Centers Policy

1. References

2. Definitions

Centers are organizational forms designed to further the university's instructional, research, and public service missions in ways that cannot be addressed through traditional structures, such as departments, schools, and colleges. Though centers are an integral part of the university, their missions should not duplicate those of departments, schools, and colleges. Instead, they should offer programs or opportunities that cannot be offered at least as well through existing structures. The key ingredient of any center is "value added."

Centers provide an organizational base for university mission-related activities in one or more academic areas. They pursue activities that may include, but are not limited to, interdisciplinary research involving faculty and students from a variety of internal administrative structures, offering continuing education activities related to their area(s) of interest, or facilitating efforts of the department, school, college, or university to obtain extramural funding in specific areas. Centers serve as a formalized link between the academic community and the professional community in the area(s) of interest.

A center cannot be involved in the independent offering of credit courses or degree programs.

This definition of center is not to be confused with facilities that include “Center” in their name (e.g., The Ramsey Student Center) or units that provide ongoing administrative or support services (e.g., The Learning Disabilities Center). A center cannot be involved in the independent offering of credit courses or degree programs.

Administration of Centers

a. Administrative Unit

Centers may be administratively located within a department, school, college, or other unit or report directly to a vice president. The most decentralized administrative level consistent with meeting the center mission is preferred.
b. **Appointments**

Center directors will be appointed with standard review processes which may vary depending upon the executive officer to whom the director reports. Tenure-track faculty who participate in centers will be appointed to departments or schools in accordance with normal appointment procedures with the exception that search committees will be formed jointly of department/school and center faculty. Both entities must agree on the employment of a new tenure-track faculty member. Non-tenure track faculty with time budgeted in a center as well as in other units will have their promotions and merit raises managed in a manner determined at the time of appointment.

Although some portion of tenure-track faculty time may be budgeted in a center, tenure and promotion processes will be initiated through the relevant department or school. However, the department or school review process will be organized to reflect the advice and recommendation of a center if a third or more of the faculty member's appointment is in the center. Merit salary decisions for those faculty with time divided between a department/school and a center will be made jointly.

Part of the time a tenure-track faculty member has budgeted in a department should include formal instruction. An exception to this teaching responsibility requires the approval of the appropriate department head and dean. This is to insure that center tenure-track faculty have regular contact with the department in which tenure resides, and, in particular, with teaching.

If a tenure-track faculty member is appointed jointly and the department does wish to recommend tenure but the center does not wish to continue the appointment, then it will be the responsibility of the department, if tenure is approved in the university review process, to come up with the funds required to purchase the faculty time from the center. If the department does not wish to tenure a person, even though the center favors tenure, then tenure will not be awarded (other than through a successful appeal based principally, as our Guidelines now provide, on process). A position vacated because tenure was not awarded will not be allocated by the department for different purposes without the explicit knowledge of the center director and the explicit approval of the cognizant department head, dean, or vice president. Similarly, if the services of a non-tenure track faculty member are not to be continued in a center, and another unit sharing that person's services wishes to retain his or her services, then the other unit is responsible for obtaining any needed salary.

### 3. Establishment of Centers

a. **Criteria**

Establishment and maintenance of centers must be based upon a defined program with measurable outcomes, defined policies and operating procedures, and a defined review process. Their establishment is justified when it is clear that their
respective missions support and enhance the programs of the university. Even then, they must have missions which demonstrably cannot be accomplished in an efficient and effective manner by existing departments, schools, colleges, centers, institutes, or other units.

b. Proposals
Proposals must include a narrative that states center goals and describes how they will meet the above criteria; the statement of goals must include specific outcomes and criteria that will be used to measure progress toward the goals.

The proposal must indicate the administrative unit and the leadership position within that unit to which the center reports and must designate the process by which the center will be reviewed. The center may be reviewed: (a) as an independent unit in Program Review; (b) as part of the Program Review of the administrative unit; (c) by the administrative unit; or (d) in another specified and approved manner. Review should occur no less frequently than once every seven years.

Proposals should also contain:

i. A statement of Operating Procedures and Policies. These should include a description of the structure, the roles and responsibilities of any participating units, an advisory committee structure, and the processes for appointment or reappointment.

ii. A description of amounts and sources of anticipated income. Anticipated financial arrangements between the center and other units, if any, should also be described. A projected budget covering the first three years of operation should be included and should detail expenditures and income expected.

iii. A description of the faculty and staff necessary to initiate its programs and maintain its operations for the first three years.

iv. A description of the physical resources that the center will occupy and utilize during its first three years.

v. A list of participating faculty, their home units, and their roles in the center, including a description of the formal arrangements through which faculty will participate with the center, will be evaluated for promotion, tenure, and salary increases, and the extent to which each affiliated faculty member will have his or her salary contained in its budget.

vi. Letters of support from affected departments, schools, colleges, other units, and the administrator who would have oversight responsibilities.

vii. A description of the responsibilities of any participating units.
4. Procedure

A proposal may be originated by any interested staff or faculty but, prior to submission for formal review, must be submitted for recommendations and comments to the heads of those units whose faculty and staff are involved. The route of review will depend in part on the originating source. For example, a proposal originating within a single college would have successive reviews by the appropriate committee within the college and by the dean. The proposal must be routed to the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. From the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, the proposal will be sent to the University Council who will make a recommendation to the President. After approval by the President, a proposal for an on-campus center will be forwarded to the Board of Regents as information. A proposal for a residence center will require approval of both the President and the Board of Regents.

If a Center proposal is approved, a copy of the proposal, with approvals, must be sent to the Office of Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness for its records.

Annual Reports and Reviews

a. Annual Reports
Centers should submit annual reports according to the accepted practices of their administrative unit.

b. Reviews
Centers will undergo an initial review by the administrative unit, to be completed by the end of the third year of existence. The center should summarize progress toward its stated goals and demonstrate how it adds value to the university. Thereafter, the center shall be reviewed as part of the normal cycle of review as specified in its initial proposal. Review should occur no less frequently than once every seven years.

Centers undergoing review must address any changes to resources, commitments, or operating agreements as specified in the original proposal or most recent review.

The review report for a third-year or normal cycle review of a center must include a statement that continuation of the center is either recommended or not recommended. If continuation is not recommended, the administrative unit head shall decide whether to invoke the process for dissolution, described below.

c. Documentation
The annual reports and all reviews of a center will be made available to the Office of Accreditation and Institutional Effectiveness.
5. **Recommendations for Changes or Dissolution**

Recommendations for dissolution may be made either (1) as a result of periodic institutional review consistent with program review guidelines, or (2) through typical department, school or college, or institutional processes. Recommendations for dissolution will be made if a center fails to meet the substantive conditions for its establishment or does not provide the "value added" requisite of a center. Any such recommendations should include a statement on how affected faculty and staff will be reassigned.

Recommendations either for significant changes in mission of, or for dissolution of, centers will be reviewed by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, who will in turn will make a recommendation to the University Council.

All recommendations for change or dissolution require approval by the President before implementation. After approval by the President, a proposal for dissolution of a center will be forwarded to the Board of Regents for information. A proposal for dissolution of a residence center will require approval of both the President and the Board of Regents.