

The Division of Research and Graduate Studies Guidelines for the Creation, Management, Evaluation, Modification and Dissolution of Texas A&M University Centers and Institutes

Fundamental to achieving the educational and research mission of Texas A&M University is the provision of an environment that promotes, nurtures and supports innovation, excellence and quality in education, research and service. Centers and institutes provide a conduit by which a critical mass of intellectual capability, disciplinary expertise, financial resources, and physical assets can be brought together to successfully accomplish the university's mission.

In order for centers and institutes to produce results commensurate with the university's investment in them, they must be effectively structured, managed and evaluated.

The vice president for research and graduate studies shall serve as the institutional official with oversight and monitoring responsibilities for university-wide administration of centers and institutes. The following provides general guidelines to assist the college(s) or other responsible university office(s) in the effective creation, management, evaluation, modification and dissolution of university centers and institutes.

I. CREATION OF CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

A. The Concept Paper.

1. Prior to the development and formal submission of a proposal to establish a center or institute, a concept paper must be submitted with a request for consideration and discussion with the board of regents. Request for exceptions to this requirement must be submitted to the vice president for research and graduate studies in accordance with I.A.5.e. below.
2. The concept paper should be routed from the dean(s) or other responsible university official(s) through the vice president for research and graduate studies, the vice president for finance, the vice provost (non-research only), the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs to the president of the university for approval and further recommendation.
3. At any time during the concept paper process, the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs may circulate the concept paper to the Council of Deans and to other representatives of the university and the academic community.
4. The concept paper should be no longer than three pages in length and should follow the procedures for submitting a concept paper as outlined in the board of regents issued guidelines, system policies, university rules and these guidelines.
5. The concept paper should include the following information:
 - a. Identifiers - The proposed name of the center or institute
 - i. The college(s) or other responsible university office(s) to which the center or institute will report

- ii. Other system members if the center or institute is to be a joint center reporting to the university and at least one other system member
- b. Specifics - The mission/goal/objectives of the center or institute
 - i. Justification for the separately organized unit
 - ii. Potential activities
 - iii. Resource requirements including potential sources of revenues
 - iv. Governance and advisory structure
 - v. Intra-system and other collaborations
 - vi. The number and range of faculty to be involved with the center or institute
- c. Upon approval by the president, the concept paper will be forwarded to the vice chancellor for academic and student affairs and serve as a formal request to the board of regents to discuss the concept of the proposed center or institute.
- d. Sufficient lead time should be given to assure that the request for consideration by the board of regents meets the deadlines as established by the system for agenda items. The university's request should be submitted at least one week in advance of that meeting's agenda item due date to the chancellor.
- e. In cases where delay of the discussions with the board of regents could jeopardize the ability of the university to make externally imposed deadlines for grant and contract funding in support of the center or institute, a request for an expedited process and the justification for it should be submitted from the dean(s) or responsible university official(s) through the vice president for research and graduate studies, the vice president for finance, the vice provost (non-research only), the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs to the president of the university for approval and further recommendation.

B. The Proposal to Create a Center or Institute.

1. The creation of centers and institutes as defined in System Policy 11.02 and TAMU Rule 11.02.99.M1 requires the prior approval of the board of regents through the process as outlined in this document.
2. Upon concurrence with the concept paper by the board of regents, a full proposal may be developed and submitted that may lead to the creation of a center or institute.
3. After the concept paper submittal and during the proposal development process, the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs will notify representatives of the academic community (i.e. Chair of the Council of Deans, Speaker of the Faculty Senate, Chair of the Council of Principal Investigators) of the proposal for the new center or institute.
4. It is recommended that proposals submitted to the board of regents for approval will be no longer than 10-20 pages and include an executive summary (2-3 pages in length), brief bibliographic data on the personnel involved with the center or institute, a projected activities calendar and other information deemed pertinent.
5. Although proposals will vary based on the scope and/or mission of the activities, the following must be addressed in every proposal:
 - a. Rationale for the creation of the center or institute - (i.e. "What merits the creation of a center or institute? Regional or national need?

Research frontiers requiring collaborations? Enrichment of education and training on a broader scale?”)

- b. Impact on education and training - (e.g. educational or service benefits to the citizenry of the region, state, U.S. and the international community)
- c. Sources of funding and projected financial support - (e.g. historical, current and projected funding information and trends; level of internal support received and projections of external funds to sustain ongoing operations, including the possibilities for endowment support)
- d. The expected number and range of faculty to be involved with center or institute’s activities
- e. Governance and advisory structure - (e.g. name of unit to which the center or institute will report, organizational chart, use of steering and/or advisory committees)
- f. Mechanisms for periodic review - (e.g. review committee membership and constituency, nature of appointment and length of terms)

C. Agenda Item for Approval of the Establishment of a Center or Institute

- 1. The full proposal should be routed from the dean(s) or responsible university official(s), through the vice president for research and graduate studies, the vice president for finance, the vice provost (non-research only), the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs to the president of the university.
- 2. The provost and executive vice president for academic affairs shall coordinate and prepare the agenda item that will present the proposal to the board of regents for consideration.
- 3. The provost and executive vice president for academic affairs will submit the agenda item with the proposal to the president for approval and further recommendation to the chancellor and the board of regents.

II. MANAGEMENT OF CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

- A. Accountability for each center or institute rests with the director or other responsible administrative official as designated by the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.
- B. The director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the center or institute.
- C. The director of the center or institute shall report to the departmental chair, academic dean or other administrative official and may be appointed for a specific period of time.
- D. The center or institute activities shall be managed in a manner as prescribed by the dean(s) or other responsible university official(s) as outlined in the board-approved proposal for the creation or modification of the center or institute.
- E. Supervising department heads may request and should receive reports from directors regarding a faculty members’ contributions to a center’s or institute’s work. Non-tenure track faculty working in a center or institute would report to the director.

III. REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

- A. The Division of Research and Graduate Studies will maintain a data base for the monitoring of centers and institutes and ensure its effective implementation. University-wide input into the relevance of the data being collected, the plan for access to the information and to summary reports and the general progress of the

development should be periodically reviewed by the university community. Working with the Division of Research and Graduate Studies, the deans (or agency heads) should have primary responsibility for keeping information in the database current.

- B. The dean(s) or other responsible university official(s) shall assure that periodic reviews of the center or institute are conducted and completed in accordance with the approved schedule of required reviews.
- C. The college(s) and other responsible university office(s) shall establish review criteria and evaluation guidelines that will assure that centers and institutes are managed effectively and making sufficient progress to the goals and objectives in accordance with the board-approved proposals. Deans and other responsible university office(s) shall submit review criteria and evaluation guidelines for their respective units to the vice president for research and graduate studies for final review and approval. Additionally, review and evaluation should be conducted to determine if the activity, under its current leadership, organizational structure and funding levels, is making sufficient progress to the center or institute's goals and objectives and if activities remain aligned with the university's goals and priorities.
- D. Performance and management review criteria may vary depending on the various missions and goals and the type of activities performed within the center or institute. Depending on these factors, examples of performance criteria may include:
 - 1. Sponsored Proposals and Awards
 - 2. Publications, Conference Papers, Refereed Journals, Books
 - 3. Conferences, Workshops, Short Courses
 - 4. Partnerships Activities and Opportunities (i.e. Industry, Government, University)
 - 5. Educational Activities and Opportunities
 - 6. Curriculum Development
 - 7. Multi-disciplinary Activities (Number of Participants and Disciplines)
 - 8. Students Supported (Undergraduate and Graduate)
 - 9. International Activities and Opportunities
 - 10. Capabilities Obtained (Facilities and Equipment)
 - 11. Awards and Recognition
 - 12. Patents, Licenses and Disclosures
 - 13. Constituencies Served
 - 14. Faculty Development
 - 15. Awards and Recognition (Individual and Institutional)
 - 16. Consulting Activities
 - 17. Other Accomplishments
- E. Examples of management and leadership review criteria may include:
 - 1. Clearly articulated vision for the center or institute
 - 2. Development and implementation of a strategic plan to meet the center's or institute's mission
 - 3. Effective leadership
 - 4. Effective financial control and oversight
 - 5. Compliance with policy and procedures
 - 6. Effective management of staff and students
 - 7. Commitment to diversity
 - 8. Productive use of facilities
- F. Reviews of centers and institutes will be conducted at least once every 5 years or as approved by the board of regents. It is recommended that reviews be performed as

frequently as necessary to assure that centers and institutes are making progress toward their respective goals and objectives. The Division of Research and Graduate Studies should develop a schedule of reviews for centers and institutes in consultation with deans or other responsible university offices. Postponements of a scheduled review shall be approved by the vice president for research and graduate studies and the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.

- G. Prior to forwarding to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies, the dean(s) or other responsible university official(s) shall submit a copy of the review to the center or institute director to provide an opportunity to address any factual errors that may be contained in the report.
- H. The dean(s) or other responsible university official(s) shall submit a copy of the review to the Division of Research and Graduate Studies with a statement that the review has been conducted and the date on which the review was completed.
- I. The Division of Research and Graduate Studies shall review the reports and provide comments and/or recommendations as to improvements or other further actions that may be indicated.
- J. The Division of Research and Graduate Studies shall submit comments and/or recommendations with copies of the review documents to the dean(s) or other responsible university official(s), the vice president for finance, the vice provost (non-research only) and the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.
- K. After receiving comments from these officials, the vice president for research and graduate studies shall make final recommendations to the provost and vice president for academic affairs concerning actions to be taken by deans or other responsible university officials. These actions may include personnel actions, modifications of the center's or institute's mission or programs, or dissolution of the center or institute. The provost and executive vice president for academic affairs shall approve or modify the recommendations and convey his or her decision to the appropriate deans or other responsible university officials.
- L. The dean(s) or other responsible university official(s) shall provide copies of the comments and/or recommendations to the center or institute director and provide any other guidance or directions to the center or institute director resulting from the review, comments and/or recommendations.
- M. As prescribed in System Policy 11.02, the Division of Research and Graduate Studies shall forward periodic reviews required by the proposal to the vice chancellor for academic affairs.
- N. Any additional annual reports or personnel evaluations associated with the center or institute will remain in the files of the dean(s) or responsible university official(s) and will be available to the vice president for research and graduate studies, vice president for finance, vice provost (non-research only), the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs and/or the president upon request.
- O. The vice president for research and graduate studies shall maintain records as to review schedules and completion to insure that centers and institutes have been reviewed and evaluated at least once within the approved required review period.
- P. The vice president for research and graduate studies shall provide the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs reports of non-compliance with the rules and guidelines as established for the consistent and effective administration of centers and institutes.
- Q. Nothing in these guidelines shall prohibit or discourage the college(s) or responsible university office(s) from conducting additional and/or special reviews or requiring additional reports as deemed necessary and/or beneficial.

- R. Nothing in these guidelines shall prohibit the request from the vice president for research and graduate studies, the vice president for finance, the vice provost (non-research only), the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs or the president for additional or special reviews and reports at any time deemed necessary or beneficial.

IV. MODIFICATIONS TO BOARD-APPROVED PROPOSALS

- A. Major changes from the board-approved proposal that led to the establishment of the center or institute shall require approval of the board of regents through the chancellor.
- B. All requests to the chancellor and/or the board of regents for modification of board approved proposals for centers and institutes shall require the approval and recommendation of the president. Requests shall be forwarded by the dean(s) or responsible university official(s) through the vice president for research and graduate studies, the vice president for finance, the vice provost (non-research only), the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs to the president of the university.
- C. Changes to the board-approved proposal that require approval of the board of regents include major changes in
 - 1. Name of the center or institute
 - 2. Function (e.g. expanding the mission/function to include research activities)
 - 3. Focus (e.g. areas of interest or expertise)
 - 4. Funding sources (e.g. types of sources)

V. DISSOLUTION OF CENTERS OR INSTITUTES

- A. In the event that the responsible administrative dean or administrative unit official proposes to dissolve a center or institute, a request should be submitted from the dean(s) or responsible university official(s) through the vice president for research and graduate studies, the vice president for finance, the vice provost (non-research only), the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, to the president of the university.
- B. If approved by the president, the president shall then submit the request to dissolve a center or institute to the chancellor who will either approve or disapprove.

VI. JOINT CENTERS OR INSTITUTES

- A. In cases where a university center or institute has also been approved as a center or institute of at least one other system member, the same university procedures described in Section I, Creation of Centers and Institutes, shall be required as those required for university centers or institutes only.
- B. Joint university centers or institutes will require the approval of the president of the university as well as the chief executive officers of the other system members responsible for the center or institute.
- C. While respecting each system member's authority and responsibility in the oversight of the center or institute, efforts will be made to streamline approval and review processes to maximize the productivity of the director in the effective management of the center or institute.
- D. Review and evaluation processes of joint centers and institutes will normally be addressed in the full proposal as submitted through each system member's approval and recommendation processes to the board or regents.

VII. ORGANIZATIONAL UNITS EXEMPTED

- A. For the purposes of compliance with System Policy 11.02, TAMU Rule 11.02.99.M1 and these guidelines, the following are not considered centers and institutes and may be exempted from board approval and the procedures as outlined in these guidelines:
 - 1. Group activities referred to as programs, laboratories, faculties or facilities which may have been referred to as “centers” prior to existence of board policy
 - 2. Departmental centers that are housed administratively within the department or unit and serve as the focal point of narrow disciplinary activity.
 - 3. Administrative centers within the university (e.g. counseling, professional development, continuing education, computer centers, training centers, etc.).
- B. Exemptions to system policies and university rules shall be extraordinary and granted only in clearly defined exceptional circumstances. Dean(s) or responsible university official(s) should submit a list of centers and institutes considered to be exempt to the vice president for research and graduate studies.
- C. The vice president for research and graduate studies, in concert with the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs shall review the list of centers and institutes considered to be exempted for concurrence.
- D. Programs, laboratories and other units submitted to and approved by the board of regents will remain subject to review and evaluation as outlined in the board-approved proposal that led to the creation of the unit.
- E. For monitoring and auditing purposes, the vice president for research and graduate studies will maintain the official university list of exempted centers and institutes as well as the list of university programs, laboratories and other units that may still require review and evaluation as outlined in board approved proposals.
- F. For the purposes of exempting existing centers or institutes or creating new organizational units exempted from board approvals and these guidelines, the use of the words “center” or “institute” will normally be restricted to those units that will be created, managed, evaluated, modified and dissolved in accordance with system policy and university rules and subject to these guidelines. Use of the word “center” or “institute” for a new unit to be exempted from board approval will require the approval of the vice president for research and graduate studies.