

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

1. Introduction

The establishment of Research 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

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 may report to the Vice President for Research, School Dean or a Department Chair.

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 the Vice President for Research.

Centers and Institutes are both focused on externally supported research or educational activities and 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 other's 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 for 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.

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3.1 Proposal

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

1. Statement of Purpose – The request to develop a Center or Institute must clearly and succinctly define the purpose of the new Center/Institute
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Evaluation Criteria – A list of qualitative or quantitative measure and associated goals that will be used to evaluate the success of the center.
5. List of Participating Faculty – A list of participating faculty, and their academic units, should be included.
6. Justification – A description of the rationale for establishing the Center/Institute and the anticipated benefits from its creation.
7. Governance Structure – The following questions should be addressed:
 - a. How is the Center/Institute Director chosen? By whom?
 - b. What is the length of the Director's term?
 - c. To whom does the Director report?
 - d. What are the Director's duties and responsibilities?
 - e. Are there management committees of participating faculty?
 - f. What is the charge to such committees?
 - g. Is there an Advisory Board?
 - h. What are the duties and responsibilities of such a board?
 - i. How is the Board appointed? By whom?
 - j. What is the term of membership on the board?
8. Space and Facilities Requirements – A description of existing laboratory and office facilities that will be used by the Center/Institute. Utilized space must be approved by the Dean and Department Chair.
9. Funding – A description of 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, needs for an Assistant Director, needs for other administrative staff and for clerical or technical staff, etc. must also be described. Proposed methods of funding these requirements must be suggested; if any Department, School, College, or University resources are anticipated or required, approval of relevant administrators must be indicated.
10. Signatures – Required signatures include: Dean and Department Chair for all participating faculty.
11. Appendix – Include an appendix containing curriculum vitae of participating faculty.
12. Submission of Center/Institute proposal – All submissions requesting the creation of a Center/Institute must be submitted to the Vice President for Research for approval.

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3.2 Approval

Establishment of a Center/Institute has implication 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 Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the University President.

4. Project Proposal Submission and 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 for sponsored projects that originate in a Center or Institute must have the explicit approval of the Director. Proposals for sponsored projects must follow the normal Michigan Tech proposal submission procedures. More information regarding proposal submission procedures can be found at:

<http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/sponsored-programs/office/>

5. Review and Evaluation

Each Center/Institute will submit an annual report to the Vice President for Research by July 1 of each 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 modification of the Center/Institute strategic plan 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.

6. 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, 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.

7. Reauthorization / Termination

At the end of the approved period, the existence of the Center or Institute will terminate unless it is specifically reauthorized to continue following its review and evaluation. The period of reauthorization will be specified in the reauthorization approval, but shall not exceed five years. Reauthorization must follow the same approval process outlined in Section 3. Approval of the Provost and President is not required for approval of a reauthorization.