Governing Principles and Procedures for Centers and Institutes

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Centers and institutes play an increasingly important role in fulfilling the teaching, research, and service mission of Arkansas State University (A-State). This document establishes guidelines for the creation, operation, and review of new and existing centers and institutes at A-State. These guidelines will affect currently existing centers and institutes by encouraging their participation in the guidelines for operation and evaluation contained herein.

Both flexible and entrepreneurial, a center or an institute contributes to the academic life of the University by fostering collaboration among faculty, departments, and colleges, and by facilitating relationships with other research enterprises, community stakeholders, and grant- making agencies. They help facilitate the University's mission by providing alternative opportunities for teaching, scholarship, and service, while simultaneously enhancing the University's reputation as a leader in scholarship and research.

2.0 PURPOSE

When academic centers, support centers, and institutes are appropriately designed, ably led, regularly reviewed, and carefully integrated with the University's core mission, they make essential and powerful contributions to the University's academic life. They are distinct entities that may be interdisciplinary or affiliated with departments and colleges. They have any or all of the following attributes:

- provide clear intellectual focus that define their essential programs and research activities;
- advance the scholarly missions of departments, colleges, and the University
- serve as the nucleus for research programs in established and emerging fields of strength;
- offer students and community stakeholders educational programs, training, and services that otherwise would not be available; and
- enhance the visibility and reputation of the University.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Academic Centers.** Academic centers are teaching/research/service entities organized within departments or colleges that have focused missions and clearly defined objectives. They may stem from a single discipline or involve collaboration among disciplines. Academic centers typically will report to a dean and should attract the intellectual and professional participation of a critical mass of faculty members, visiting scholars, senior scientists, and/or leading professionals.
- **Support Centers.** Support centers are entities organized within colleges or executive-level offices. Their reporting structure typically is to a dean or executive official. Their purpose is to serve the academic community, supporting the University's mission of teaching, research, and service.

- **Institutes.** Institutes, like academic centers, are grounded in the teaching/research/service mission of the University. They typically have broader missions and multidisciplinary foci than academic centers and will most commonly report to the Provost or designee, such as the Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery for research institutes. They should enhance the intellectual and professional participation of a critical mass of faculty members, visiting scholars, senior scientists, and/or leading professionals. It is expected that most institutes would also include significant interaction with community stakeholders and be totally self-sufficient within a specified period.
- **Center or Institute Affiliates.** The University's faculty and staff, community participants, or other external stakeholders may receive "affiliate" designations when appropriate. An affiliate's designation indicates an individual's key role in a center or an institute.
- **Designation as a Center or Institute.** Designation as a center or an institute is a competitive process that is administered by the Office of the Provost and Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery in consultation with the Office of the Chancellor.

4.0 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all faculty and staff at A-State

5.0 GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

5.1 Establishment

Designation as a center or institute is a singular honor reserved for those entities that are a) central to the mission of the University, b) interdisciplinary, c) entrepreneurial in approach, d) research intensive, e) venues for student learning, and f) linked to the community and to other external stakeholders. Additionally, centers and institutes must build upon faculty strengths; facilitate the creation of a multidisciplinary community of scholars; be linked to at least one academic program in order to provide research, service, and experiential learning opportunities for faculty and students; demonstrate the potential for attracting external support and/or demonstrably enhancing the University's reputation; and demonstrate linkages to the community (desirable for centers, mandatory for institutes).

Academic centers and institutes require thoughtful analysis before they are established. Proposals for their establishment should include a statement of need, mission statement, goals and objectives, proposed name, benefits, a communications plan, relationships, affiliations, and a business plan. Please see Section 7.0 for more detailed instructions.

5.2 Management of Centers and Institutes

5.2.1 Role of the Director.

The directors of centers and institutes are responsible for ensuring that their units contribute to the academic vitality and visibility of the University. Directors of the academic centers and institutes are appointed by the Provost and Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery with the advice and approval of the relevant Deans and Chairs. They must be members of the faculty, unless otherwise approved by the Provost and Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery. The appointment of a director must include a written enumeration of any additional compensation, change in workload, other alterations of the faculty member's responsibilities, and any conditions of employment. The Director's faculty contract will be modified or redrawn as necessary to reflect new levels of responsibilities and/or compensation.

5.2.2 Faculty/Constituent Affiliations.

The leaders of centers and institutes are encouraged to develop relationships with the faculty and other stakeholders within and outside of the University. The Director has responsibility for recommending any affiliate positions to his/her supervisor.

Center or Institute affiliates should receive letters of appointment that contain the specified periods of service, position descriptions, compensation terms (if any), and descriptions of alterations in workload. Before agreeing to participate, any members of the faculty who anticipate serving in an affiliate's role should seek advice from their chairs and/or deans concerning the impact that his/her involvement will have upon tenure and/or promotion. Faculty affiliates likewise should report any center or institute activities in their annual performance reports.

5.2.3 Policy and Procedure Compliance.

All center and institute employees and affiliates are responsible for understanding and adhering to the University's policies and procedures, including but not limited to financial and human resources policies and procedures, the gift acceptance policy, sponsored research policies and procedures, procurement policy, capital projects planning procedures, and all other relevant policies and procedures.

5.2.4 Establishment of Advisory Boards.

If deemed appropriate by the Chancellor, Provost, and Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery, an external advisory board may be created for a center or institute to provide the unit with support and advice. Its responsibilities may include advising the director about activities that are consistent with the unit's mission, reviewing the unit's accomplishments considering its goals, providing long-range guidance for the unit's major direction and strategies, and contributing to and/or promoting the financial viability of the center.

The external advisory board may include qualified representatives from academic communities, professional organizations, corporations, governmental agencies, or other suitable entities that are relevant to the center or institute. Members of an external advisory board are appointed by the Chancellor upon the recommendation of the Provost, and the Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery. The Director or a nominating committee may recommend prospective board members but cannot invite or appoint new members to the board independently.

If an advisory board is established, the expectations of membership should be clearly articulated. Terms should be for specific durations (no more than three years) and should expire on a rotating basis to ensure continuity.

5.3.5 Evaluation of Centers and Institutes.

All centers and institutes will be fully evaluated every five years using the methodology described in Section 7, Procedures.

6.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery to participate in the establishment of centers and institutes, to work with them on an ongoing basis to enhance research productivity, and to participate in periodic evaluations (every 5 years, see section 5.3.5).

It is the responsibility of Deans and Chairs to sponsor development of the centers and institutes, monitor their ongoing activities when appropriate, and participate in periodic evaluations. It is likewise their responsibility to assure faculty release time when appropriate.

It is the responsibility of center and institute directors to:

1. create strategic plans and goals in the context of the University's academic mission;
2. ensure that the units' activities are consistent with their missions, goals, and objectives;

3. interact with university faculty and administrators, as well as with external constituents;
4. garner faculty, visiting scholar, and community stakeholder participation in the unit and secure affiliate appointments as appropriate via the chair, dean, or Provost;
5. secure financial resources to support the center or institute and oversee fiscal matters and submitting financial reports as required;
6. ensure that resources are used appropriately;
7. employ and manage staff within the unit;
8. ensure that terms contained in any grant and donor agreements are met;
9. develop and implement annual and self-study reports; and
10. ensure that all employees (faculty and staff) perform according to the ethical and moral standards of the University, and comply with all University, federal, state, local and University regulations and policies.

7.0 PROCEDURES

7.1 Establishment

Program requests must include the following elements.

- **Statement of Need**: How the entity will advance the University's mission and what opportunities that currently do not exist will be possible if the center or institute is established.
- **Mission Statement, Goals, and Objectives:** A mission statement should be developed that clearly describes the center's purpose, goals, and objectives. The statement should link to the University's mission statement and should provide clear indication of desired outcomes.
- **Naming the Center or Institute:** The proposed name for the center and the rationale for the name. The Provost will evaluate the proposal and recommend its approval or disapproval. The Provost reserves the right to modify the proposal as appropriate.
- **Benefits:** The benefits garnered for faculty, students, staff and the community.
- **Communication Plans:** How the new unit will be communicated to the University community and to external stakeholders.
- **Relationships:** The relationship of the proposed unit to the faculty and to other educational programs, centers, institutes, the community, or other external constituencies
- **Consultations:** The entities that have been consulted within and outside the University. Copies of any letters of support must be included with the proposal.
- **Business Plan:** The business plan should contain the following components:
    - A budget that includes anticipated revenues and expenses for the first five years of operation.
    - Current external funding, if any, and the duration of that funding. NOTE: A proposal must be submitted to and approved by the Provost prior to the initiation or acceptance of external funds. In some cases, a grant proposal may be used to justify establishment of the center or institute. In such circumstances, the principal investigator must provide sufficient time for the Chair, Dean, and the Provost to evaluate the proposal.
    - Potential sources of internal funding and amounts.
    - Analysis of the anticipated true cost of the unit including any in-kind donations (e.g., personnel, operating supplies, travel, equipment, space, etc.)
    - A long-term methodology and plan to sustain the unit.
    - Listing of faculty and staff who will be involved in the proposed unit, what their roles will be, and the impact the new unit will have on their current responsibilities (if any). CVs for current faculty and staff should be included.
    - The unit's proposed administrative structure and organizational chart.

    - The space, equipment, or other physical requirements. Explain how existing facilities and resources will be used, or what facilities and resources must be added.

7.2 Annual Reports

All centers and institutes, whether new or existing, are required to submit annual reports to Research and Technology Transfer of their activities from the previous fiscal year by August 1. These reports must contain the following elements:

- contribution to the visibility and stature of the university;
- contribution to scholarship in the areas in which the Center/Institute is positioned;
- involvement of faculty and students, including the names and disciplines of those who participate;
- ability to garner the resources necessary to effectively address the goals and objectives articulated in the unit's proposal;
    - Number, dollar amount, and source of all competitive, extramural funding proposals
    - Number, dollar amount, and source of all competitive proposals funded

- financial statement that provides the unit's operating costs;
- financial statement that provides the unit's true costs (including all in-kind contributions from the University or other sources);
- ability to utilize the advisory board (if applicable) to enhance and expand the units' activities;
- reports of any obstacles encountered and the actions taken to overcome these obstacles, or the reason they were not solved

7.3 Evaluation of New and Existing Centers and Institutes

Every five years, Centers and Institutes will provide evaluation materials to Research and Technology Transfer that must include:

1. a copy of the document that established the unit;
2. evidence of the unit's ability to enhance the academic mission of the university;
3. extent of the unit's contribution to the visibility and stature of the university;
4. a statement of the progress made in fulfilling the unit's goals and objectives;
5. an evaluation of the impact the unit has had upon scholarship including publications, patents, creative activities, invited presentations, keynote addresses, service on federal panels, and awards or other special acknowledgements;
6. an evaluation of the impact the unit has had upon teaching at both the graduate and undergraduate levels;
7. an evaluation of the impact the unit has had on linkages with community stakeholders;
8. an assessment of the external funding that has been garnered during the review period;
9. an evaluation of the unit's long-term fiscal viability;
10. an evaluation of the quality of the management of the unit;
11. a listing of all visiting scholars and postdoctoral fellows who have worked or are working with the unit (if applicable);
12. the efficacy of the unit's advisory board (if applicable);
13. a financial statement of expenses incurred within the unit for the previous five years; a financial statement that articulates the unit's true costs (including all in-kind contributions from the University or from other sources for the previous five years).

The review process will include the following elements:

- The Faculty Research Awards Committee (FRAC) will serve as the evaluation committee for Centers and Institutes.
- The Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery will serve as an ex-officio member of the Committee and Research and Technology Transfer will be responsible for administering the reviews.
- The Vice Provost for Research, Innovation, and Discovery will develop a schedule identifying the year when each unit will be reviewed. Each unit will be given at least one semester to prepare for the review.
- The center will prepare a self-study that addresses the evaluation criteria listed above.
- The center/institute director will have an opportunity to meet with the Committee and to answer any questions that may arise from the self-study.

After evaluating the self-study document and any external input, the FRAC will report its findings to the Provost. The report shall articulate the unit's strengths and weaknesses and shall contain recommendations to 1) continue the center for an additional five-year period; 2) conditionally continue the center for a prescribed period until improvements are met; 3) merge the unit with another unit on campus; or 4) dissolve the unit. In the latter case, the Committee should make recommendations to the Provost about an orderly transition of any personnel or assets contained within the unit.

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