

Procedures for Establishment and Review of Michigan Tech Research Centers and Institutes

1. INTRODUCTION	2
2. DEFINITIONS	2
Research Center	2
Research Institute	2
3. ESTABLISHMENT	3
3.1 Proposal	3
Statement of Purpose	3
Mission Statement	3
Description of Proposed Activities	3
List of Participating Faculty	3
Justification	3
Governance Structure	4
Space and Facilities Requirements	4
Funding	4
3.2 Approval	4
4. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND PROJECT ADMINISTRATION	4
5. REVIEW AND EVALUATION	4
6. RE-AUTHORIZATION/TERMINATION	5
7. CHARTER	5
8. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF CONTROL	5

1. INTRODUCTION

As Michigan Tech matures as a research institution, there is a need to periodically review practices related to research activities on campus. It is also sometimes necessary to formalize procedures that have previously been done on an *ad hoc* basis. With close to two dozen research centers and institutes on campus, it is an opportune time to revisit what it means to be a research center or institute at Michigan Tech, our procedures and practices for establishing such organizations, and our expectations for review and continuation of such organizations through time.

The establishment of Centers and Institutes are signs of entrepreneurial activities of faculty and academic units. Centers/Institutes are established for different reasons and bring different benefits. These organizations serve as a focus of scholarly activity and intellectual creativity, focal points for interaction with research sponsors, and serve to amplify Michigan Tech's competitiveness in obtaining research funding in the designated areas.

2. DEFINITIONS

The terms "center" and "institute" have been used as synonyms in describing focused areas of research at Michigan Tech. While this is the practice at many institutions, there are many others that attach specific definitions and expectations to these two terms. The following definitions of these terms are recommended for future practice:

Research Center: A smaller, collaborative effort, centered on a specific research or educational activity, often with participants from more than one Department or School. A Center is administered by a Director that usually reports to a Department Chair or School Dean.

Research Institute: A larger, integrative unit, usually with participants from more than one College or School. An Institute may contain one or more Centers within its administrative structure. An Institute is administered by a Director that reports to a Dean or higher ranking individual in the central administration.

Both Centers and Institutes are focused on externally supported research or educational activities. By definition, Centers and Institutes are collaborative efforts and not the product of single individuals. Directors of Centers or Institutes are normally tenured faculty within a Department or School. Centers and Institutes normally do not contain faculty lines outside of academic Departments or Schools. It is not necessary for every Center or Institute to be identical; the governance structure of each should reflect the unique needs and characteristics of that Center/Institute.

The formal process for establishing a Center or Institute is outlined below. Other research organizations that typically do not extend beyond the Department/School level and which do not require higher administrative approval beyond that level may be designated as a "Laboratory" or a "Program".

3. ESTABLISHMENT

Centers and Institutes must facilitate research and education. The establishment of a Center or Institute should lead to an intellectual environment that brings people together to solve societal problems. Centers and Institutes can serve as a means of focusing resources to advance this goal. There are two general criteria for the establishment of a Center or Institute:

- A. A *de facto* Center or Institute exists; faculty are working together on research problems requiring an interdisciplinary approach; they are serving on each others' graduate student committees; regular research meetings or seminars involving the group take place. Center or Institute designation is a formal recognition of a center of excellence resulting from that group and its activities.
- B. A significant funding opportunity is available that requires a "Center", "Institute", or other umbrella organization to exist in order to submit a proposal or to be competitive for an award. These funding opportunities must by nature be interdisciplinary and available over an extended period of time.

Interim approval of Center status may be given in order to expedite the response to a funding opportunity or to provide a mechanism for a group to organize. Interim approval shall require the approval of all administrators normally involved in the Center/Institute approval process (Section 3.2), and shall usually be limited to one calendar year.

3.1 Proposal

A written proposal must be developed and approved in order to establish a Center or Institute. The proposal must contain at least the following elements:

Statement of Purpose. The request to develop a Center or Institute must clearly and succinctly define the purpose of the new Center/Institute.

Mission Statement. The request to develop a Center/Institute must define in concise language the mission of the proposed Center/Institute. This mission provides the basis upon which later evaluations of Center/Institute activities will be made.

Description of Proposed Activities. A description of the activities to be undertaken by the Center/Institute, and its relationship with academic units and degree programs.

List of Participating Faculty. A list of participating faculty, and their academic units, should be included, as should an appendix containing curriculum vitae of participating faculty.

Justification. A description of the rationale for establishing the Center/Institute and the anticipated benefits from its creation.

Governance Structure. The following questions should be addressed: How is the Center/Institute Director chosen? By whom? What is the length of the Director's term? To whom does the Director report? What are the Director's duties and responsibilities? Are there management committees of participating faculty? What is the charge to such

committees? Is there an Advisory Board? What are the duties and responsibilities of such a board? How is the Board appointed? By whom? What is the term of membership on the board?

Space and Facilities Requirements. A description of existing laboratory and office facilities that will be used by the Center/Institute, along with a description of new laboratory, office, or other space and facility requirements of the new Center/Institute.

Funding. A description of new resources that will be required for the Center/Institute, along with a description of current externally funded projects that will contribute to Center/Institute activities. The direct costs to support the research activities of the Center/Institute must be identified, at least in general terms. Indirect costs such as space, other facilities, and general administrative costs must be specified. The proportion of the Director's time to be dedicated to the Center/Institute, and needs for an Assistant Director, needs for other administrative staff and for clerical or technical staff, etc. must be described. Proposed methods of funding these requirements must be suggested; if any Department, School, College, or university resources (including a return of indirect cost recovery to the proposed Center/Institute) are anticipated or required, approval of relevant administrators must be indicated.

3.2 Approval

Establishment of a Center/Institute has implications for the Departments, Schools, and Colleges with participating faculty. Establishment, therefore, of such an entity requires the approval of all involved Chairs and Deans. Since establishment of a Center/Institute also confers University endorsement, approval is also required from the Vice President for Research, the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the University President.

4. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND PROJECT ADMINISTRATION

Centers/Institutes involve Department/School/College personnel and facilities. Chairs and Deans are responsible for resources assigned to their units, and only they can commit those resources. Proposals originating in Centers or Institutes must have the explicit approval of the Director and the person in the position to which the Director reports; if the Director reports to a Chair, the appropriate Dean must also approve. Proposals must follow the normal Michigan Tech proposal submission procedures.

5. REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Each Center or Institute will submit an annual report to the Vice President for Research at the end of each academic year. The annual report should summarize the activities of the Center/Institute for the past year, and address the mission of the unit. Updates or modifications of the Center/Institute strategic plan (Section 7) should accompany the annual report.

Each Center/Institute will be established for a fixed period of time, usually five years unless there are prevailing reasons for a shorter or longer term. Shorter or longer terms must be explicitly described in the proposal or evaluation documents. In the final year of authorization, each Center/Institute will conduct a self-study and undergo a thorough review

and evaluation of its activities and accomplishments. The review will include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the Director and their suitability to continue in that role. The review will be organized by the Vice President for Research and the person to whom the Director reports. Reviewers may be internal or external, as the situation merits.

6. REAUTHORIZATION/TERMINATION

At the end of the establishment period, the existence of the Center or Institute will terminate unless it is specifically reauthorized to continue following its review and evaluation. Reauthorization usually would not be granted unless the Center or Institute was achieving its stated goals (Section 7). The period of reauthorization will be specified in the reauthorization approval. Reauthorization must follow the same approval process (Section 3.2) required for the initial establishment of the Center/Institute.

7. CHARTER

Following approval, each Center/Institute will develop a Charter during its first year of existence or the first year following reauthorization. The Charter will describe the mission, description of proposed activities, and governance structure, and include a strategic plan describing the means of addressing the mission of the unit. The plan will specify explicit goals regarding the number of graduate students supported, research funds generated, faculty release time paid from Center/Institute projects, and indirect costs recovered. The Charter shall be approved by the Director, the person to whom the Director reports, the Vice President for Research, and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

8. ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BOARD OF CONTROL

Annually, the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs will report to the Board of Control on the approval of new Centers/Institutes, the reauthorization of existing Centers and Institutes, and the level of research activity in recognized Centers and Institutes.