighting our findings.

This interview should last about an hour. Do you have any questions before we begin?
(Address any questions. Then ***begin recording***.)
This is Amanda Vogel speaking with [NAME].

ENGAGING IN CROSS-DISCIPLINARY COLLABORATIONS: FACILITATING FACTORS AND CHALLENGES
As you know, one of the goals of the TREC initiative has been to foster *cross-disciplinary collaboration* in various stages across the research process, such as the formation of research questions, the methods that are used, and the ways that findings are analyzed and interpreted. We are interested in learning about the strategies TREC centers have used to achieve this goal.

I'm going to start by asking you some questions about *cross-disciplinary collaboration*. Then I'm going to ask you some questions about *transdisciplinary* research, using the particular definition of that term.

1. **First, w***hat factors have helped to facilitate or support productive cross-disciplinary collaborations* at your TREC center? For example, things like interpersonal processes within teams, leadership, infrastructure, or institutional policies?**

    a. *What strategies have scientists at your center used* to facilitate productive cross-disciplinary collaborations?

    b. *What factors at your TREC center, or at your institution, more broadly,* have helped to facilitate or support productive cross-disciplinary collaborations? For example: leadership, infrastructure, or institutional policies?

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2. W*hat challenges have emerged related to engaging in or supporting productive cross-disciplinary collaborations?*

3. **Have any of the challenges that you've mentioned been addressed? And if so, how has that been done?**

<u>ENGAGING IN TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH: FACILITATING FACTORS AND CHALLENGES</u>

Now I want to ask you some questions using a particular definition of "<u>trans</u>disciplinary research." This is the definition that our team has shared in our previous discussions with you and the Evaluation Working Group.

This definition highlights TD research as a unique level of cross-disciplinary collaboration that involves: an *"<u>Integrative process whereby researchers from different disciplines work jointly to develop and use a shared conceptual framework that synthesizes and extends discipline-specific theories, concepts, methods, and approaches, to address a common problem."</u>*

4. *C*an you reflect on the extent to which your TREC center, as a whole, has engaged in research that reflects this particular definition of <u>transdisciplinarity, with its emphasis on the "integration" of disciplines?</u>

    a. (If more positive:) *Can you give me some examples of aspects of the Center's work, or particular projects, that reflect this definition of TD research?*

    b. (If more negative:) **Why do you think that your research has not been transdisciplinary, according to this definition?**

5. If more positive. Otherwise skip to #6:) **You mentioned a number of factors that helped to facilitate or support cross-disciplinary research at your TREC center.   Were there any <u>additional</u> factors that helped to facilitate <u>transdisciplinary</u> research, as I just defined it? For example, things like interpersonal processes within teams, leadership, infrastructure, or institutional policies?**

    a. *What strategies have scientists at your center used* to facilitate transdisciplinary research, as I just defined it?

    b. *What factors at your TREC center, or at your institution, more broadly,* have helped to facilitate or support transdisciplinary research, as I just defined it? For example: leadership, infrastructure, or institutional policies?

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6. **You mentioned a number of challenges that emerged related to engaging in or supporting cross-disciplinary collaboration. Were there any <u>additional</u> challenges that emerged specifically related to engaging in or supporting <u>trans</u>disciplinary research, as I defined it?**

7. **Have any of those challenges been addressed, or are they being addressed? And if so, how?**

<u>FEEDBACK ON THE TREC INITIATIVE</u>
Now I want to get your feedback about the TREC Initiative, as a whole.

8. **In what ways has the TREC Initiative, as a whole, helped to support *cross-disciplinary* collaboration, or even *transdisciplinary* research?**

   a. **Could you reflect, in particular, on the TREC Initiative's structure – such as the coordination center, working groups, scientific meetings and center retreats, and the requirement to have the TREC center cores?   To what extent have these structures helped to support cross-disciplinary collaboration, or even transdisciplinary research?**

9. **Do you have any recommendations about how the TREC Initiative, or future center grant programs, can better support *cross-disciplinary* collaboration, or even *transdisciplinary* research?**

<u>IMPACT</u>
Now I want to ask you about some of the impacts of TREC.

10. **Have there been any unique <u>scientific</u> outcomes – such as scientific innovations or advances -- that emerged due to *cross-disciplinary* collaboration -- that would not have emerged otherwise?**

11. **In addition to scientific outcomes, have there been any other unique outcomes from the TREC initiative, that you think would not have occurred otherwise? For example, translational outcomes, or outcomes for your academic institution, or participating scientists?**

   (If time, ask probes a through c – otherwise skip to probe d:)
   a. **Were there any unique translational outcomes, such as community programs or policy applications?**

   b. **(If time:) Were there any other outcomes for your academic institution? Such as changes in institutional culture, administrative routines, or institutional policies?**

   c. **(If time:) Were there any outcomes for you, academically or professionally?**

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> d. Were there any particular aspects of TREC that contributed to these outcomes?

<u>WRAP-UP QUESTION</u>
12. **That completes my questions for you. Is there any other feedback you'd like to share, before we end the interview?**

Thank you very much for your time.