

# Academic Affairs Policy Statement No. 7

## Centers and Institutes

### 1. References

- a. Academic Affairs Handbook, Board of Regents, University System of Georgia, July 1, 1986.
- b. Centers and Institutes policy statement approved by the University Council, January 26, 1993 and revised June 4, 1998.

### 2. Definitions

Centers and institutes 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 and institutes are an integral part of the university, their respective 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 or institute is "value added."

Both centers and institutes 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. Both 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, while an institute may be involved in the offering of credit courses and may offer 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). This definition of institute is not to be confused with use of the term "institute" in connection with adult and continuing education. One of several formats used to group adult learners for non-credit instruction or instruction earning CEU's (continuing education units) is the institute. Institutes of this sort are typically conducted over a fixed period of time and address specialized areas of concern or practice, adding to the knowledge which participants already have on the subject.

### 3. Administration of Centers/Institutes

#### a. Administrative Unit

Centers and institutes 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 or institute mission is preferred.

#### b. Appointments

Institute and 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/institutes 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/institute 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/institute 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/institute, 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/institute if a third or more of the faculty member's appointment is in the center/institute. Merit salary decisions for those faculty with time divided between a department/school and a center/institute 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/institute 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 or institute 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 or institute. If the department does not wish to tenure a person, even though the center or institute 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 or institute 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/institute, 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.

#### **4. Establishment of Centers/Institutes**

##### **a. Criteria**

Establishment and maintenance of centers/institutes 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/institute 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/institute reports and must designate the process by which the center/institute will be reviewed. The center/institute 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:

1. 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.
2. A description of amounts and sources of anticipated income. Anticipated financial arrangements between the center/institute 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.
3. A description of the faculty and staff necessary to initiate its programs and maintain its operations for the first three years.
4. A description of the physical resources that the center/institute will occupy and utilize during its first three years.
5. A list of participating faculty, their home units, and their roles in the center/institute, including a description of the formal arrangements through which faculty will participate with the center/institute, 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.
6. Institutes that offer or plan to offer a degree program (see 4.b.9 below) must have clear, formal agreements with home units of faculty that guarantee their availability to teach courses needed by students in the program.
7. Letters of support from affected departments, schools, colleges, other units, and the administrator who would have oversight responsibilities.
8. A description of the responsibilities of any participating units.
9. Recommendations, if appropriate, for the creation of courses or degrees and how they are integral to the functioning of the institute.

## **5. 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. If the proposal contains a graduate program including courses or a degree, then it should be routed from the school or college dean to the Graduate School Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Council. If a proposal originates from faculty crossing school or college lines, then it must be reviewed at the college level in each of the respective schools and colleges. If a proposal originates outside of the typical school or college structure and is linked to units within a school or college, it would be reviewed first at that school or college. From the dean of the school or college the

proposal must be sent to the relevant vice president(s). 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 Curriculum Committee and then to the University Council who will make a recommendation to the President. After approval by the President, a proposal for an on-campus center or an institute 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 or Institute proposal is approved, a copy of the proposal, with approvals, must be sent to the Office of Academic Planning for its records.

## **6. Annual Reports and Reviews**

### **a. Annual Reports**

Centers and institutes should submit annual reports according to the accepted practices of their administrative unit.

### **b. Reviews**

Centers and institutes that exist at the time of this policy revision (December 2009), and have undergone reviews in the past, at the time of their next review, should review (and consider revising) their existing statement that details center/institute goals and describes how they are meeting the criteria specified in 4a. The statement of goals must include specific outcomes and criteria that are being used to measure progress toward the goals (see 4b). In addition, existing centers and institutes will be required to file annual reports as described above following their next review.

Centers and institutes that exist on December 2009 but have never been reviewed must undergo an initial review by the administrative unit, to be completed within three years of this policy revision. In preparation for this review, the center or institute must revise or create the statement of goals and select the review process as detailed in 4b. Following the initial review, these centers and institutes will be required to file annual reports as described above. Review should occur no less frequently than once every seven years.

Centers/institutes created after December 2009 will undergo an initial review by the administrative unit, to be completed by the end of the third year of existence. The center/institute should summarize progress toward its stated goals and demonstrate how it adds value to the university. Thereafter, the center/institute shall be reviewed as part of the normal cycle review as specified in its initial proposal (see 4b). Review should occur no less frequently than once every seven years.

Centers/institutes undergoing review must address any changes to resources, commitments, or operating agreements as specified in the original proposal or most recent review. Each of the elements of section 4b of the proposal should be addressed and any revisions detailed.

The review report for a third-year or normal cycle review of a center or institute must include a statement that continuation of the center or institute 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 or institute will be made available to the Office of Academic Planning.

## **7. 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 or institute fails to meet the substantive conditions for its establishment or does not provide the "value added" requisite of a center or institute. Any such recommendations should include a statement on how affected faculty and staff will be reassigned, and how affected students in any degree program will be handled.

Recommendations either for significant changes in mission of, or for dissolution of, centers and institutes will be reviewed by the University Curriculum Committee which in turn will make its recommendation to the 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 or an institute 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.