

College Guidelines on the Establishment of Centers and Institutes

(Final Version - Thursday, October 30, 2007)

I. Introduction

A wide range of centers and institutes exist on the Bloomington Campus serving a multitude of purposes and encompassing a myriad of organizational and budgetary structures. In general, the purpose of Centers is to draw people together or to concentrate resources or facilities needed by a varied group of people in a single location (virtual or physical) in order to facilitate interdisciplinary research and creative activity, graduate student recruitment, and/or external grant activity. In general, the underlying motivation is that the people, equipment, and know how to do something new exist here on campus but the ties between them are weak due to physical, disciplinary, or administrative separation. Those seeking to establish a center believe that in doing so they will strengthen those ties, in various ways, which will increase productivity. Thus, almost by definition, a new center brings together individuals and equipment from multiple disciplines.

Here on the Bloomington campus it is necessary to make an artificial distinction - when establishing and reviewing centers - between budgetary units and academic disciplines. Centers and Institutes whose members come from multiple RCMs (responsibility centered management units) on the Bloomington campus are generally expected to have their administrative home in the Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR). Guidelines for Center establishment and review of OVPR centers can be found on the OVPR website. Centers, however, which draw their members almost exclusively from a single RCM, such as the College, though they are members of different academic disciplines (e.g. departments, research facilities, or areas of study) are expected to be located administratively in their own RCM. Thus, College faculty members who wish to create a center whose members are mostly faculty and researchers in the College should plan to establish a center within the College.

Within the College there are two primary types of centers, those which sit completely outside of a department and report directly to the Dean of the College and those which sit within a department and report to a department chair. In general, Centers which report to the dean do so because they have large infrastructure requirements, make use of facilities which are required by multiple departments, and/or draw their membership from two or more different departments in the College. Centers whose membership is drawn from only one departments (or involve only a few faculty members from other departments), whose facilities are primarily located within a single department, and which do not have large infrastructure requirements are more likely to be administratively located within the most proximate department.

It is expected that centers will be established initially for 3 or 5 years. In the fall of the final year of the agreement the center will be reviewed and a determination as to its continuation and the terms of that continuation will be made.

II. Procedure for establishing a center within the College

Faculty wishing to establish a College center should write a proposal and submit it to the associate dean for research in the College. It is recommended that faculty meet with associate dean for research before writing the proposal to discuss their plans.

Proposals should include the following sections:

1. Name of the proposed Center
2. Proposed Administrative Structure
 - a. management plan (director, membership, committees, reporting lines, etc.)
 - b. space and facilities (existing/virtual/needed)
 - c. staffing
 - d. advisory board (members may be internal but not center members)
3. Purpose and goals of the center include:
 - a. details about what current vision the center will fill
 - b. details of what benefits the center will provide
 1. research
 2. graduate student support/recruitment
 3. reputation/prestige
 4. grant/fellowship activity
4. Detailed three year plan for Center including:
 - a. plan for establishment
 - b. plan and timeline for how the Center will achieve the goals in section III
 - c. accountability benchmarks
5. Detailed three (or five) year budget

Proposals for the establishment of a center will be reviewed in the College by a committee consisting of knowledgeable College faculty chaired by the associate dean for research. The committee will make a recommendation to the dean as to whether the center should be established, the recommended initial budget, and the initial period of operation. The dean will make the final decision.

III. Procedures for Center review and continuation

Centers will initially be established for either three or five years. It is expected that Center directors will submit an annual report to the appropriate administrative entity (department chair or dean). That annual report is expected to discuss how well the center is doing in terms of the goals, benefits, and accountability benchmarks laid out in the initial proposal.

In the fall of the final year of operation each center will be reviewed. Centers or Institutes which report to department chairs will be reviewed by the department chairs under procedures determined in the department. Centers and Institutes which report to the Dean will be reviewed by the College. All reviews should consider how well the center has achieved the goals laid out in its initial proposal as well as whether the center has provided the expected benefits.

In the College, reviews will be carried out by a review committee appointed by the associate dean for research in consultation with the center director and the appropriate administrator and the Dean. Following the review the review committee will formulate a recommendation to the dean for the continuation or discontinuation of the center. If it is recommended that the center continue, the recommendation will contain a recommended period of continuation (3 or 5 years) and a recommended budget for the continuation period.

For Centers and Institutes which report to department chairs. The department chair will negotiate the Center/Institutes continuation and budget with the Dean during departmental budget meetings in light of the departmental review - a report of which will be made available to the Dean before the meeting.