Definition

This policy defines centers and institutes at Cal State San Marcos. The principal reason for establishing a center or institute is to bring into focus the communication, learning, research, or other efforts of faculty, students, and staff interested in an area of study or service not normally offered by a single academic department or program. A center or institute can enhance service and professional development opportunities for students, faculty, and staff; build links with government, industry and community organizations; foster interdisciplinary work; aid in obtaining external support; and complement the instructional program.

Affiliation of centers and institutes with the university connotes performance of the activity in the name of and with the endorsement of the university. University centers and institutes promote internal and external recognition of the university's activities, and provide opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to extend the mission of the university. University centers and institutes report administratively to the Associate Vice President for Research in Academic Affairs.

Procedures for this policy describe the process for official recognition of centers or institutes, as well as guidelines for their administration and periodic evaluation.

Authority

CSU Executive Order No. 729 (July 5, 2000)

Scope

Centers and institutes at CSU San Marcos

Alexander Gonzalez, President

Approval Date

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Approval Date
I. Centers and Institutes at CSU San Marcos

According to CSU Executive Order No. 729 (July 5, 2000), “Centers, institutes and similar organizations are entities affiliated with California State University campuses to offer non-credit instruction, information, or other services beyond the campus community, to public or private agencies or individuals.” Such entities may exist under a number of names such as “institute,” “center,” “office,” “research group,” “council,” “bureau,” “field station,” “consortium,” “archives,” or “museum.” These entities (herein collectively referred to as “centers and institutes”) facilitate the conduct and dissemination of research, perform public service, or provide special training. This document does not apply to central administrative or service units such as the Writing Center, or the Faculty Center, which serve campus-wide academic programs and which also use the term “Center.”

Centers and institutes report administratively to the associate vice president for research (AVPR), in Academic Affairs, who is the provost’s designee as appropriate administrator for centers and institutes. The AVPR will oversee, publicize, and promote their activities, and will work collaboratively with the centers and institutes to set appropriate goals for success and sustainability. The AVPR will coordinate the periodic evaluation of centers and institutes.

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In general, institutes tend to be larger and more complex organizations than centers, which in turn tend to have more focused missions than institutes. Centers may, for example, be housed administratively under institutes.
II. Procedures for Official Recognition of a Center or Institute

Recognition as a center or institute defines administrative, fiscal, and legal responsibilities of both the university and the organization, thus reducing personal, financial, and legal risks for the associated faculty and for the university. The following course of events is normally expected for a center or institute to obtain official recognition.

A. Working proposal development. Normally an officially recognized center or institute is the result of a collaborative proposal from faculty. The founders of a center or institute should begin by meeting with the associate vice president for research (AVPR) to discuss and refine the following concepts:

1. outline the scope of the center or institute,
2. describe its relationship to the mission of the institution
3. show how the center or institute better serves the needs outlined than the existing departmental, school, or university organization, and
4. explore the proposed financial and other support obligations of the university to the center or institute.

These discussions are designed to lead to the development of a written working proposal, or prospectus, and may involve other members of the university community.

B. Formal proposal development. Once the affiliated areas of the university have given conceptual approval for the project to proceed to the proposal stage, the initiators will prepare a formal proposal. The formal proposal will consider and answer, among other questions, the following:

1. Rationale
   a. Why is the new center or institute needed?
   b. Why is the present organizational structure not able to accommodate these needs?

2. Mission
   a. What activities will the center or institute promote?
   b. How does the center’s/institute’s mission support the mission of the university?

3. Structure and personnel
   a. What is the proposed organizational structure of the center or institute?
   b. What will be the responsibilities of the center or institute director? Who will be the founding director?
   c. Who are the unit’s founding members and how does their expertise relate to its purpose?
   d. What are the rights, responsibilities, and benefits of membership in the center or institute?
   e. Will the center or institute have an advisory board? For what purpose? How will members be selected?
4. Relationship of the center or institute to other university entities
   a. Which programs, administrative units, colleges or library, other centers or institutes will be involved in the proposed new center or institute?
   b. What effect will the center or institute have on the faculty’s department(s) academically, operationally, and financially?
   c. What is its relationship to teaching, coursework, and the instructional program of the faculty’s home department(s)?

5. Operating expenses, facilities, and equipment
   a. What support for the center or institute will be derived from non-university sources?
   b. What operating support from the university is required for this center or institute to be functional on an ongoing basis?
   c. What space and facilities will be needed?
   d. What other equipment will be needed?
   e. Describe the computer and telecommunications needs.

6. Financial support
   a. How will the center or institute be financed for the first three years and for at least five years thereafter? Specifically address the anticipated personnel, operating, space, equipment, and other costs and how they will be supported.
   b. What will happen if outside sources of funding are no longer available after the center or institute is formed?

7. Evaluation
   a. All centers and institutes will undergo periodic evaluation. What are the critical elements that will go into an assessment of the center or institute’s degree of success?

C. Proposal submission. The faculty initiators send the formal proposal to the associate vice president for research (AVPR), who will make a recommendation regarding establishment of the center or institute. The AVPR’s recommendation will include:

- comments on the technical merits of the proposal, i.e., responses in the formal proposal to the above questions,
- a summary of comments received from consulting faculty, staff, and administrators (including the University Foundation)
- identification of the university’s and Foundation’s obligations and responsibilities regarding institutional support for the center or institute
- a determination concerning the proposed unit’s financial viability, including the identification of any university resources essential to its operation.

Within four weeks of receipt of the formal proposal the AVPR will send the proposal, accompanied by her/his recommendation, to the chair of the Academic Senate. The senate chair, in turn, will consult with appropriate senate standing committees and either (a) forward the package to the
provost (accompanied by a senate recommendation); or (b) return the proposal (accompanied by questions, commentary, and/or suggestions) to the proposers/AVPR for further development. The senate chair has six weeks in which to formulate the senate’s recommendation and forward it to the provost. If either the AVPR or the senate chair has not completed her/his recommendation within the allotted time, the recommendation will be automatically sent forward to the next step of review.

If he/she approves the proposal, the provost will forward the complete package to the president for action, along with a letter of intent identifying the university’s obligations and responsibilities to the center or institute. The provost will strive to complete her/his determination within four weeks. The final decision regarding establishment of a center or institute resides with the president of the university.

Normally a center or institute will be granted a charter that governs the operation of the center or institute for up to six years, renewable upon approval of the president or designee (see evaluation procedures).

III. Administration and Annual Report

1. Each center or institute shall be administered by a director. The president or designee appoints the center or institute director, after consultation with the search committee and/or the advisory board, if any, and the associate vice president for research. The director will:
   a. be responsible for establishing a vision and goals which support the mission of the center and the University;
   b. be responsible for financial management of the center or institute, ensuring fiscal solvency;
   c. assure that the center or institute operates in accordance with all current university policies;
   d. obtain appropriate approval for noncredit course offerings, if any;
   e. provide consultation with the advisory board (if one exists);
   f. prepare the annual report for presentation to the associate vice president for research;
   g. prepare the self-study for the center or institute’s periodic evaluation;
   h. be reviewed in accordance with the terms set forth in the charter of the center or institute.

2. Centers and institutes may have advisory boards, as appropriate.

3. Administration of finances of the center or institute, except for that portion from the State budget, will normally be handled by the CSUSM Foundation
   a. When the center or institute receives indirect funds (F&A) from grants for which the center or institute receives resources from a department, the director will negotiate appropriate F&A reimbursement for the departmental resources.
4. The director shall submit an annual report at the close of each academic year to the associate vice president for research. The report shall include a summary of:

   a. Projects accomplished during the year (including a listing of the personnel involved in each--faculty, staff, students--and their responsibilities)
   b. A balance sheet showing the financial status of the center or institute, including information on revenues and expenditures
   c. Proposals for external funding submitted during the year
   d. Names, titles, and organizational affiliations of persons serving on the advisory board
   e. Major challenge or issue
   f. Assessment activities
   g. Proposed goals for the following academic year

5. All operations will follow all current policies of the university, including the following:

   The California State University, San Marcos Foundation shall act as depository and fiscal agent for the center or institute for non-state funds and provide appropriate accounting and related services, except for the following: all non-degree credit and noncredit certificate programs and all courses for continuing education credit will be offered through Extended Studies and funds will be deposited in the “CERF” account.

   All awarded grants and contracts related to a center or institute must follow established campus procedures, including appropriate approvals at the proposal stage. All grant and contract funds received by a center or institute from external sources must be processed through the CSUSM Foundation.

6. A center or institute may offer courses (whether credit or non-credit) only upon approval by the appropriate academic unit.

7. Members of a center or institute do not have academic titles unless they have them by virtue of an appointment in a college/library unit.

IV. Procedures for Periodic Evaluation of a Center or Institute

Each center or institute will be formally evaluated in the fifth year from the date of its charter or charter renewal.
The review committee shall be constituted as follows:

- The associate vice president for research (who convenes the committee)
- Two faculty members with relevant expertise appointed by the Academic Senate,
- One member appointed by the dean of each college/library involved in the center or institute,
- One member appointed by the Foundation,
- One or more community members, when appropriate, to be named by the president or designee
- An external reviewer from the academic community chosen in accordance with the Academic Senate policy on academic program review, when appropriate

Current members of the center or institute may not serve on this review committee.

The director shall prepare a self-study covering the center or institute’s mission and history, resources, staff, research, scholarly and creative activities, and administration. The review committee will examine the self-study, as well as annual reports for the period under review, conduct interviews with the director, and may also interview the advisory board, affiliated faculty, or other individuals associated with the center or institute. The review committee will tour the physical facilities of the center or institute.

The review committee’s evaluation shall examine and report findings on the academic, financial, legal, and administrative viability of the center or institute. Particular attention shall be paid to how well the center or institute is fulfilling its charter. The review shall also examine the university’s performance in terms of facilitating the ongoing operation of the center or institute.

The review committee’s report of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations shall be discussed with the director and then submitted to the provost. The recommendations will also be reported to the Academic Senate. Upon consideration of the results of the review materials, the provost shall make recommendations for action to the president. Recommended actions may include charter renewal (including continuation, reorganization, or changes in scope and focus), discontinuance of the center or institute, or other appropriate actions, such as reorganization.

Unless a center or institute’s charter/renewal is formally renewed by the president following the evaluation process outlined above, the center or institute will cease to exist no later than June 30 of the sixth year following its establishment or most recent renewal. Upon termination, its resources will revert to the provost for appropriate disposition. Donors’ wishes shall be taken into account if donated resources are involved. Notwithstanding a specified termination date, a center or institute may be dissolved at any time through the evaluation process. In the event that a center’s or institute’s operation should become inimical to the interests of the University, the president, after appropriate consultation, may terminate it at any time.