

# Procedures for Establishing, Reviewing, and Discontinuing Centers and Institutes at UNC Charlotte

Updated October 2005

## A. Introduction

Centers and institutes are established within the University to strengthen and enrich multidisciplinary programs of research, public service, or instruction conducted by the faculty and staff. They also may provide undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral fellows with added research opportunities, facilities, and assistance, as well as enhance their involvement in public service and educational activities. Centers and institutes also have a strong positive impact on the economic development of the state by providing job opportunities, supplying technical assistance and training, fostering community development, and enhancing the transfer of new technologies. By engaging in partnerships with organizations such as private or corporate sponsors, educational institutions, and federal or state agencies, centers serve as an important means to address the diverse mission of the University.

Centers and institutes must avoid unnecessary duplication within the UNC System. Each unit should seek to differentiate its mission, activities, and/or clientele from other UNC units, and to make its facilities available to other constituent institutions for cooperative activities as appropriate. The activities of a center or institute may be funded from state appropriations, or from external funds sought for that purpose, or both. Unless organized specifically in response to legislation and appropriations approved by the North Carolina General Assembly to focus on a specific state need, each center and institute is expected to demonstrate a strong foundation of non-state support to justify its establishment and continuing operation.

University-wide centers and institutes at UNC Charlotte are, by their nature, interdisciplinary and are established, reviewed, and discontinued under the authority of Policy Statement 112 (PS#112), which provides that the Provost will appoint five faculty members to serve on a Centers & Institutes Committee (CIC) to secure advice on matters related to establishing and evaluating centers and institutes. Appointments to the CIC are for three years and are staggered so that not every member rotates off at the same time. The Vice Chancellor for Research and Federal Relations chairs the CIC and serves as a sixth member *ex officio*. In making appointments to the CIC, the Provost seeks faculty from diverse disciplines who have a demonstrated ability to think strategically and broadly about University-wide issues. PS#112 further provides that final approval of a recommendation to establish or discontinue a center or institute shall rest with the Chancellor.

The objective of these procedures is to provide a uniform framework governing the establishment, review, and discontinuation of University-wide centers and institutes at UNC Charlotte in accordance with PS#112, and to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources.

For centers that involve a single department or college, deans may establish “local” centers under procedures that mirror these University-wide procedures, including evaluation. Deans should submit proposed procedures to the Provost for approval, with a copy to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Federal Relations, prior to creating such centers.

## **B. Definitions**

### **1. Centers versus Institutes**

For the purposes of classification within the UNC System, there is no technical distinction between the terms "institute" and "center." Both typically offer interdisciplinary programs attracting faculty, students, and staff from various academic departments. In practice, an "institute" frequently refers to an activity with a broader scope than a "center." At UNC Charlotte, the term “institute” is reserved for situations involving a relationship with an external entity, such as a parallel nonprofit organization, or for organizations serving as an umbrella for multiple centers. For simplicity, this document will frequently refer to both centers and institutes as “centers.”

### **2. Institutional versus Interinstitutional Centers and Institutes**

Centers and institutes may be either *institutional* or *interinstitutional* in nature, and may be designated as research, public service, or instructional units. They may include the participation of other institutions, agencies, or organizations, such as other colleges and universities, schools, hospitals, industry, foundations, or governmental bodies.

*Institutional* centers and institutes report to only a single campus within the UNC system. These centers or institutes may collaborate with units or departments from other institutions for specific activities or projects, but fiscal and administrative oversight is limited to a single institution. Institutional centers do not submit planning, establishment, or discontinuation requests to the Board of Governors, but are subject to the policies and procedures for establishment and review that are established by their respective campus.

*Interinstitutional* centers and institutes involve more than one campus within the UNC system for participation, including shared administrative and fiscal oversight or substantial involvement of more than one UNC institution in on-going activities. Centers are also considered interinstitutional if the Office of the President provides fiscal and/or administrative oversight. Each interinstitutional center must designate the unit to provide administrative and/or fiscal oversight. In some cases these responsibilities may be assigned to two separate institutions or assumed by the Office of the President. The UNC Board of Governors provides oversight for all interinstitutional centers and institutes in accordance with these regulations.

### **3. Types of Centers and Institutes**

A *research* center or institute has research as its primary mission. Both institutional and interinstitutional centers may be designated for research. Although classified as a research center or institute, such a unit may also provide instruction, training, technical assistance, or public service programs. Although such units do not have jurisdiction over academic curricula, they may offer courses in cooperation with academic units.

A *public service* center or institute has public service or technical assistance as its primary mission. Both institutional and interinstitutional centers may be designated for public service. Research, instruction, and training activities may also be conducted as secondary components of the mission. Although such units do not have jurisdiction over academic curricula, they may offer courses in cooperation with academic units.

An *instructional* center or institute has training or instruction as its primary mission. Both institutional and interinstitutional centers may be designated for instruction, and these units may also conduct research and public service activities. Although instructional centers and institutes do not have primary jurisdiction over academic curricula, they may offer courses in cooperation with academic units.

#### **4. Other Designations for Centers and Institutes**

Any center or institute may also be defined as a *membership* center or institute. These units receive a significant portion of their funding from membership or affiliate fees paid by corporate or other private or governmental entities to pursue research, public service, or instructional activities of mutual benefit. Membership agreements are routed through the University using the standard Internal Processing Form for approvals of sponsored program requests. Once the agreement is signed and the fees have been paid by the member organization, the agreement is then processed as an external award.

#### **C. Authority and Lines of Responsibility**

University-wide centers at UNC Charlotte are established or discontinued at the discretion of the Chancellor in accordance with PS#112. Interinstitutional centers and institutes are subject to *Regulations for Planning, Establishing, and Reviewing Centers and Institutes in The University of North Carolina*, Chapter 400.5[R] of the UNC Policy Manual.

Throughout the remainder of this document, the terms “centers” will refer to *institutional* centers at UNC Charlotte.

University-wide centers are responsible to the Chancellor or, by his or her delegation, to another administrative officer, and the Chancellor appoints the director. If the director's position is that of a senior administrative officer, the appointment is made in accordance with existing policies for such appointments. If a faculty appointment is involved, the regular procedures for faculty appointments also are followed. The director, subject to the approval of the Chancellor or a designated administrative officer, appoints associate or assistant directors.

Each center will have a web site displaying at minimum the center's name, primary designation (research, public service, instructional), director's name and contact information, and a brief mission statement.

#### **D. Purpose and Scope of Centers and Institutes**

In order to contribute significantly to University strategic goals, centers must build excellence and/or visibility. Moreover, any center consumes scarce organizational resources, whether those

resources are dollars or merely reporting and oversight responsibilities. Thus, there must be good reasons for creating a new center, such as:

- providing an alternative classification structure to that which already exists in the department or college in order to bring diverse groups of faculty together;
- providing more focused administrative or technical support for proposal and project activities beyond that provided by departments; or
- creating and maintaining better visibility for activities that come under the center's umbrella.

For example, one of the principal ways in which we can increase federal funding is to pursue larger, more complex projects involving teams whose membership comes from more than one college. Another way is to secure support for groups of related projects, whereby the sheer volume of the activity increases competitiveness and visibility. Both of these mechanisms might be well served by the creation of appropriate centers.

The reasons for creating a center should be sufficiently concrete that they can be expressed in the form of objectives to be achieved over the first five years. Such objectives should be both quantifiable and measurable, and serve two purposes. First, when compared with current conditions, they define the value to be added by the center. Second, they provide criteria for an evaluation of the center at the end of five years. Objectives can be classified under five broad performance factors:

- research/scholarship;
- external professional recognition;
- external outreach/service;
- involvement of faculty and visiting scholars; and
- student support and involvement.

In addition to adding value, a center's objectives should be strategically aligned with the University's mission and academic plan. The consideration of strategic benefit is intended to be very broad. For example, research centers in well-funded disciplines must obviously focus, in part, on the leveraging of external funding. But there are also many important disciplines in a research university for which external funding is scarce or non-existent, but for which a center might significantly add value through new organizational structures, new faculty interactions, visibility, outreach, recognition, and/or the education of students. The degree to which the center should add value would depend, in part, on the resources required in establishing the center. A center that exists within a department and requires few resources outside of the department might not be expected to achieve objectives comparable to a large interdisciplinary center that receives significant University core funding. But, in all cases, there must be value added and it must be explicitly identified.

## **E. Funding**

No single funding model can fit all centers. Core (administrative) funding may come from a variety of sources, including departments, colleges, the University (Provost), and private sources

outside the University. Some centers will be established under agreements with external agencies (public or private) that provide project and/or operating funds. Centers that provide services to non-governmental organizations can also charge administrative fees on top of direct and indirect costs, but government funds (federal, state, or local) cannot generally be used for non-project-related expenses. On the other hand, some centers will have minimal expenses beyond direct project costs and, in addition to external grants, might subsist entirely on funds provided by a department or college.

Centers that propose to add value through increased external funding or increased visibility will usually achieve that increase through some form of entrepreneurship. A center's director is usually its chief entrepreneur and would therefore be expected to devote considerable time to the entrepreneurship needed to expand the center's work. Thus, in addition to the director's salary, any costs associated with entrepreneurship (*e.g.*, travel, communications, *etc.*) would also be borne by the center. Moreover, federal audit regulations prohibit distributing clerical costs among multiple projects, so a center must also fund the administrative staff necessary to provide services to center faculty, and center funding plans need to reflect such costs. External funding commitments to proposed centers will weigh heavily in the decision to create new centers, under the assumption that external funding is committed on the basis of significant external review or evaluation. Centers requiring internal funding must obviously demonstrate significant value added as well as significant strategic alignment with University objectives.

In general, proposals to establish new centers that require University funds beyond existing college resources will be submitted to the Provost in late February as part of deans' annual requests for new permanent funding. New center proposals therefore need to be developed early in the academic year in order to receive appropriate consideration and be prioritized at the college level prior to the spring budget request.

In addition to the consideration of new center proposals as part of the annual budget request cycle, the Vice Chancellor for Research and Federal Relations will coordinate new center requests that require timely action in response to unusual strategic opportunities involving external relationships or funding.

#### **F. Proposal and Award Credit and Indirect Cost Return**

A center will always be dependent upon chairs and deans encouraging their faculty to participate in center activity. If the University is rigorous in developing centers on the basis of value added, then a center can be a major asset to a chair, in that a faculty member may have a better chance of success in submitting a proposal through a center rather than through a department. The center's visibility, management capability, and track record carry considerable weight in a proposal review. Thus, if a department gets the same credit and recognition in either scenario, an astute chair should promote the center route. Such credit and recognition is resident in the return of indirect costs to the department and the credit for proposals and awards by unit. Thus the investigators' home departments will continue to receive the departmental overhead return established by the University, and monthly reports of proposal and award activity will continue to reflect faculty activity by academic department. At the same time, a parallel monthly report will summarize the proposal and award activity of centers.

## **G. Procedures for Establishing New University-wide Interdisciplinary Centers**

Faculty wishing to propose a new center should prepare a one- to two-page concept paper with the following information:

- Name and category of proposed center (research, public service, or instructional)
- Participating academic units and the number of faculty involved from each unit
- Organizational and reporting structure
- Short description of proposed activities
- 5-year goals within some or all of the following performance factors:
  - Research/scholarship
  - External professional recognition
  - External outreach/service
  - Involvement of faculty & visiting scholars
  - Student support & involvement
- Required resources & sources of support (including whether the proposal is contingent upon receiving internal funding)

The concept paper should be submitted early in the fall semester of the academic year, under deadlines to be announced by each college, to the appropriate dean(s) for consideration as part of the annual budget request. Deans will establish college review procedures to examine how the proposed center contributes to the University's academic and strategic plans and adds value in the areas of external funding, scholarship, visibility, outreach and service, faculty involvement, and/or student support. For those centers that are to be submitted to the Provost within the colleges' funding priorities, as well as those centers for which no additional funding is required, a detailed 5-Year Plan should provide the following information:

- Description
- Mission
- Administrative and reporting structure (including advisory boards)
- Resources (what you have; core support needs; what you need; sources of support)
- Programs & activities
- Relevance to University mission
- Organizational capacity (are proposed advisory bodies and/or administrative staff appropriate for what needs to be done? If the center will submit a lot of proposals, will the center provide administrative support for the submission process, or will faculty have to get their own departments to help? How will advisory boards be utilized? Will the center have sufficient technical staff? How will the center respond to opportunities? Discuss entrepreneurship.)
- Performance factors (measurable goals on which the center will receive preliminary evaluation after two years and formal evaluation after four years), selected from the following categories:
  - Research/scholarship
  - External professional recognition
  - External outreach/service
  - Involvement of faculty & visiting scholars
  - Student support & involvement

Upon receipt of a center plan, the Provost will ask the CIC to analyze the request under the following criteria:

- Contribution to academic and/or strategic plans
- Value added
- Budget and funding plan, including realism of external funding goals

The CIC will also consider whether the proposed center name realistically and accurately reflects the scope of the mission, activities, and clientele of the center or institute.

Following analysis by the CIC, the Vice Chancellor for Research and Federal Relations will forward recommendations to the Provost, including:

- Whether the proposed center should be further considered and under what conditions;
- How it fits the Academic Plan and strategically serves University objectives;
- How it delivers value added; and
- What it will cost and who will support it.

The Provost will then incorporate center requests into college budget allocations based on strategic objectives and the availability of funds. For those centers receiving positive evaluations and necessary funding, the Provost will recommend to the Chancellor that the center be established.

#### **H. Procedures for Establishing Local Centers**

Once the Provost has approved college procedures (which should include a value-added standard and an evaluation process, with a “sunset clause” requiring a positive evaluation outcome for continuation) deans may establish local centers. Such centers should be reported to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Federal Relations, together with the name of the center director.

#### **I. Center Annual Reports**

Using the reporting format in the Appendix, University-wide centers should submit annual data to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Federal Relations at the end of each academic year, or at an alternate time to be negotiated with the Vice Chancellor.

#### **J. Evaluation of Centers**

New centers will receive an initial three-year charter. At the end of Year 2, the center will prepare a report summarizing the progress toward its goals (performance factors), based on the center’s initial five-year plan, for review by the CIC. Based on this review, the CIC will recommend to the Provost that the center receive a two-year extension of their charter (to five years) or that the center be terminated at the end of the three-year charter. Authority for the two-year extension shall rest with the Provost.

For centers that receive an extension of their charter to five years, a full center review and evaluation will take place in the fourth year. In late spring of Year 3, the CIC will charge the center director with a self-study (see details below) to be delivered to the CIC by December 15

of Year 4. A review team will begin review of the self-study documents in mid-January and will deliver its recommendations to the Provost no later than mid-March.

Using the Annual Report format in the Appendix, the CIC will meet with the center director and customize the format to the specific center. The purpose of the self-study will be to review data related to the center's goals and objectives, including assessments of how the center is serving its various constituencies (students, faculty, external community, *etc.*). When the center director delivers the self-study to the CIC in mid-December, he or she will also recommend several potential external (i.e., non-UNC Charlotte) reviewers. The CIC will select two or three external reviewers of the self-study, including at least one of those recommended by the center director. An appropriate honorarium will be provided to the external reviewers and they will be requested to return reports to the CIC in mid-January. The CIC review team will then perform its own review of the self-study and assess the external reviewer's comments. The review team will consist of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Federal Relations, at least two additional CIC members, and one or two additional members, appropriate to the center subject, selected by the Provost. No member of the review team shall be associated with the center under review. During the CIC review, particular attention will be paid to the relationship between the objectives of the center or institute and the University's mission. The review will also address the following:

- Is current funding of the unit sufficient to continue its operation? If the unit was originally given start-up funds from the University or other granting agencies, has it been able to attract sufficient external funds to continue without major additional institutional support?
- Are the unit's stated goals and objectives being met? Are the support and training of students consistent with the unit's stated goals and objectives?
- Are the quality and quantity of scholarly activity by faculty, professional staff, and students reflected in the unit's output (e.g., publications, patents, grants, contracts)?
- Do current operations duplicate the efforts of other units?
- Do financial assessments and professional evaluations demonstrate that the unit is being managed appropriately?
- Are the facilities required for continued operation of the unit adequate?
- Are the unit's clients being served? (The clients may include students, faculty, University administration, practicing professionals, the general public, the North Carolina General Assembly, or funding agencies, as may be appropriate considering the unit's mission.)

Based on the recommendations of the review team, the Provost may elect to extend the center's charter for an additional five years or to recommend to the Chancellor that the center be discontinued, with University funding reverting to the Provost.

# APPENDIX

## ANNUAL REPORT – CENTERS AND INSTITUTES

### I. Center

- A. Name of Center or Institute
- B. Date Established
- C. Internet Home Page URL
- D. Primary Designation (Research, Public Service, Instruction)
- E. Participating Campuses (or other entities)

### II. Director

- A. Name
- B. Title
- C. Address
- D. Phone and FAX Numbers
- E. E-mail Address
- F. Other Contact name

### III. Mission Statement

### IV. Relevance to Institutional Missions (including involvement with instructional programs)

### V. Measures of Performance - Fiscal Year \_\_\_\_\_

#### A. Personnel

- 1. Number of FTE (equivalent) Faculty and Staff: EPA Positions \_\_\_\_ SPA Positions \_\_\_\_
- 2. Number of FTE (equivalent) Students: Doctoral \_\_\_\_ Masters \_\_\_\_ Undergraduate \_\_\_\_

#### B. Funds

- 1. Direct State Appropriations: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Total External Support from Grants and Contracts: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. All Other University Support (overhead receipts, cost sharing, patent and licensing revenue, University allocations): \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Gifts to the Center: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. Total All Sources of Support (Items 1-4 above): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

C. Contracts and Grants Supported by Center (numbers)

	<u># of Awards</u>	<u>\$ Amount</u>
Federal		
Industry		
State/Local Govt		
Foundation		
Other		
TOTAL		

D. Publications (numbers)

Books \_\_\_\_ Journal Articles \_\_\_\_ Proceedings Papers or Reports \_\_\_\_ Total \_\_\_\_

E. Technology Transfer Activities (numbers)

Invention Disclosures \_\_\_\_ Patent Applications \_\_\_\_ Patents Received \_\_\_\_ Licenses \_\_\_\_

F. Membership Centers Only

Number of Members \_\_\_\_ Number of Licenses Awarded to Center Members \_\_\_\_

**VI. Major Services Delivered to North Carolina (including clientele served, societal benefits, State and regional priorities being addressed, economic impact)**

**VII. Examples of Most Significant Accomplishments**

**VIII. Role of Center within the UNC System**

- A. Geographic Region Served by Center
- B. Duplication of Center within UNC System (if yes, please justify)
- C. Inter-Institutional Cooperative Activities Involving the Center

**IX. Planned Changes for Program Improvement During Next Planning Period**

- A. Size (personnel, space)
- B. Budget (include internal versus external support)
- C. Administrative Structure and Governance
- D. Mission