



# BHEF 2006 Issue Brief

## Expert



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## SPECIAL UPDATE: STEM Business-University Research Collaboration

There is increasing concern that the future prosperity of the United States is in jeopardy due to a decline in the science and innovation talent and infrastructure. In 1999, the Forum recognized one of the contributing problems and sponsored the Research Collaboration Initiative to identify ways in which universities and industry could lower the barriers to collaborative research interactions. The product of RCI, *Working Together, Creating Knowledge: The University-Industry Research Collaboration Initiative* (2001) contains a wealth of information and insights that provide a foundation for effecting changes in established practices.

In 2003 three key stakeholder groups, the Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable (GUIRR) (an organization within the National Academies), the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA), and the Industrial Research Institute (IRI) launched a project to explore the principles that should govern industry-university collaboration and identify an array of strategies for effectively translating those principles into research agreements. *Working Together, Creating Knowledge* was recognized and used as a foundational document for the project.

One of the key findings of the project team was that previous efforts to standardize research agreement language by creating model agreements were, in fact, counterproductive. The team, instead, has begun to develop tools that will help partners build an agreement that is customized to the circumstances of the project and the needs of the partners. A new demonstration partnership will be launched in the spring of 2006. The first product of the partnership will be a new tool called "TurboNegotiator" that can be used by business and university administrators at universities and companies to quickly find appropriate IP terms for their research agreement.

BHEF's winter 2006 meeting considered the goals of the GUIRR-NCURA-IRI demonstration partnership, how its results advance state-of-the-art research collaboration negotiations, and how hastening the signing of collaboration agreements contributes to improving student education and the international competitiveness of U.S. universities. Forum members discussed opportunities for involvement in the demonstration partnership and examined how that involvement can further Forum public policy outreach and advocacy goals, as well as complement the Forum's ongoing STEM activities.