

## Washington University Policy on Centers and Institutes

### **Centers and Institutes**

Centers and institutes foster cross-disciplinary scholarship and research in order to maximize Washington University's impact in addressing complex problems, conducting original research, educating students, and serving as an international leader.

Institutional centers and institutes specifically provide support to faculty, staff and students from different disciplines in research, instructional and/or public service endeavors. Such interdisciplinary centers must be organized between two Schools, with the approval of the Provost, or under the Office of the Provost. In general, centers and institutes do not have jurisdiction over academic curricula but may offer courses in cooperation with academic units.

School-based centers and institutes are housed within a single school or department. They are research organizations that are approved by the school Dean. They are predominantly composed of multiple faculty members from a single school.

Agreements supporting existing centers and institutes at Washington University are now governed by this policy. When new centers are created, guidelines shall be consistent with this policy.

### **Periodic Review of Centers and Institutes**

Each center or institute shall generally undergo a review every five years. Three years after the completion of a review, the Dean or Provost has the discretion to schedule another full review. A review may also occur sooner at the discretion of the appointing officer or school. The review committee shall consist of not less than three members, with one from outside of Washington University. The review of the director may not serve as a substitute for the review of a center or institute.

The review team shall evaluate:

1. Mission, goals and objectives and their alignment with those of the University;
2. Degree of success in achieving the mission and meeting specific goals;
3. Quality and quantity of scholarly, instructional, and/or public service and engagement activity;
4. Effectiveness of organizational structure, leadership and staffing;
5. Adequacy of financial resources;
6. Barriers to achievement of mission or goals; and
7. Vision for the future, including program improvement plans.

The report from the review committee shall be transmitted to the Center director, the administrative officer to whom the center reports (Dean or Department Chair) and the Provost.

## **Discontinuation of Centers and Institutes**

Following a review as described above or upon a formal written request by the administrative officer to whom the center or institutes reports, the Dean or Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs may discontinue a center or institutes, as long as the responsible Dean is agreeable, and under the following circumstances:

1. Insufficient financial, human, or facilities resources are available to support the center
2. Major supporting grant, gift, or award has been terminated or reduced such that the work of the center is impacted
3. The center or institute has failed to achieve its mission, goals, or objectives
4. The mission, goals, and objectives of the center are no longer consistent with the unit to which it reports or to the university

For an institutional center, if the Provost and Dean jointly determine the discontinuation is warranted he or she will ask the Chancellor to approve this action. The administrative officer to whom the center or institute reports, in collaboration with the center director, will develop a plan for phasing out the unit to allow orderly termination or transfer of obligations and attempt to find alternative employment to staff, if necessary. If the center proposed for elimination is supported by a donor gift, then the impact of discontinuation on the original donor / gift agreement shall be considered.

A center director may appeal a discontinuation decision to the Faculty Senate Advisory Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (ACTAF).

## **Exemptions**

The following types of entities do not meet the definition of a center or institute as articulated in this policy and are, therefore, exempt:

- Those whose mission is to provide services to specific university constituencies. Examples include The Writing Center (serving students) and the Teaching Center (serving faculty)
- Centers focused primarily on the clinical care of patients
- Activities supported by external grant programs that are called centers by the funding agencies but do not operate or function as a center as described in this policy, unless the funding agency requires formal designation as a University center or institute.