



University Policy: Establishment, Review and Rechartering of Centers, Institutes, and other Scholarly Initiatives

Policy Category: Academic Policies

Responsible Executive: Provost

Office Responsible for Review of this Policy: Office of the Provost

Procedures: As described below.

Related University Policies: Academic Regulations; Faculty Manual

I. SCOPE:

This Policy provides guidance for the establishment, review and rechartering of Centers, Institutes and other Scholarly Initiatives by faculty and academic units. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that these activities are in compliance with the university's academic, fiscal, and administrative policies.

II. POLICY STATEMENT:

The primary unit for academic instruction, discovery, and service at AU is the designated teaching unit. The teaching unit's governance, structure and deliberative consultation and review process provides a stable home for long-term investment in academic programs. However, there are circumstances in which faculty and staff seek to undertake scholarly, research, creative, or professional activities that require a more nimble and flexible decision-making and operational structure. In these circumstances, a range of organizational options is available to provide the independence sought while ensuring essential oversight needed for administration and compliance. Unlike the designated teaching units, these entities are customarily self-supporting and draw upon external resources. Their existence is dependent upon the entrepreneurship of the leadership, and they will sunset when resources, leadership, or interest are no longer available. Authority for school/college centers or institutes rests with the dean. For campus-wide centers or institutes, this responsibility falls to the Provost.

These new administrative entities shall not replace or augment the degree granting and curricular authority vested in teaching units. That authority rests with the faculty as represented by the teaching unit and shall remain there. Credit-hour instructional programming (courses and certificates) may be offered in conjunction with these entities, but only if approved by the teaching unit and reviewed through the University's normal curricular approval process (non-credit instruction may originate from and offer additional paid opportunities to faculty).

These new organizational entities may fall into several different categories or structures, as described below.

III. DEFINITIONS

Research Groups, Collaboratives, Laboratories, Scholarly Initiatives and Projects

As entities develop, they may not have the resources or desire for full organizational independence,

The establishment of a new center or institute (school/college-based) requires the development of a proposal describing its mission, leadership and percent of time allocated, resource availability, management structure, reporting lines, job descriptions, budget oversight, and space authorized or rented. After preliminary approval by the relevant dean(s), proposals will be circulated to the other deans and Provost for review of standards, prioritization of resources (if not funded entirely from outside sources), potential duplication, and quality of the scope of work. For approval, a proposal for a school/college center must demonstrate a vision and capability of enriching the area of study or service commensurate with similar centers at leading national universities. The threshold and standard for approval requires more than desire and resources. Proponents must demonstrate knowledge of the field, familiarity with similar leading organizations elsewhere, and a vision for how this center or institute at AU will provide an original and important contribution to the field, enhancing AU's reputation among its peers.

Once final authorization is granted by the Provost, the dean or deans may implement the center or institute proposal and are ultimately responsible for oversight of its operations. The director of the center or institute serves at the pleasure of the dean(s). Centers with externally funded resources must comply with all regulations and rules regarding use of funds, as mandated both by AU and by the funding sources. At a minimum, an annual report of center or institute activities must be submitted to the dean, and if it is not sufficiently serving its intended mission, the dean may close the unit.

3. Campus-Wide Centers or Institutes

A full proposal similar to a school/college-based Center or Institute is required, to be approved by the Provost in consultation with the Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Research and the academic deans. Centers and Institutes with externally funded resources must comply with all regulations and rules regarding use of funds, as mandated both by AU and by the funding sources. An annual report of Center or Institute activities must be submitted to the Provost. An annual review of performance and progress is required and is shared with the deans. Should the entity no longer serve its intended mission or not achieve the recognition or impact envisioned, the Provost may close the center or institute.

4. Proposal Structure and Guidelines

A request to initiate a center or institute that is housed within an academic unit or one that is campus-wide requires a proposal that describes the following elements: (a) its anticipated programmatic focus; (b) its proposed governance structure; (c) its anticipated space needs; and, (d) its long-term financing and sustainability.

Anticipated Programmatic Focus

A proposal for a center or institute must include a mission statement and a description of long-term plans for the production and dissemination of scholarship once established. The narrative must include all goals for proposed research, educational, training and translational activities, with projected timelines for each specific goal.

Proposed Governance Structure

A proposal for a center or institute must include a description of its proposed governance structure, including its faculty leadership, a proposed staffing plan with draft job descriptions, as well as a description of potential impacts on the academic unit(s) and teaching unit(s) to which likely affiliates of the center or institute are assigned.

Anticipated Space Needs

A proposal for a center or institute must include descriptions of the assigned or rental space and facilities needed to accommodate the proposed scholarly activities, leadership and staffing.

Long-Term Financing and Sustainability

A proposal for a center or institute must include a three- to five-year estimate of the anticipated costs for all proposed scholarly activities, rental space, facilities, leadership and staffing. The narrative should also include a list of external funding sources to which applications will be submitted to underwrite the proposed research, educational, training and translational activities, and costs associated with leadership, staff, facilities or rental space needs. The list of potential external funding sources should include a brief justification for the inclusion of each specific funding source.

In addition, a proposal for a center or institute should describe one year of initial funding commitments made by the proposed initiation date. The narrative should provide explicit details about external and internal funding that is already committed to accomplish the start-up phase of anticipated scholarly activities, space and facilities requirements, leadership and staffing for the proposed center or institute.

Proposal Guidelines

A proposal to establish a center or institute should be no longer than 12 pages of single-spaced text and should be submitted to the head of an academic unit or to the dean. The text should be no smaller than 11 point font. The narrative must include the following components:

- x A cover page with the name of the proposed center or institute and the proposal authors
- x An introduction with the mission statement of the proposed center or institute
- x An analysis of comparable entities in other universities or research/policy centers
- x Fit with American University's strategic plan, institutional mission and academic strengths
- x Proposed governance structure, leadership and staffing plan with job descriptions
- x Proposed goals for research, educational, training and translational activities for three to five years with timelines for implementation
- x Requirements for space, facilities and equipment
- x A proposed budget, including projected expenses for an initial three- to five-year period
- x A proposed funding plan, including external funding and projected revenue (as appropriate) for an initial three- to five-year period
- x Internal and external funding commitments for the initial start-up year

An optional appendix of support material may be included with the application. The appendix should be no more than ten pages in length.

V. ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Each director of a center or institute, irrespective of reporting line, must submit an annual report providing details of (a) scholarly activities (e.g., research, educational, training and translational activities) conducted by affiliates during the previous fiscal year, with (b) financial statements listing funding and expenditures of the center or institute. If the mission, structure, goals or resource requirements for the center or institute change, those changes should be highlighted in the annual report. The annual report must contain the following categories of information:

Research or Scholarly Activities

- x Publications
 - o List of peer-reviewed journal articles published or in press

- List of non-peer-reviewed publications published or in press
 - List of books and book chapters published or in press
 - List of other publications, published or in press
 - Technical reports, research reports to funding agencies or government entities
- x Lists of conference presentations, including:
 - Poster presentations
 - Paper presentations
 - Participation in symposia as a presenter, a chair or a discussant
 - Invited addresses
- x Creative Activities
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The annual report must include a spreadsheet that summarizes both the income and the major categories of expenditures of the center or institute for the preceding fiscal year. Categories of income include: funds from external sources, funds from internal sources, institutional cost-share, and program income. Categories of expenditures include: faculty affiliate and staff salaries, student salary and tuition support, space rental, equipment costs, travel, food and catering, supplies, photocopy and printing costs, events, website development and maintenance, and other costs.

VI. RECHARTERING REQUIREMENTS:

The initial chartering period of a center or institute is no more than five years. At the end of the initial charter period, the leadership must apply to renew the charter of a center or institute. A proposal to renew a charter is similar to the proposal submitted for the establishment of a center or institute. Major emphasis should be given in the renewal proposal to: (a) the degree to which the initial mission and goals were fulfilled during the previous charter period; (b) proposed goals for research, educational, training and translational activities for the next three to five year period; and (c) projected revenue sources for the next three-to-five year period. The decision to renew the charter of a center or institute is made by the head of the academic unit in which the center or institute is housed, in consultation with the Office of the Provost.

V. EFFECTIVE DATE AND REVISIONS:

This Policy is effective **October 10, 2012**. Reviewed April 2015.