



Guidelines for Creation of a Center of Excellence

Introduction

The purpose of the Centers of Excellence Program is to:

- Recognize and advance faculty expertise;
- Engage undergraduate and graduate students in experiential learning opportunities through service and research.
- Apply the intellectual capacity of the University to the needs of the region;
- Market those capacities to the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors;
- Provide opportunities to integrate teaching, research and service;
- Encourage multidisciplinary collaboration;
- Facilitate the administration of externally supported projects;

The policies outlined below are to be used in the creation, operation, and evaluation of Centers of Excellence at IPFW. Throughout, the term “center” is intended to be generic and applies to units that use other descriptors such as “institute.”

Criteria for Establishment of a Center of Excellence

In order for a proposed center to receive consideration for establishment it must meet the following criteria:

- The center must build upon current IPFW faculty strengths;
- The center must be collaborative and serve as a mechanism for the creation of a multidisciplinary community of scholars;
- The center must be housed in an academic department and be linked to an academic program in order to provide research, service, and experiential learning opportunities for faculty and students;
- The center must demonstrate the potential for attracting external support;
- The center must provide services useful to the Fort Wayne region.

Procedure for Establishment of a Center of Excellence

Requests for approval to establish a new center must follow the sequence described below:

- Demonstrate support for the center at the department and school level by supplying letters from the Department Chair and Dean;
- Forward a written request to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research;
- The request for formation must contain the elements described in the following section “Required Components of a Proposal for Creation of a Center of Excellence;”
- Proposed center director shall make a presentation of the proposed center to the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (additional VCAA Staff will be invited as appropriate);
- The VCAA, approves, denies, or requests additional information;
- Notification of Academic Affairs approval or denial will be forwarded to the requesting party.

Organizational Structure

The following guidelines are to be used to inform decisions regarding center organization:

- The center director will be appointed, with terms specified by the appointment letter;
- Upon receiving approval for center formation the center director shall create a set of operating guidelines addressing the following: internal governance, membership criteria, and identification of an internal/external advisory group;
- The center shall not be the tenure home for participating faculty;
- The center shall not offer any form of course, academic program, degree, or certificate;
- The center shall provide an annual report of activities to the AVCR, and to its members, advisory group, and any other stakeholders.

Categories of Support

Upon formation of a center, the Office of Academic Affairs will provide some or all of the following forms of support:

- Some combination of a stipend and/or course release for the Director of the center;
- Access to secretarial support;
- Compensation for the director’s home department, using associate faculty rates;
- Operational funds (S&E, travel);
- Funding for a graduate assistant or release time for other faculty;

There will be an initial support period of three years, with the expectation that the center will become increasingly self-sufficient after that time.

Center Assessment and Life Span

A center is not intended to have an indefinite institutional life, nor shall it receive University funding beyond a reasonable start-up period:

- Within three years of establishment the center shall undergo a comprehensive program review. When appropriate, the center should also solicit an external evaluation as part of its comprehensive review;
- After the initial review cycle, the center shall complete additional reviews every three years. The administration, however, has the right to initiate a review at any time;
- A center will exist only as long as it is deemed to be performing the function for which it was established. A center may be disestablished for any of the following reasons: it ceases to accomplish its objectives, it has fulfilled its objectives, the objectives can be met more effectively in some other way, or there is no longer sufficient funding from internal or external sources.

Required Components of a Proposal for Creation of a Center of Excellence

Mission Statement - What is the purpose of the center? What will be its focus? What will it do?

Rationale - Why is such a center needed? Why is it significant? Is there an audience or market for the services of the center? This section must address all of the topics described in the "Criteria" section above.

Activities - What activities would the center sponsor (e.g. training, consulting, research)?

Goals - What are the specific goals for the first three years of the center.

Facilities and Equipment - What existing and new equipment and facilities would be needed? How would new equipment and facilities be funded from external sources? A statement approving the use of non-departmental facilities must be attached.

Structure - How would the center be organized and governed?

Membership - Who would be members or associates of the Center? Will the Center have an internal or external advisory committee?

Administration - How would the center be administered and who would have that responsibility? Will there be support staff?

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Action Plan and Budget - What would be the specific goals/activities and budget of the Center for Year 1 through Year 3? How will progress be assessed? What metrics will be used to assess goal achievement?

Sustainability – How will the activities of the center be sustained after the initial three years of support? What external sources of support are expected to be available?

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