

# **Guidelines for University Centers and Institutes**

**(Approved by Academic Council, February 21, 2008)**

The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide several common requirements for the initiation and continuity of Centers/Institutes, while at the same time to encourage the entrepreneurial and creative activity of faculty, and to enhance the success of the Centers/Institutes in their missions. It is recognized that Centers/Institutes vary widely; some involve only a few faculty members within a department, while others involve a large number of faculty across several departments and colleges. The following guidelines apply equally to all Centers/Institutes.

## **1) Types of Centers and Institutes:**

Whereas Centers typically have a relatively focused agenda in an area of advanced study or research, Institutes have a more comprehensive and multifaceted mission. Generally, any Center/Institute should report to the organizational unit representing a strong majority (75% or more) of the contributing constituent faculty. For example, if a strong majority of member faculty were proposed to be within a particular College, the Center/Institute would report to the Dean of that College. An exception to this may occur if over 50% of the Center/Institute funding comes from some higher unit in the University, such as the Office of Research or Office of the Provost. Although most Institutes will be appropriately housed within a single College, there can be compelling reasons to designate some as University Institutes. To be identified as a University Institute, the unit should normally meet the following criteria: (i) less than 75% of the participating active faculty belong to a single College; (ii) the supporting endowment exceeds ten million dollars; (iii) the institute's mission lies in an area of sustained and decided interest to the University as a whole. A University Institute normally reports to the Office of the Provost or the Office of Research.

## **2) Oversight of Centers and Institutes**

Center/Institute Directors will be appointed by the chief academic leader of the supervisory unit overseeing the Center/Institute. Each Center/Institute is expected to meet regularly, in most cases, at least once a month, with a designated representative of the Supervisory Unit and to prepare an Annual Report of its activities to be presented to its Supervisory Unit. These meetings are intended to monitor progress, to assist the Center/Institute in its programs and planning, and to connect the Center/Institute to other complementary activities on campus that can be used to augment the programs of the Center/Institute. The reports should address scholarly and instructional activities such as lectures, conferences, workshops, enrollments in sponsored courses and degree programs, publications, sponsored research funds, Center/Institute membership, plans for the Center/Institute for the coming year, and other relevant information requested by the Supervisory Unit. Copies of this report should be made available to the appropriate Chairs, Deans, and Provost.

## **3) Procedure for Establishing a New Center/Institute:**

To establish a new Center/Institute, the interested faculty should develop a proposal to be reviewed by the Deans of the relevant colleges, Office of the Provost, and Office of Research in consultation with the involved department heads and faculty. If recommended by the Colleges, the proposal must be submitted to the Office of the Provost for final approval. Criteria to be considered in establishing a new Center/Institute as an official University Unit should include the following: the academic credentials of all faculty members involved and their proposed research; academic objectives and intellectual benefits that the establishment of such a Center/Institute can provide to faculty and students; resource requirement (e.g. staff, library, laboratory space, etc.); procedures for choosing Center/Institute membership, leadership, and policies for succession and change of leadership; proposed funding sources and the financial and academic sustainability of the Center/Institute.

All existing Centers/Institutes must register through this process within the first five months of adoption of these guidelines. Registration will require each Center/Institute to

provide the information described above to its Supervisory Unit, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of Research. This information will be used to confirm that the Center/Institute is still active and/or reporting to the appropriate Supervisory Unit.

#### **4) Procedures for Review:**

Each Center/Institute is expected to undergo an internal review after its first three to five years of existence, followed by subsequent internal reviews approximately every five to seven years. For the review of existing Centers/Institutes, the Supervisory Unit in consultation with the Office of the Provost will set a timetable for the initial review. External reviews may be warranted for some of the more prominent Centers/Institutes. In all reviews, the Center's/Institute's mission, scholarly activity, instructional contributions, academic impact, management, reporting structure and other relevant factors will be considered. A detailed financial report will also be included as part of each review. The Supervisory Unit is responsible for administering the review. If an external funding agency requires a different schedule or format of review, those requirements will take precedence and may substitute for a university-administered review.

The emphasis in the above review is to evaluate and enhance the quality of research and instructional activity devoted to fulfilling the mission of the Center/Institute. The review will also serve as a mechanism for the University and the Center/Institute to work together to increase support, raise visibility, maintain high scholarly standards, adjust/renew the mission of the Center/Institute and enhance the impact of the Center/Institute on the University's education mission. Normally, funding for these reviews will be provided by the Center/Institute itself.

If a review shows inadequate performance in terms of the Center's/Institute's academic objectives, intellectual benefits, or quality of research, then the Supervisory Unit will ordinarily put the Center/Institute on probation. Within four months of notification of the probationary status, a Committee will be appointed by the Supervisory Unit to evaluate the status of the Center/Institute. This committee will be composed of one member chosen by the Center/Institute Director, one member chosen by the

Supervisory Unit, and one member chosen by the Office of the Provost. The supervisor of the Center/Institute will appoint, in consultation with the Dean/Provost, one member as the chair. Within the year, the Committee will consider what actions the Center/Institute is taking or should take to improve its performance. At the end of the first probationary year, the Committee's recommendations will be presented to the Center/Institute membership, the Supervisory Unit, and the Office of the Provost. If at a later date, the Committee's concerns have been addressed to the satisfaction of the Supervisory Unit, the probationary status will be lifted. If the problems have not been adequately addressed within two years of the initial review, as judged by the Supervisory Unit, the matter would be referred to the Provost for appropriate action, which could include dissolution. In circumstances of gross underperformance, immediate dissolution of a Center/Institute can occur.

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*These Guidelines are designed to assist the Centers/Institutes in achieving their goals and in helping Notre Dame become a pre-eminent research university with a distinctive Catholic character, and outstanding undergraduate and graduate education. The purpose of the guidelines is to improve the quality of research, to heighten external visibility of scholarly activity, and to help increase the contribution of the Centers/Institutes to the intellectual life of the University.*

*The Provost may propose amendments to these Guidelines by submitting such amendments to the Executive Committee of the Academic Council. The Executive Committee may either adopt the proposed amendments by majority vote or submit the proposed amendments to the full Academic Council for consideration and adoption.*