Guidelines for the Establishment of Centers, Institutes, and Related Units

Introduction and Definitions
Universities commonly have a number of organizational areas outside traditional curricular structures. These areas usually are designated as centers or institutes, although other designations are used to allow faculty and staff to address specific topics or issues. West Virginia University has a variety of such entities. Their purposes and characteristics vary considerably and range from "letterhead" centers that give identity to a small interdisciplinary group to larger enterprises that involve significant commitments of staffing, space, overhead sharing agreements, and other resources. Throughout the remainder of this document the term "Center" is used to designate Centers, Institutes, and other similar units.

The purpose of this document is to establish processes for:

- Creating Centers.
- Evaluating them against established expectations.
- Decommissioning them when they are no longer active or meeting their objectives.

Two guiding principles for this document are to incentivize the creation of effective and vigorous centers, and retain flexibility in how they are structured and used.

This document does not provide guidelines for units that are covered by the existing departmental review process, such as task-specific laboratories or performance facilities; clinical care centers whose primary purpose is to provide care to patients or clients; purely academic centers (e.g., a Writing Center); and those covered by the existing administrative unit review process, such as the Health Sciences Center, Student Recreation Center. Rather, this document does concern centers that involve the following efforts:

- Research, and production and dissemination of scholarly information.
- Sponsorship of programs that offer students the opportunity to develop skills in an applied setting.
- Developing grant and contract proposals and administering grant- and contract-supported programs.

Such research-based centers are typically created for two reasons, 1) as a result of major federal or state funding acquired specifically to create a center, e.g., a US Department of Energy Frontier Research Center, or 2) to demonstrate the existence of a collaborative group of researchers who are seeking additional single investigator or multi-investigator research funding and a "Center" designation will increase their competitiveness for such funding. This document establishes the requirements for a specific class of large-scale, research-based Centers, designated as a "West Virginia University Center" (WVUC, and also describes minimum criteria for the establishment of all other research-based centers at West Virginia University. Providing support and incentives for faculty to invest the time and energy required to create and lead such Centers is an institutional priority. Therefore, the principal budgetary feature of a "West Virginia University Center" is that a fraction of the facilities and administrative (F&A) costs brought into the institution by such centers will be available for reinvestment into their operations. The current distribution of F&A costs for most colleges is 70% to the central administration and 30% to the colleges. In multi-investigator awards, the college distribution is prorated across academic units based on the distribution of tasks and college-specific rules for F&A sharing. For approved WVUCs that have met the threshold in external funding, 20% of the F&A can be directed specifically to the center, given an appropriate/approved budget for the use of those funds. The remaining F&A will be split between the central administration and the colleges according to existing agreements for distribution of F&A, i.e., the nominal split is 70% of central administration and 30% to the colleges. Note that any threshold for a college at which the F&A distribution switches, for example from 70%-30% to 30%-70%, based on a total level of research activity is unaffected by this policy as those calculations are based on the total level of research activity, including the F&A component. The distribution of the F&A funds returned to the colleges will proceed according to the distribution of tasks within each funded proposal. In the case of an existing center that already receives a portion of their budget from centrally allocated funds, the center will receive the greater of the 20% return or the existing budget line.

Procedures to Establish a WVUC and Other Centers
The threshold for establishing a WVUC is an annual externally supported expenditure level of $1,000,000. This threshold is established in 2014 and is expected to rise over time in accordance with the nominal rate of inflation. During formation of a WVUC, founding faculty can identify existing grants to be associated with
a WVUC for purposes of meeting this threshold. The F&A distribution on these existing grants will not change when the WVUC is created. However, the incentive F&A distribution proposed herein (20% of total F&A) will apply to new funding obtained by the WVUC after the WVUC is approved. In the case of a new WVUC created through the receipt of a large external grant, the incentive F&A return may be incorporated into the budget of the Center at the time of proposal submission. Faculty must identify a WVUC affiliation during the pre-proposal submission process for a specific proposal to be associated with and count towards the funding level for the WVUC, or multiple WVUC in rare cases (funds cannot be counted twice). Grants cannot be moved from WVUC designations once they are so identified. The only permitted use for F&A returned to Centers is to support the research and administrative activities of the Center.

Clearly, active and vigorous centers with annual expenditure budgets under $1,000,000 exist in many disciplines. Scaling the annual expenditure threshold for a WVUC by specific disciplines would artificially complicate the formation of interdisciplinary WVUCs and is not consistent with specifically incentivizing large, externally-funded Centers. A campus-wide threshold and a campus-wide nominal F&A return level are intended to reduce the cross-college barriers to WVUC formation. Centers with annual research expenditure levels below the WVUC threshold may negotiate with the Colleges from which they draw faculty for re-investment of F&A from the fraction of F&A returned to the colleges by the institution. In other words, the funding level threshold for a WVUC does not preclude Deans or Chairs from negotiating separate modifications to the F&A return policies within their units to encourage the creation of smaller Centers.

The “credit” for all extramural funding will follow the expenditure tasks. For example, if a proposal with two tasks for faculty in two different colleges is awarded to faculty in a Center, the “credit” for the funding will be split amongst the two colleges according to the budget tasks. No centers are permitted to incur a negative operations budget and all research and support personnel employed by any Center must have contracts that permit termination of employment or support in the absence of sufficient funds. Any agreements that provide financial support to academic faculty participating in a Center must clearly terminate in the absence of Center funding. Any Center entering into equipment or other maintenance contracts must have demonstrated resources sufficient to cover the cost of the contract over the entire length of the contract period even if the funding used to pay for the contract expires before the contract period ends.

**Approval of Centers**

Centers housed entirely within an academic unit, e.g., a department, college, or HSC, and that do not require resources beyond those controlled by the academic unit will require approval from the unit in question and one level of administration above. For example, a department level Center such as a “Center for European History” would require approval by the chair of the department of history and the Dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences. Any Center requesting designation as a WVUC, any Center seeking physical space that is not controlled entirely by colleges, and any Center that includes faculty from multiple colleges must be approved by the Strategic Research Council after approval of the deans of the colleges involved. Centers proposed by faculty and staff in non-academic units will require approval of the Vice President of Research.

Proposals for the establishment of new centers must include the standard approval page and follow the guidelines defined in the appendix of this document. The approving authority will make the final determination on the establishment of the Center within one month. This relatively short time frame is intended to enable faculty to respond quickly to the need to create a Center in response to rapidly changing events. Center proposals arising from a response to a funding agency solicitation can receive a rapid one-year approval through an expedited process as indicated on the approval cover page.

**Evaluation of Centers**

Annual reporting requirements generally follow the management structure outlined above. For example, a Center based entirely in a single college will report to the Dean of that college. Reporting of multi-college Centers can be through the Deans of the colleges with final approval by the Strategic Research Council (SRC) or through the SRC as approved in the Center proposal. Each College will develop a schedule in which Centers in existence at the time of the promulgation of these guidelines will be reviewed so that all existing Centers will have met these guidelines within a three year time frame; all existing Centers are required to submit annual reports at the end of each academic year. Briefly, the report should highlight the Center’s activities in research, scholarship, and service/community engagement. Goals and objectives for the upcoming year will also be outlined. In addition, a financial report and a listing of active membership
should be appended to each annual report. A template is provided as an appendix to this document. It behooves current Centers that desire WVUC status to obtain this status as quickly as possible.

**Director**

Once a proposal for a Center has been approved, the process for appointing a Director occurs. Within two weeks of approval, the charter faculty members of the Center will nominate a candidate for Director (unless a search to identify external candidates was approved in the proposal) and submit for approval to the appropriate authority, e.g., chair and dean for a center contained within a department; chairs, deans, and strategic research council for a multi-college center. Depending on the complexity of the center, the center Director’s annual workload, in the case of faculty directors, might be modified to reflect their additional administrative duties. Such modifications to the annual workload and any administrative supplements to salary for a faculty member must be approved in writing by the Dean of the College in which the Center Director’s primary faculty appointment resides. If a center is terminated after failing to meet the evaluation criteria established in the center proposal, the director position will be eliminated at the same time. The managing authorities, typically a Dean or a council of Deans as outlined in the approved management plan for the Center, have sole discretion in the appointment of the Director. The Director nomination will be approved within 2 weeks or the authorizing officials will call for a new nominee; in the latter case, a written rationale for rejecting the previous nominee will be provided. Personnel in the Office of the Vice President for Research are able to provide training in project management and assistance with reporting requirements for directors of any type of Center.

Directors will be appointed for a term of two to five years. When 75% of the Director’s term has elapsed, the faculty affiliates of the Center will select a nominee for the subsequent term and submit the name for approval per the process described above. Directors may be nominated for, and serve, consecutive terms. Once appointed, the Director has responsibility for securing external funding, promoting the work of the Center, overseeing the budget, and supervising personnel. The Director submits an annual report to the appropriate managing authority and a five-year report, as described below.

The performance of Centers and Directors will be reviewed annually by the managing authority (as defined in the approved proposal). Each year the managing authority shall provide the director’s home department with a review of the center’s performance. This review shall be placed in the director’s annual file by the department chair. The center-related activity of any faculty or staff member whose workload assignment includes center-related effort shall be reviewed annually by the director and that review provided to the chair of the faculty member’s home department or the staff member’s primary supervisor. These reviews shall be placed in the faculty or staff member’s annual personnel file. In the rare circumstance that the managing authority or a majority of the faculty members of a center determine that a change in center directorship is warranted before a Director’s term has expired, the faculty members of the Center may submit (or be asked to submit) a nomination for a new candidate for Director (or request a search to identify external candidates) and a decision will be rendered by the managing authority. Major reviews will be undertaken every five years to determine if continuation of the Center is desirable. Recommendations arising from each review must be supported by metrics outlined by the Director in concert with other Center personnel or advisory boards. The Office of the Vice President for Research will maintain a current list of approved Centers, shall be copied on all annual reports by Centers, and will inform Center directors when it is time for them to resubmit the five-year re-approval application form.

**Changes:**

Once a Center is approved, the director must obtain approval through the process outlined above for any significant changes in the above items.

**Use of Center Name/Acknowledgement of Sponsorship:**

Reference by name to Centers in letterhead, official documents, brochures, web pages, campus telephone book, business cards, etc., or use of the title “director” with regard to a Center requires advance approval of the Center as specified above. All publications and web sites of Centers must conform to University standards. Departments, Divisions, and Colleges provide the faculty that enable Centers to exist. Thus, there is a need, where possible, for Centers to identify the units responsible for providing the faculty who make up a Center.
Appendix: Required Elements for a Proposal for a Center or Institute (document limited to 5 pages):

1. Name, Purposes and Functions
   - Identify the mission (or purpose) of the proposed center;
   - Identify the need for the proposed center; and
   - Identify the name of the proposed center and how acknowledgement of support from colleges and departments will be documented in center letterhead, media materials, etc.;

2. Organizational Structure and Bylaws or Operating Procedures
   - Explain the proposed center's placement within the University's existing organizational and administrative structure and who the managing authority for approval and reporting will be. Identification of the appropriate managing authority should be accomplished in consultation with department chairs, college deans, Vice President for Research for Health Sciences (for HSC-based Centers), and/or the office of the Vice President for Research (for centers involving faculty from multiple colleges, non-academic faculty, or centrally allocated resources);
   - Describe the proposed center's internal administrative structure; Minimum structure must include a Director and may include others such as an advisory board composed of internal and external representatives, faculty roles, and/or staff positions. Proposers should describe positions and their responsibilities, and compensations (if any) in release time or salary; and
   - Describe the process through which new faculty become affiliated with the Center, e.g., do they request affiliation through the Director, request approval from the Center advisory board, etc.

3. Information on Possible Overlap and Endorsements
   - Identify any overlap between the proposed center's function or organization with other efforts or activities at the university; and
   - Provide evidence of support for the proposed center indicating that all affected departments/units are aware of plans for establishing the center.

5. Business Plan
   - Provide an initial budget and a business plan for sustained operation of the Center, including existing or potential funding sources. Funding for centers may include a combination of College support, external grants, and philanthropy. Note whether state funds, federal grants, private funding or other funding sources will be involved; and
   - If the center is applying for the status of a West Virginia University Center and is therefore requesting that a portion of the F&A funds be returned directly to the WVUC, provide a list of the grants associated with the WVUC showing that the total annual research expenditures will exceed the threshold. **Note that if the total annual research expenditures for the WVUC fall below the threshold for 24 months, the WVUC will lose its status as a WVUC and F&A sharing agreement will be terminated.** If funding levels are restored to above the threshold within 12 months from termination of the F&A sharing agreement, the prior agreement will be re-activated without need for additional review.

6. Administration of Grants
   - Indicate how Center-wide grants will be administered (which Business Office(s) will manage the reporting requirements for the grant, verification that the funding threshold for WVUCs is being met, close out of the grant, and similar grant administration related matters). In the case of particularly complex Centers that require extensive grant administration, WVUCs may be asked by the College housing the primary Business Office to contribute financially, from resources returned to the WVUC, to the support of grant administration staff who will directly support the operation of the WVUC.

7. Staffing
   - Detail proposed staffing needs and demonstrate support is adequate to meet the proposed center's mission; and
   - Identify key center personnel if known;

8. Space
   - Describe space and facilities required, including plans to meet those needs;
   - Identify where the proposed center's staff and activities will be housed; and
   - Indicate the cost and source of funds for any space remodeling or realignment that may be required.
WVU Center/Institute Approval Cover Page

Date: ________________________________________________

Center Title: __________________________________________

Submitting Faculty: ______________________________________
                                                 ____________________________
                                                 ____________________________
                                                 ____________________________

Primary Contact Information: ______________________________
                           ____________________________
                           ____________________________
                           ____________________________

Is this proposal for a large-scale, West Virginia University Center? [ ]

Is this proposal in response to a solicitation by an external funding agency? [ ]
   If so, please attach a copy of the solicitation.

Is this a request for an expedited, one-year approval as part of a major grant proposal? [ ]
   If so, please attach a copy of the proposal being submitted to the external agency
   instead of a complete Center proposal.

Vice President for Research  ____________________________________________
                           Vice President for Research

College Level Approvals

College  Dean’s Signature

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Department Level Approvals

Department  Chair’s Signature

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CENTER: ______________________________________________________

Instructions: Complete report as described below, convert to a pdf document, and provide to the Center Managing Authority by October 1, 2013.

I. SUMMARY OF PAST YEAR'S GOALS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Summarize in narrative form the Center's accomplishments over the past year. Include mention, in particular, of outstanding accomplishments, unanticipated advances, and new opportunities pursued. Indicate if goals and expectations were met. What obstacles/challenges did you face and how did you handle them? This summary should not exceed 2 pages.

A. RESEARCH PROJECTS
   Summarize in narrative form.

B. SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY
   Summarize in narrative form.

C. SERVICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
   Summarize in narrative form.

II. DETAILED ACTIVITY REPORT

A. RESEARCH PROJECTS – Please note this is not a request for listing of specific grants but total awards.

   1. Funded research grants and contracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of grants</th>
<th>Total $ of grants</th>
<th># of state/local grants</th>
<th>Total $ of state/local grants</th>
<th># of industry sponsor grants</th>
<th>Total $ industry sponsor grants</th>
<th># of foundation grants</th>
<th>Total $ of foundation grants</th>
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   2. Submitted research proposals

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<th># of grants</th>
<th>Total $ of grants</th>
<th># of state/local grants</th>
<th>Total $ of state/local grants</th>
<th># of industry sponsor grants</th>
<th>Total $ industry sponsor grants</th>
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   3. Research Space

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<th>Room #</th>
<th>Space sq. ft.</th>
<th>Exclusive/shared</th>
<th>Shared with</th>
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</table>
B. SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY

1. Publications: For the reporting period, list the number of all Center member publications in tabular form here, and append a list of all Center publications. Include only publications for which the Center is cited. DO NOT include any papers “submitted” or “in preparation.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research papers published</th>
<th>Research papers in press</th>
<th>Book chapters, reviews published</th>
<th>Book chapters, reviews in press</th>
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2. Intellectual Property development

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<th>Intellectual property disclosures</th>
<th>Patents applied for</th>
<th>Patents issued</th>
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3. Keynote Addresses or Plenary Lectures presented

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<th># of Local or State</th>
<th># of National</th>
<th># of International</th>
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4. Other
Describe other Scholarly Activity that does not fit into the first 3 categories.

C. SERVICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Indicate areas where Center members have provided professional service or engaged in community outreach related to the Center. Typical activities include service on editorial and scientific boards, study section, conference organizing/sponsoring, leadership role in community events, etc.

1. Service and Community Engagement Activities

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<tr>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th># of Local or State</th>
<th># of National</th>
<th># of International</th>
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IIII. FINANCIAL SUMMARY:
Identify in tabular form use of institutional funds that were allocated to support the activities of the Center (e.g., personnel, seminars, workshops, seed projects, etc.)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Fund use</th>
<th>Amount expended</th>
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IV. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR NEXT FISCAL YEAR: Outline goals and objectives for the upcoming year. Who is responsible and what resources are planned (people, money, space, etc.). For each Goal or Objective, describe it, state how you will know if it is accomplished, give a rough idea of how you intend to attain it, explain its relevance to the Center/Institute Mission, and provide a target time for accomplishment.
A. RESEARCH PROJECTS
   Summarize in narrative form or numerical list.

B. SCHOLARLY ACTIVITY
   Summarize in narrative form or numerical list.

C. SERVICE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
   Summarize in narrative form or numerical list.

   If goals for the current year were not met, indicate steps taken to help ensure success in
   meeting the goals for the next fiscal year.

V. ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP LISTING:
   Last Name, Initials, Degree, Title, Primary Academic Affiliation