

NUMBER: ACAF 2.01
SECTION: Academic Affairs
SUBJECT: Establishment and Modification of Centers and Institutes
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Policy for: All Campuses
Procedure for: All Campuses
Authorized by: Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost and Vice
President for System Planning
Issued by: Office of the Provost

I. Policy

When collaborations within and among academic programs evolve toward increasing complexity and interdisciplinarity, the University will often establish centers and institutes to organize the management and development of a research initiative. Centers and institutes are a subset of the broader category of academic administrative units, which also includes departments, interdisciplinary academic programs, colleges and schools.

This policy governs the establishment, modification or termination of centers and institutes on the University of South Carolina campuses.

A. Approval Process

1. New centers and institutes require internal approval through the appropriate campus, college or school faculty governance body; the campus, college or school dean (hereafter referred to as "dean;") the provost or the executive vice chancellor, or the senior vice chancellor as appropriate; the chancellor; the president; and the Board of Trustees. Centers or Institutes seeking state funding will also require approval by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (CHE). Centers or Institutes which encompass more than one school or college must be reviewed and approved by each dean.
2. Modification of the name or purpose of a center or institute, or termination of a center or institute also requires the approvals outlined above.

3. The Academic Program Liaison (APL) serves as the main information resource on academic administrative unit actions. Units starting new centers and institutes should work with their APL in drafting the proposal.

Draft documents and notifications may be forwarded to the Office of the Provost for the Columbia and Regional Campuses and the Office of System Planning for USC Aiken, Beaufort and Upstate by the APL, but all formal program actions must be forwarded directly by the dean on the Columbia campus or by the respective chancellor.

B. Criteria for the Establishment or Review of Centers and Institutes

All centers and institutes at the University must address each of the following criteria:

1. Is the focal area critically important to the success of the University? Does it strengthen the USC mission? The center or institute must be driven by potential research, instruction, community engagement, and/or creative activities that contribute to the University's overall mission, but that are not academic degree or credit granting activities.
2. Is the center or institute potentially transforming? Will it allow us to become a leading program among peer institutions?
3. Will the center or institute influence others beyond those participating in the initiative itself? Does it draw new kinds of exceptionally talented faculty and students?
4. Will it make an impact on the outside world?
5. Will it successfully raise funds to support itself?

C. Funding

Centers and Institutes are expected to seek external funding to support their activities. The University will consider requests for support from those centers and institutes that:

- express a major priority of the University;
- are stipulated by line-item state appropriations;
- require matching support for funding rather than full support; and/or
- are broadly interdisciplinary.

D. Five-Year Review Cycle

New centers and institutes on all USC campuses are approved for a five-year period. Existing centers and institutes are reviewed by the dean on the Columbia campus and the Chancellors or his/her designee on the Aiken, Beaufort, Upstate and Regional campuses every five years.

E Center and Institute Directors

Center and institute directors report to the dean on the Columbia campus and the chancellors or his/her designee on the Aiken, Beaufort, Upstate and Regional campuses unless otherwise indicated during establishment of the center. Center and institute directors are appointed to serve by a dean or chancellor, and any specific commitments to the director are to be indicated in a formal appointment letter. Directors may be released from some responsibility to their home academic units by their dean or chancellor.

F University Centers and Institutes Inventory

The Office of Academic Programs in the Office of the Provost maintains the official inventory of University-recognized Centers and Institutes on the Columbia and Regional campuses. The inventory is updated annually and as changes occur. The Office of Academic Programs notifies the Office of the Vice President for Research of all changes to the official list of Centers and Institutes, and the Office of the Vice President for Research maintains the current list of research Centers and Institutes on their website at: http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/research/centersandfacilities/index.php. USC Aiken, Beaufort and Upstate each maintain their own official inventory.

G Publications

Final approval by the Board of Trustees and CHE if appropriate is required prior to publication of approved changes in any University bulletins, brochures, websites and other internal and external materials.

II. Procedure

A. Procedure for all USC Campuses

1. Establishment of Centers and Institutes

a. Preliminary Discussion with Academic Program Liaison (APL)

Before preparing a letter of intent or other proposal for a new center or institute on any campus, the faculty member or dean should contact the campus, college or school APL to review the required approval. A current list of APLs is available at: http://www.sc.edu/about/offices_and_divisions/provost/planning/academic_programs/academic-program-liasons.php.

b. Letter of Intent and College-Level Approval

A proposal for a new center or institute, comprised of a letter of intent, outlining the proposed, structure, and rationale for the unit, and the attached documents outlined below, must be approved at the dean or chancellor or their designee level before being forwarded to the Office of the Provost or Office of System Planning for university review and approval. The proposal must be no more than five pages, including the budget page, and must include the following:

- i. A justification, concisely stating the need for the proposed center or institute, a statement of purpose, and the proposed activities of the center or institute.
- ii. A statement explicitly defining the value added to the University as a result of the establishment of the center or institute. The relationship of the proposed center or institute to the University's mission and to other established centers or institutes or relevant University academic units should be described.
- iii. A list of the lead faculty members who will participate in the activities of the center or institute, to include an explanation of how each individual will add value to the proposed entity.
- iv. An estimate of the financial resources necessary by broad category as outlined on the attached budget form. Sources of financing for the center or institute must be presented and any requests for University support must be justified. Any financing described as "reallocation of existing funds" must also be explained.
- v. Along with the proposed date of implementation, a draft assessment plan that clearly outlines the criteria to be used to determine the success of the proposed center or institute at the end of five years.
- vi. As outlined below in Section II.A.1.d., proposals for new programs that plan to seek state appropriated funding must include a New Center Proposal Form to be filed with CHE if approved by the provost or vice president for system planning (<http://www.che.sc.gov/InstitutionsEducators/AcademicPolicies,Programs/AcademicPrograms.aspx>).

The following must be provided as attachments to the proposal:

- i. Current one page bio sketch for each lead faculty member.

ii. Letters of support from participating faculty and administration.

c. Review of Proposal

Following dean or chancellor approval, the letter of intent and attached documents will be forwarded by the dean to the provost on the Columbia campus. Proposals from Regional campuses will be forwarded to the provost through the chancellor of Palmetto College. Proposals from USC Aiken, Beaufort and Upstate will be forwarded to the vice president for system planning through the chancellors.

The provost or vice president for system planning will consider proposals with respect to the criteria outlined in Section I.B. For all proposals pertaining to research the provost or vice president for system planning will consult with the vice president for research. The provost's decision will be conveyed to the dean in writing. The vice president for system planning's decision will be conveyed to the chancellor in writing. Successful proposals will then be forwarded to the president and the Board of Trustees for approval.

d. State Appropriations

If new state appropriations are required or requested for the proposed center or institute, a New Center Proposal Form must be submitted to the Office of the Provost or Office of System Planning. After approval by the provost, it is then submitted for the approval of the president, the Board of Trustees, and the CHE. After approval from the vice president for system planning, the USC Aiken, Beaufort and Upstate proposals are submitted for approval of the president, the Board of Trustees and the CHE. Guidelines for new center approval by CHE are available at http://www.che.sc.gov/CHE_Docs/academicaffairs/20141002PoliciesandProceduresforAcademicPrograms.pdf

e. Notification of Commission on Higher Education

For proposals that do not require additional state appropriations, following approval by the Board of Trustees, the Office of the Provost will complete the appropriate Notification of Change forms for transmittal to CHE.

2. Review of Existing Centers and Institutes

a. Annual Reporting

Centers and institutes must submit an annual report to the dean in which they address the following:

- i. Changes from the prior year;
- ii. Progress toward prior year objectives;
- iii. Objectives (updated, both long- and short- term);
- iv. Quantitative benchmarks;
- v. Publications; and
- vi. Funding awards and proposals.

Annual reports should be submitted at the end of each academic year.

In preparation for the five-year review process outlined in Section II.A.2.b below, the report submitted at the end of the fourth year of existence for a new center or the fourth year following the last review for existing centers should be a comprehensive self-evaluation report.

b. Five-Year Review Cycle

i. New Centers and Institutes

New centers and institutes will be approved initially for a five-year period. During the first semester of the fifth year, the center or institute will be evaluated by the dean or chancellor, to determine if continuation is justified. This review must include a peer review, which may be external at the dean's or chancellor's discretion.

The center or institute will be reviewed in a similar manner by the dean or chancellor every five years thereafter.

ii. Existing Centers and Institutes

Existing centers and institutes should be reviewed every five years. In consultation with the deans, the Office of the Provost will establish a review schedule for all existing centers which is prioritized according to center or institute longevity and history of past reviews. In consultation with the chancellors, the vice president for system planning will establish a review schedule for all existing centers prioritized according to the center institute longevity and the history of past reviews.

The Office of the Provost or Office of System Planning will contact the deans or respective chancellor at the beginning of each academic year to indicate which centers and institutes are scheduled for review during that year.

c. Review Criteria

New and existing centers and institutes will be evaluated according to the criteria outlined in Section I.B as well as:

- i. the extent to which they have met the stated goals and objectives as originally proposed;
- ii. the extent to which the long term funding objectives have been met in a progression towards financial stability; and
- iii. evidence of effectiveness or impact.

Such evaluations will also provide recommendations for enhancement of the center's productivity, and assess the national and international standing and impact of the center.

d. Peer Reviewers

The dean or chancellor should develop a list of up to ten names of recognized scholars with the appropriate expertise, and who do not have a conflict of interest or formal relationship with the existing center or institute. The choice of whether to conduct an external review, an internal review, or a blend of the two is at the dean's or chancellor's discretion. The review panel is responsible for reporting their findings to the dean or chancellor.

e. Coordination and Funding of Review

The dean or chancellor is responsible for coordination of the review as well as covering all costs associated with the review process.

f. Evaluation Report

Following the review process, the dean or chancellor will prepare an evaluation report based on the review criteria in Section II.A.2.c. and on the peer review panel report, with a specific recommendation to the provost or vice president for system planning. The report should be submitted no later than three months prior to the end of the second semester of the academic year.

g. Outcome of the Review Process

The provost will review the evaluation report, consulting with the vice president for research for all centers and institutes pertaining to research, and then make a final decision regarding the future of the center or institute. The vice president for system planning will review the evaluation reports for centers and institutes at Aiken, Beaufort and Upstate, consulting with the vice president for research for all centers and institutes pertaining to research, and then make a final decision regarding the future of the center or institute.

3. Modification and Terminations

a. Name Changes or Other Modifications of a Center or Institute

Name changes and other modifications to a center or institute must be approved by the provost or vice president for system planning; the president and the Board of Trustees. The Office of the Provost will update the university inventory and notify CHE, the Office of the Vice President for Research, and the Registrar's office for bulletin entry. USC Aiken, Beaufort and Upstate maintain their own inventory.

b. Termination of a Center or Institute

If a decision is made to terminate a center or institute the dean or chancellor must make a recommendation to the provost or vice president for system planning as outlined in Section II.A.2.f. Terminations will normally be the result of lack of adequate progress, changes in University priorities or strategic direction, or changes in the availability of sufficient financial resources to sustain a viable center.

Terminations may be initiated by the unit housing the center or institute, the provost, or the vice president for system planning. If initiated by the provost or vice president for system planning, provisions will be made for timely notification of the dean or chancellor and the center or institute director.

If the final decision is to terminate the center or institute, the Office of the Provost will remove the center or institute from the USC Columbia inventory. Comprehensive campus centers or institutes will be deleted from the USC Aiken, Beaufort and Upstate inventories. The Office of the Provost or the Office of System Planning will notify the Board of Trustees and CHE as appropriate.

B. Appendices

Appendix A: Budget Plan

III. Related Policies

University Policy ACAF 2.02 Establishment and Modification of Academic Administrative Units

University Policy ACAF 2.00 Creation, Revision and Termination of Academic Programs

IV. Reason for Revision

Revised to clarify approval process and updated to reflect current practices. Initial approval period changed from three to five years. Procedures added regarding name changes, terminations, and the five-year review cycle.

APPENDIX A: BUDGET PLAN

ESTIMATED COSTS BY YEAR						
Category	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	TOTALS
Program Administration						
Faculty Salaries						
Graduate Assistants						
Clerical/Support Personnel						
Supplies and Materials						
Library Resources						
Equipment						
Facilities						
Others (Identify)						
TOTALS						
SOURCES OF FINANCING BY YEAR						
New State Funding (Legislative Appropriate)						
Reallocation of Existing Funds						
Federal Funding						
Other Funding (Endowment, Auxiliary, etc.)						
TOTALS						
