Jan E. Odegard, PhD
Executive Director
Ion
Ion. Accelerating Innovation. Connecting Communities

Dr. Odegard is the Executive Director at the Ion. The Ion is the epicenter for Houston's innovation ecosystem and currently anchors the 16-acre Ion District that is being developed by the Rice Management Company. The Ion serves as a hub focusing on quality collaborations between entrepreneurs, incubators, accelerators, corporations, academics, and the broader Houston community. The Ion's mission is to create opportunities to advance and sustain economic growth in Houston and to foster innovation in energy, healthcare, space, transportation, manufacturing, and other industries. It is home to event space hosting daily programs, Common Desk coworking, the Ion Investor Studio, the Ion Prototyping Lab powered by TXRX, and tenants such as Microsoft, Chevron Technology Ventures, ARA Partners, Rice University, and OpenStax, with more to be announced.

Odegard has over 25 years of leadership experience supporting innovators and enabling research and life-long learning engagements in computing, data science, and information technology.

Prior to joining Ion, Odegard served as the Executive Director of the Ken Kennedy Institute at Rice University, where he focused on building strategic partnerships to serve as catalysts for research, education, and external engagements in data and computing. During his tenure at Rice, Odegard also served as the Associate VP for Research Computing from 2015 until he joined the Ion. While at Rice, Odegard worked with colleagues in the industry to launch the Oil & Gas High-Performance Computing Conference series in spring 2008 and then to launch the Ken Kennedy Institute Data Science Conference series in fall 2017.

Odegard was an associate professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Stavanger, Norway, (1999-2001), and served as department chair (2000-2001). From 1996 to 1997, he was the founding executive director of the Computational Mathematics Laboratory and research associate in Electrical and Computer Engineering at Rice. From 1997 to 1999, he served as the founding executive director of the Rice Center for Multimedia Communication. Odegard received the Michael Pearlman Memorial Service Award from Rice University in 2009 and was elected Senior Member of IEEE in 2002.

Odegard received his Ph.D. in electrical and computer engineering from Rice University in 1996, earned a Bachelor of Science degree (1987) and a Master of Science degree (1990), both from Texas A&M University in electrical engineering and holds an associate degree (1986) in electrical engineering from Telemark College of Engineering, Porsgrunn, Norway.