

## **Policies and Procedures Governing Centers and Institutes**

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### **I. Introduction: Purpose and Scope**

This document delineates the policies and procedures for planning, establishing, reviewing, and discontinuing centers and institutes at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. These policies and procedures are built on the framework provided by The UNC Policy Manual 400.5[R], Planning, Establishing, and Reviewing Centers and Institutes in The University of North Carolina, most recently revised on June 8, 2015 and December 4, 2015.

These policies and procedures are intended to facilitate the establishment and operation of appropriate centers and institutes at UNC-Chapel Hill, to prevent the creation of units that unnecessarily duplicate the mission and programs of existing units, and to describe UNC-Chapel Hill administrators' responsibility, authority, and accountability for the leadership and management of centers and institutes. Regulations and processes described in this document apply to all organized research, instructional, and public service units that represent themselves as interdisciplinary centers or institutes of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Because designation as a center or institute connotes an organizational representation of UNC-Chapel Hill's significant programmatic capacity, such designations are reserved for those units that have complied with these policies and procedures. Units that do not comply with these policies and procedures may not be called "center" or "institute" except as noted in Section II below.

### **II. General Information and Definitions**

Centers and institutes first and foremost provide a vehicle for cross-disciplinary or cross-unit collaboration and partnership to maximize the capacity of the University to address complex problems, conduct research, educate students, and serve the needs of the state, the nation, and the world. Together, our centers and institutes strengthen and enrich efforts to fulfill the University's tripartite instructional, research, and service mission and provide enhanced opportunities for faculty, staff, and students.

University centers and institutes are organized administrative units that

- provide support to faculty, staff, and students from different disciplines in research, instructional, and/or public service endeavors that benefit from coordination across multiple perspectives and units *and*
- result in strengthened and enriched programs in research, teaching, and/or service; enhanced opportunities for faculty, staff, students, and the public; and heightened economic impact in the state.

Such interdisciplinary centers may be organized under the auspices of a dean or group of deans and based within a department or a school or college or group of schools, or they

may be pan-university and under the auspices of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost or the Vice Chancellor for Research and Economic Development.

Each center or institute is designated as either a research, instructional, or public service unit, depending on its primary mission and core activities, but may be involved in complementary activities in the other areas. Centers and institutes do not have jurisdiction over academic curricula but may offer courses in cooperation with academic units.

The terms *center* and *institute* are used interchangeably; however, the term *institute* sometimes reflects a broader scope and may indicate a unit containing smaller centers within it.

Centers and institutes may be *institutional*, involving departments, schools, and other units within UNC-Chapel Hill, or *inter-institutional*, supporting and promoting collaboration across institutions of higher education within the UNC system or beyond. Inter-institutional centers and institutes designate one campus as the administrative campus to be responsible for general and fiscal oversight. For certain units designated as University System Multi-Campus Centers and Institutes, UNC General Administration maintains a level of involvement, as described in The UNC Policy Manual 400.5[R], Section III.

The following types of entities do *not* meet the definition of center or institute as articulated in this policy and are therefore exempt from this policy:

- Those whose mission is to provide focused services to specific university or community constituencies. Examples include the Writing Center, the Center for Faculty Excellence, and the NC Children's Center for Clinical Excellence.
- Those whose purpose is to ensure the professional curation of scientific, scholarly, natural, or cultural resources and collections and provide these to organizations and individuals within the university and/or in the larger community for the purposes of research, education, and public service.
- Buildings that are called centers, e.g., the FedEx Global Education Center.
- Activities supported by external grant programs that are called centers by the funding agencies, unless the funding agency requires formal designation as a University center or institute.
- Centers focused primarily on the clinical care of patients, e.g., the Diabetes Care Clinic and the Ear and Hearing Center.
- Centers embedded within larger centers or institutes.
- Coordinating entities (e.g., partnerships, consortia, collaboratives, initiatives, or centers) within single departments or single disciplines. The UNC-CH administration must, however, remain aware of such discipline-based entities; therefore, deans and department chairs must notify the Centers and Institutes Review Committee (described below) of their existence and viability.

### **III. Oversight**

The Centers and Institutes Review Committee, appointed by the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, oversees the creation, review, and discontinuation of centers and institutes, including evaluating the merit of proposals for new centers and institutes and reviewing the performance and continued viability of existing centers. Committee members are the Executive Vice Provost, Vice Chancellor for Research, Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives (Chair), Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Chief Financial Officer, and three deans chosen from among the professional schools and the College of Arts and Sciences, who are appointed on a rotating basis. Recommendations of the Centers and Institutes Review Committee are made to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost and the Chancellor, who is ultimately responsible for the oversight and management of each center or institute. The Board of Trustees has the authority to approve policies and to authorize establishment and discontinuation of centers and institutes.

Each center or institute must have a director who reports to a senior academic officer designated by the Chancellor. The director is responsible for the day-to-day programmatic, fiscal, and personnel decisions of the center or institute.

A center or institute may have an advisory board, which may be particularly useful for coordinating efforts across departments, units, or institutions; making recommendations regarding programs or funding priorities; or for assistance with fundraising. Such boards do not have financial, governing, or hiring authority.

### **IV. Establishing New Centers and Institutes**

Establishing a new center or institute at any level within the University (campus-wide, departmental, or school/college-based) is a two-step process involving first a request for authorization to plan and then a request for authorization to establish. The Centers and Institutes Review Committee oversees both steps and forwards recommendations to the Provost, who makes a determination regarding the request to plan or establish. Final approval to establish a center or institute is given by the Chancellor and Board of Trustees.

#### **A. Authorization to Plan**

To request authorization to plan a new center or institute, the person or team proposing the unit will submit to the Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives, in his or her role as Chair of the Centers and Institutes Review Committee, a letter that includes the following information:

1. Relevance of the proposed center or institute to the mission of UNC-Chapel Hill and the UNC system.
2. Mission, goals, and objectives of the proposed unit and an explanation of why these cannot be met within existing university structures.
3. Description of how the proposed unit differs from other centers, institutes, and units within UNC-Chapel Hill, the UNC system, and the state, and proposed relationships with them.

4. Description of the people and units involved.
5. Estimated funding needed to initiate and sustain the proposed center or institute for five years, including amounts of state, non-state, and in-kind support needed during that period.
6. Estimated space, facilities, and equipment needs and plans for meeting these needs.
7. If relevant, information about the inter-institutional nature of the proposed unit with regard to mission, leadership, activities, funding, or other aspects.
8. Proposed timeline, milestones, and responsible parties for planning and establishing the center or institute. If a time-limited center is proposed, e.g., one established only for the duration of certain external funding, estimated “sunset” date.

The Centers and Institutes Review Committee will evaluate the request and forward to the Provost and Chancellor a recommendation to grant authorization to plan. The Provost and Chancellor will communicate a decision regarding authorization to plan and, if authorization is granted, the expected timeline for completion of the plan and request for authorization to establish. Approval of the request to plan will be reported to the Board of Trustees and to the Office of Research and Graduate Education at UNC General Administration within 30 days of the Chancellor’s approval or by the next regular meeting of the Board, whichever is later. The planning period will have a maximum duration of two years. If a request for authorization to establish is not presented within two years, a new request for authorization to plan must be submitted.

## **B. Authorization to Establish**

When planning is complete, the person or team proposing the center or institute will submit to the Vice Provost for Academic Initiatives, in his or her role as Chair of the Centers and Institutes Review Committee, a written proposal that includes the following information:

1. A name for the proposed center or institute that appropriately reflects the unit’s mission and scope.
2. The proposed unit’s designation as either a research, instructional, or public service unit, in accordance with its primary mission and with the understanding that it may conduct complementary activities outside its designated primary mission.
3. The mission, goals, and objectives of the proposed center or institute.
4. The anticipated benefit of the unit’s work to the research, instructional, or public service programs of UNC-Chapel Hill; and, if inter-institutional arrangements are involved, the anticipated benefit to the participating institutions.
5. A description of how the achievement of the unit’s mission, goals, and objectives will be measured, documented, and assessed.
6. Description of the organizational structure, including reporting lines, leadership, staffing, and advisory boards, and an organizational chart showing both the unit’s relationship to existing campus units and the internal organization of the unit. If relevant, evidence that any necessary inter-unit agreements have been reached.
  - a. The Director of the center or institute must report to a senior academic officer designated by the Chancellor.
7. Letter of support from the administrator to whom the unit will report. If the center

is to report to a department chair, the dean must also indicate approval.

8. If relevant, evidence that inter-institutional agreements regarding leadership, governance, activities, funding, and other aspects have been reached by the collaborating Chancellors or their designees.
9. Description of space, facilities, and equipment needs and how those needs will be met both immediately and in the initial five years of operation.
10. Five-year budget detailing personnel and non-personnel costs and sources of revenue, including state funds, non-state funds, and in-kind support.
11. Acceptance of requirements for periodic review of the director and of the center or institute (see sections V and VII below) and requirements related to political and legislative activity (Section VI below). Specific dates for the initial director and center/institute reviews must be noted.
12. If a time-limited center is proposed, e.g., one established only for the duration of certain external funding, explicit acknowledgment of the “sunset” date.

The Centers and Institutes Review Committee will evaluate the request and make a recommendation to the Provost. The Provost will determine whether to (1) approve the request to establish and forward it to the Chancellor and Board of Trustees for final approval or (2) deny the request and communicate that decision to those submitting the proposal. If approved, the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost will notify the UNC Office of Research and Graduate Education at UNC General Administration of the establishment of a new center or institute.

## **V. Hiring and Periodic Review of Center and Institute Directors**

Each center or institute will have a director who is responsible for the day-to-day programmatic, fiscal, and personnel decisions of the unit. Recruitment and hiring of center directors will conform to the University’s usual human resources policies and procedures and will be the responsibility of the senior academic officer to whom the director will report, hereafter referred to as the “appointing officer.”

Not less frequently than every five years, every center or institute director will undergo a performance review. Each director classified as an EPA-Non Faculty employee will have an annual performance review as required by personnel policies; however, the appointing officer may choose to also periodically conduct a more in-depth review. The appointing officer will be responsible for initiating the review and for acting on its findings and/or recommendations. Performance will be judged based—at a minimum—on achievement of individual objectives and goals; management of fiscal and human resources; and feedback from center/institute staff, partners, and/or clients regarding the director’s leadership and communication. In responding to unsatisfactory performance in any of these areas, appointing officers will follow the University’s usual human resources policies and procedures.

## **VI. Special Requirements Regarding Political and Legislative Activity**

As noted in the UNC Policy Manual, Section 400.5[R], university employees assigned to centers and institutes are subject to UNC Policy Manual Section 300.5.1, which describes prohibitions against engaging in political activity while on duty. Further, the Internal Revenue Code limits the extent to which tax-exempt organizations may engage in activities directed toward influencing legislation, i.e., lobbying. Each center or institute must adhere to the limits on lobbying as described in Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3).

The Director and professional staff of each center or institute must receive comprehensive annual training concerning Internal Revenue Code restrictions on political and legislative activities by Section 501(c)(3) organizations. The Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost will monitor compliance with this training requirement.

## **VII. Periodic review of centers and institutes**

Each center or institute must undergo a review every five years as a mechanism for evaluating its relevance and effectiveness as an academic and administrative entity. A review may occur sooner at the discretion of the appointing officer, who also may time the review to coincide with the review of the director. The review of the director, however, may not serve as a substitute for the review of the center or institute, and the review of the center or institute may not serve as a substitute for periodic review of the director.

External review by a national accrediting or funding body may be considered equivalent to a center review if the review results in renewed accreditation or funding. Such review may serve as periodic review unless the appointing officer, the Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost, the Chancellor, or the Board of Trustees otherwise requests a review. Accreditation review and grant renewal processes may not substitute for periodic review of the director.

The appointing officer will choose reviewers based on their expertise in the field represented by the center under review. Reviewers may be internal or external to the university. For pan-university centers, the review team must include at least three reviewers; at least one must be external to the University, and one must be designated as chair.

The review team will evaluate the following:

1. Mission, goals, and objectives and their alignment with those of the University.
2. Extent to which the mission, goals, and activities are unique or duplicated elsewhere on campus or within the UNC system, including consideration of whether the unit's work could be effectively accomplished by another department, administrative office, or program.
3. Degree of success in achieving the mission and meeting specific goals and objectives.
4. How and to what extent the center promotes interdisciplinary work.
5. Quality and quantity of scholarly, instructional, and/or public service and engagement activity

6. Effectiveness of leadership, organizational structure, and staffing.
7. Adequacy of financial resources—including amount and sources of funding (state, non-state, in-kind)—and fiscal oversight.
8. Adequacy of facilities, operational support, and administrative resources
9. Barriers to achievement of mission or goals.
10. Vision for the future of the center or institute, including program improvement plans.

The reviewers will obtain feedback from stakeholders and also may obtain data regarding the above aspects from various print or electronic documents; a concise self-study report prepared by the center director (required for pan-university centers); and/or interviews with the appointing officer, center director, center staff, and center affiliates (faculty, students, staff, others). If the unit is an inter-institutional center or institute, the reviewers will gather input from representatives of participating institutions. The reviewers will submit a single, concise written report to the appointing officer, typically within one month following completion of the review of data. The report will address the areas listed above, with discussion of the degree to which the unit's mission is realistic, feasible, and capable of meeting the needs of the university and wider community; the feasibility of the unit's plans for the future; and recommendations for improving academic and administrative effectiveness.

The appointing officer will transmit the report, whether generated by the external accrediting or funding body or by the university-appointed reviewers, to the center director, dean (for school-based centers only), and the Centers and Institutes Review Committee. Following consideration of the review findings, the Committee will make recommendations to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost and the Chancellor regarding (1) the center's continued viability, (2) an action plan for changes or improvements, and (3) timeline for the next review. The Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost and Chancellor will communicate their decision to the center or institute director, the administrative officer to whom the unit reports, and the dean (for school-based centers only).

The entire review process typically should be completed within a four-month period.

### **VIII. Discontinuation of Centers and Institutes**

Following a review as described in Section VII above or a formal written request by the administrative officer to whom the center or institute reports, the Centers and Institutes Review Committee may recommend to the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost the discontinuation of a center or institute under the following circumstances:

1. The unit unnecessarily duplicates the mission and/or activities of another unit at UNC-Chapel Hill or within the UNC system.
2. Insufficient financial, human, or facilities resources are available to support the unit.
3. The major supporting grant or award has been terminated.
4. The center or institute has failed to achieve its mission, goals, or objectives.
5. The mission, goals, and objectives of the center or institute are no longer congruent

with those of the administrative unit to which it reports or the University.

6. The unit no longer meets the definition of center or institute as described in Section II of this policy.

If the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost determines that discontinuation is warranted, he or she will ask the Chancellor and Board of Trustees to approve this action, and then will notify the Office of Research and Graduate Education at UNC General Administration of the action. Inter-institutional centers will require documented agreement by the Chancellors at the collaborating institutions before the recommendation to discontinue is presented to the Chancellor and Trustees of UNC-Chapel Hill. The administrative officer to whom the center or institute reports, in collaboration with the center director, will develop a plan for phasing out the unit to allow orderly termination or transfer of contractual obligations and an effort to find alternative employment for full-time staff. Normally, the phase-out period will not be more than one year in duration.

The UNC President or Board of Governors may also initiate discontinuation, as described in the UNC Policy Manual, Section 400.5[R].