Assessing the Need and Proposed Policy

Faculty should thoroughly discuss the idea of creating a new center with their dean(s) and other relevant senior administrators at the University. They should be prepared to describe the mission and goal of this proposed unit and what would be accomplished by this unit that could not be accomplished without it. Once approved, faculty can move forward with a full proposal to the dean(s).

NOTE: The structure for interdisciplinary activity should be the minimal structure required to meet its scholarly and/or service objectives (research colloquium, joint research project, establishment of an incubator unit, grow into an externally funded center, and finally require the establishment of a formal division, center, or institute).

Centers, Institutes, Programs, and Initiatives (referred to as “centers”) are defined as:

An organization located within or alongside the traditional academic hierarchy of school / college and department that is formed to pursue an intellectual area of inquiry through teaching, research and / or service activities typically bringing together faculty and often students. Centers may focus within a discipline or be interdisciplinary with faculty from a single department, school / college, or multiple units. The organization may be freestanding or within a department or school / college.
Suggested Process on the Formation of Centers or Institutes

Criteria considerations for the proposed unit

Does the proposed unit:

- Align with the strategic direction of the School/University.
- Fill a need not already met by other entities in the School/University.
- A Group of faculty who are ready and able to provide leadership.
- Have a strategy for external support (philanthropy or sponsored activity).
- Position the School / University in an important emerging field of inquiry.
- Include faculty from more than one School and have an agreed upon governance model.
- Have a commitment of internal support until external support is realized.
- Have the support of the School leadership of the faculty involved.

Please see business plan template

Please see bylaws template

Regentally Approved or Established Centers or Institutes

The establishment of a center or institute by action of the Board of Regents is based on a number of factors, including budget, size, scope, and implications for the University community. To get a determination if the center or institute being established requires regents’ approval please contact the Provost’s Chief of Staff at 734-936-2254.

Sec. 6.03. Institutes and Centers (revised April 1995)

Institutes may be established on recommendation by the president as subordinate units of the university, for the purpose of conducting teaching research, or service activities administratively organized as separate units ordinarily responsible to a major unit of the university. The executive functions of an institute shall be performed by a director and executive committee, appointed by the president, and responsible to the appropriate university officer.

Centers may be established on recommendation by the president for the support of interdisciplinary research, publication, and training in several departments within a school or college. The executive functions of the center shall be performed by a director and executive committee, appointed by the president, and responsible to the dean and executive committee of the college.
Effective Management of Unit and Annual Reports

Once a unit is created, it is normally approved for a five-year period. Management of the unit is the primary responsibility of the unit’s director.

While each school manages its own process for regularly reviewing their units, the general process involves preparing an annual report and undergoing a periodic formal review. It would be appropriate to review the management and performance as part of the annual budget conference. While specific review criteria and required documentation will differ by school they include some of the following items:

- A brief assessment of the year’s successes and challenges.
- Is the unit fulfilling the mission for which it was established?
- The units current budget (total GF, Research & Endowment $’s), goals and metrics / measures** for the next two to three years.
- Center grant and other external funding sources.
- Current unit space occupancy (square footage).
- Center Organizational Chart.
- Staffing FTE (Direct and Indirect).
- Center Faculty (engaged in the unit’s activities and the corresponding departments).
- A listing of publications by Center faculty.
- A listing of honors/awards for the Center.

** Examples of possible metrics:

- **Funding**
  - Total ICR
  - ICR / total grant expenditures
  - ICR / GF support
  - GF support as % of total operational expenditures
  - Revenue raised / Administrative cost
  - Faculty support (Grant and GF)
  - GF budget
  - Total space (square footage)
  - Infrastructure / Equipment (invested capital)
  - Fund balances

- **Operational Effectiveness**
  - Total FTE’s, Staff FTE’s
  - Administrative structure with titles
  - Administrative Costs / Total Costs
  - Shared Staff FTE’s
  - Faculty workload
  - Utilization of space (time used / time available)
BEST PRACTICES & TOOL KIT

- Administrative Audit results
- Faculty retention

✓ Teaching & Educational Impact (Not all units have a teaching component)
  - Enrollment
  - Student to Faculty ratio
  - Degrees (certificates) awarded
  - SCH taught
  - Courses access or availability
  - Class sizes
  - Waitlists
  - Student Advising
  - Student Satisfaction
  - Number of Students participating in research
  - Learning assessments
  - Standard test scores
  - Job Placements
  - Graduation Rates

✓ Research Effectiveness
  - Grants awarded / Grants submitted
  - Publications per year
  - Faculty teaching load (effort of salary to teaching)
  - “Participation index” based on teaching load
  - Faculty tenure rate

✓ Visibility & Impact
  - Mention of unit in media
  - Faculty recruitment
  - Program ranking
  - Number of units participating

Tracking Centers / Institutes / Initiatives

U-M is interested in tracking organizations that are labeled "center", "institute", and “initiative" or, in some cases, other identifiers (such as “program”). For simplicity, we describe them below as “centers”. We should track organizations via a financial identifier in order to compile regular statistics without having to ask the unit administrators for data.

Other organizations will not need a financial identifier, though they should be tracked via a simple inventory (organization name and contact information), in order to report on the overall scope of such activity at U-M.

Listed below are categories with definitions and questions to help sort them into meaningful groups. Categories 1 and 2 are those that the provost would like to track via a financial identifier, and 3 and 4
BEST PRACTICES & TOOL KIT

are those that the provost would like to include in our inventory (along with 1 and 2) without a financial identifier being necessary. Categories 5 and 6 describe organizations whose existence we will track in our U-M inventory for the sake of completeness. Below are the categories with questions that are intended to determine whether a given organization fits a particular category.

Category 1: University Center or Institute

Institute: a separate university administrative unit and reports to a major university unit.

Center: a university unit within a school or college, or sometimes spanning several departments within a school or college.

University designation:

The participants, activity, resources, and / or oversight extend beyond a single unit.

• Faculty participation crosses multiple schools / colleges
• Administrative / financial oversight of the center usually centrally located
• Center receives funding from multiple units

Category 2: School / College Center

The organization is contained within a single unit; however, the organization's activity is understood to play a role in the medium to long-term unit's academic strategy.

• Usually more than one individual carries out the center’s leadership concurrently or over time.
• Center has a medium or long-term funding agreement.
• Unit would want to continue the center's activity even if the center no longer existed.

Category 3: Faculty Member Center

The organization carries out a teaching, research, or service program specifically associated with a particular individual.

• Center was set up as (part of) a recruitment/retention package.
• Center's activity would not continue in the absence of the faculty.

Category 4: Sponsored Research Center

The unit is in existence only because the university received a center grant or contract and is dependent on the continuation of such funding.

• The center only receives Sponsored Research funding or associated cost sharing from non-sponsored sources.
Category 5: Administrative Center

The organization's activities are administrative or focused on a supporting role for the enhancement of teaching and/or research.

- Center does not conduct its own research activity.
- Center's membership is primarily non-faculty, or faculty members primarily conduct non-research activity for the center.

Category 6: Agency Center

The center is "affiliated with" the university but is not a university organization (an example is the Institute of Wildlife Fisheries).

- Center does not receive any university funding.
- Center primarily reports to a non-university body.

**Comprehensive Reviews**

It is a best practice that a periodic formal review, generally every five years, be done on a unit. Usually, the Dean’s Office will contact the unit director to initiate an internal review of the unit. The review committee typically will be comprised of University of Michigan faculty, however, the need may arise due to expertise needed to assess the unit that an external reviewer will be asked to serve on the review committee, or at least provide input on the reputation of the unit outside of the University of Michigan. The final report of the review committee is usually advisory to the Dean.

Reviews typically entail five main objectives:

1. Has the Center / Institute / Program met the mandate for which it was established? This provides the opportunity to reassess whether an organization’s direction, goals, strengths, and weaknesses are in the areas of the School / College’s mission.
2. Is the Center / Institute / Program relevant to the mission of the School / College?
3. Has the Center / Institute / Program been a good financial steward of its resources? This assists in determining the present and future needs of each Center / Institute / Program with respect to personnel and other resources.
4. Does the current format of the Center / Institute / Program need to change, stay the same or change directions, and if so, what would be the future direction?
5. How is the current leadership performing? Reviews provide a mechanism by which the members of a Center / Institute/ Program can express their views concerning the unit leadership.
Sunsetting / Closing / Discontinuance of a Center

General standards for consideration in closing, sunsetting, or transitioning a center:

- The center cannot sustain itself financially, either by external or internal funds.
- The scholarly quality of work performed by the center falls below U-M norms.
- The original interdisciplinary nature of the center has disappeared, perhaps because what was once novel has been absorbed into the mainstream of a cognate discipline.
- The center is unable to attract new faculty, students, or dedicated leadership.

Sunsetting a center may have a number of manifestations, including:

- Transfer, intact, from status as a “Unit” center to a new home within a school or college. It may happen that a center evolves in such a manner that its interests fall completely within a single school or college. Under such circumstances, re-establishing within a college would be a logical transition.
- Redistribution of center resources and transfer some or all to other units.
- Spin-off as an entity separate from the University.
- Liquidation of all resources with return of assets to original stakeholders.

Sunsetting of a center may also involve a substantial degree of administrative effort and the process should follow procedures agreed upon in the document establishing the center with respect to the redirection, redistribution, or disposal of resources and assets (lines, equipment, space, funding, staff, etc.)

- The completion of remaining grant / contract obligations.
- Providing bridging support for student appointed to the center.
- Determine IT transitions including: web site, databases, severs, IRB/Clinical patient secure data (HIPPA).
- Providing bridging or other transition funds for dislocated staff.
- Assisting in placement, relocation or outsource activities for effected staff.
- Covering tenure obligations to academic faculty partially appointed to the center.
- Decommissioning facilities, especially specialized laboratories.
- Transferring facilities and space back to original stakeholder.

HELPING EACH OTHER AND SHARING BEST PRACTICES

IF YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL BEST PRACTICES THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SHARE WITH THE BROADER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY, PLEASE EMAIL PROVOST@UMICH.EDU. WE WILL UPDATE THIS DOCUMENT QUARTERLY.