



Centers and Institutes: Establishment, Governance and Programmatic Oversight

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1.0 Purpose

Historically, the university has found Centers to be a proven, effective means of organizing complex academic activities, particularly interdisciplinary research, instruction, and outreach. Over the years, these Centers have served the faculty and the university well. They have allowed faculty and their associates from varied backgrounds and expertise to come together to solve common problems that could not otherwise be addressed, and they have provided substantial growth in support for faculty, students, and facilities across the university.

Beginning in the late 1990s the university began to establish University Institutes for the purpose of providing a more coordinated and structured means of supporting large, complex interdisciplinary research endeavors across certain strategic focus areas. These University Institutes have enhanced certain recognized research and discovery strengths of the university while also allowing for growth and development into key strategic areas such as the life and health sciences. Substantial funding has been allocated by the university to these University Institutes as an important investment towards our collective future.

[Policy 3020](#) (Centers and University Institutes Financial and Administrative Policies and Procedures) outlines the policies and procedures necessary for the effective operation of Centers and University Institutes in regard to their financial and administrative affairs, including necessary controls that are in place through the establishment and governance of these organizations.

This policy document provides guidance regarding the establishment, governance and programmatic functions and responsibilities related to research, instruction and outreach performed in Centers and University Institutes that have been duly authorized under Policy 3020.

2.0 Policy

The university encourages the formation of Centers and, as appropriate, University Institutes, for the purpose of enhancing the achievement of its instructional, research, and outreach missions. This document sets forth the rules by which Centers and University Institutes are established, governed and overseen from a programmatic standpoint. All matters relating to research, instruction and outreach at Virginia Tech fall under the jurisdiction of the Senior Vice President and Provost as Chief Academic Officer of the university, and as such, the organization and operation of Centers and University Institutes, in accordance with university policies and procedures, are under the purview of the Senior Vice President and Provost. The Senior Vice President and Provost may in turn engage other Vice Presidents (e.g., the Vice President for Research, the Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs) in an oversight role for Centers and University Institutes that align with their respective domain areas.



Policies and procedures related to the fiscal and administrative rules by which Centers and University Institutes are organized and operated are addressed within Policy No. 3020 (Centers and University Institutes Financial and Administrative Policy and Procedures).

3.0 Procedures

3.1 Establishment of New Centers and University Institutes

3.1.1 Establishment of a New Center

Inasmuch as a new Center within the university creates additional demands for resources, oversight, reporting and review, and represents a major commitment of duties for one or more faculty members, there shall be compelling, strategic reasons to establish a Center. Classification of the proposed Center shall be in accordance with the stated definitions in Section 4.0 and recommended by the Center's proposed Stakeholders Committee, subject to approval of the Center by the university governance structure in the case of university-level Centers, and the appropriate Vice President in the case of Centers that would be administratively housed within a department, college, or University Institute.

The initial step in requesting to establish a new Center is to submit a "Letter of Intent to Establish a New Center" to the appropriate Vice President for consideration (Vice President for Research for proposed research Centers; Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs for proposed outreach Centers; Vice President and Dean for Undergraduate Education for proposed Centers focused on undergraduate education; Vice President and Dean for Graduate Education for proposed Centers focused on graduate education) and other senior administrative areas as deemed appropriate by the Senior Vice President and Provost. The letter should in reasonable detail provide information related to the following items:

1. Vision and objectives for the Center
2. The general nature of the faculty and student groups that will, directly or indirectly, be involved in the Center, and the clientele served by the Center
3. Proposed administrative category of the Center (e.g., university-level, college-level, University Institute-level, or department-level)
4. Anticipated resource needs of the Center and expected sources of these resources (Note: a letter of intent that proposes to form a center that would require centralized, University resources would require review by the Senior Vice President and Provost as well as the University's Chief Financial Officer)
5. Relationship of the Center to other entities at the university (e.g., centers, major research institutes, departments, schools, etc.) that have apparent similar areas of mission-related focus

The letter must include the endorsement of the responsible leader of the proposed administrative location of the Center (e.g., dean for a college-level center, department head for a department-level center, director for a University Institute-level center).

Upon receipt the appropriate Vice President or their designee will have a 30-day period to review the Letter of Intent and provide a response. A decision to deny the request to formally submit a proposal for the new Center will clearly articulate the reasons for that denial (e.g., the proposed Center substantially duplicates existing organized efforts at



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the university). If the Vice President conducting the review of the Letter of Intent is supportive of the Center's foundation, that official will invite the proponents of the new Center to proceed with a formal proposal. Coincident with this invitation the Vice President will inform the Chair of the University Commission in the corresponding mission area (e.g., Research, Outreach and International Affairs, or Undergraduate or Graduate Education) for planning purposes that a proposal for a new center will be forthcoming.

The proposal for the establishment of a new Center shall be in the form of a Charter that addresses all pertinent policy and procedure requirements as stated in this document, to include but not be limited to:

1. Vision of the Center.
2. Short- (five-year) and longer-term objectives of the Center in one or more of the university's mission areas
3. The general nature of the faculty and student groups that will (directly or indirectly) be involved in the Center and the clientele it will serve
4. Governance of the Center, including the proposed Administrator for the Center as well as members of the Stakeholders' Committee and (if desired) Advisory Committee
5. Anticipated resource needs (e.g., startup and continual funding, space, facilities, personnel) as well as prospective sources of these resources (Note: Center proposals that request centralized, university resources would need to be reviewed by the Senior Vice President and Provost and the University's Chief Financial Officer)
6. Forecast of external funding sources to the Center (e.g., sponsored research funding expenditures anticipated for research Centers)
7. Anticipated distribution of returned indirect costs between the Center and its partners (consistent with university policy)
8. Statement of the qualifications of the proposed Director who will provide leadership and administrative oversight to the day-to-day affairs of the Center.

In addition to the Charter a formal request to establish a Center must include a letter of endorsement from all university units (e.g., departments, colleges, University Institutes, etc.) who will have a significant role in the proposed Center.

Requests to establish a university-level Center in the mission areas of Research, Instruction or Outreach must be forwarded to the Commission appropriate to the primary mission area of the proposed Center ((Research, Undergraduate Studies and Policies, Graduate Studies and Policies, or Outreach and International Affairs) for consideration through the formal governance system. The Commission in question will review the drafted Charter, making recommendations for revision to ensure clear specification of objectives, sources of support, and criteria for future assessments of the Center's performance. After consideration of the draft Charter the Commission will be asked to vote on the question of recommending to the appropriate Vice President that foundation of the Center be authorized under the terms specified in the Charter. This Vice President will review this input in reaching a decision regarding the proposed Center.

Formal requests, including a Charter and letters of endorsement, to establish Centers that are to be administered within a department, college or University Institute will be forwarded to the appropriate Vice President (e.g., Vice President for Research for research Centers, Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs for outreach Centers, etc.) for consideration and a decision regarding authorization.



If a proposal to establish a new Center is denied by a Vice President then the faculty members who brought forward the proposal would have the option to appeal that denial decision to the Senior Vice President and Provost. The decision reached by the Senior Vice President and Provost regarding the appeal would be the final outcome.

Proposals for new Centers also will be reviewed by the Office of the University's Chief Financial Officer or their designee. Upon review of the proposal for the Center, training and/or management consulting for financial and administrative operations may be recommended for the proposed Director and other administrative personnel within the Center if warranted.

The final decision regarding approval or denial of a proposed new Center will be transmitted to the proposers. This documentation will include a copy of the original proposal along with other appropriate documentation as noted in Section 3.2 of this document. A decision by a Vice President to approve a new Center will also be forwarded to the Senior Vice President and Provost as their office is responsible for maintaining an online listing of all approved and duly-registered Centers and University Institutes at Virginia Tech.

3.1.2 Establishment of a New University Institute

Establishment of a new University Institute involves a substantial investment of various types of resources (e.g., personnel, startup and annual funding, space) from within the university. As such it is envisioned that the establishment of a new University Institute will occur infrequently and only after careful, deliberative consideration of such a proposal.

The steps in the process to establish a new University Institute are similar to those defined for a Center in Section 3.1.1. A Letter of Intent to establish a new University Institute will be submitted to the Senior Vice President and Provost and address the items listed in Section 3.1.1. The Senior Vice President and Provost will form a review team to study the concept for the proposed new University Institute. Additional membership on that review team will include the appropriate Vice President based upon the mission area of the proposed University Institute, the Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer, two or more college deans (from disciplinary areas aligned with the proposed University Institute), one or more directors from existing University Institutes, and the chair of the University Commission appropriate to the mission area of the proposed University Institute. This review team will serve in an advisory role to the Senior Vice President and Provost regarding the issue of either approving or denying the request to formally submit a proposal on the new University Institute. The final decision of the Senior Vice President and Provost will be reached and transmitted within a 90-day period to those who filed the Letter of Intent. If the Senior Vice President and Provost agrees to receive a proposal for a new University Institute, then they will invite the proponents of the University Institute to submit a formal proposal for further review. Coincident with this invitation, the Senior Vice President and Provost will inform the Chair of the University Commission in the corresponding mission area (e.g., Research, Outreach and International Affairs, or Undergraduate or Graduate Education) for planning purposes that a proposal for a new University Institute will be forthcoming.

If the request to propose a new University Institute is approved, then the proposers will prepare a Charter document similar to that previously described in Section 3.1.1. Letters of endorsement from all parties having a major role in the proposed University Institute must accompany the Charter when submitted for formal review. The Senior Vice President and Provost will chair a review team that would include as a minimum the members listed earlier in this section. Others may be added to the review team by the Senior Vice President and Provost as deemed necessary and appropriate. This review team will develop a formal recommendation regarding the proposed University Institute and forward that recommendation to the appropriate Commission, where further review of the proposal would be



initiated within the university governance system. As described earlier, the Commission in question will review the draft Charter, making recommendations for revision to clarify specification of objectives, sources of support, and criteria for future assessments of the University Institute's performance. After consideration of the draft Charter, the Commission will be asked to vote on the question of recommending to the Senior Vice President and Provost that the University Institute be authorized under the terms specified in the Charter. The final decision on authorization of the proposed University Institute rests with the Senior Vice President and Provost. The final decision on a proposed new University Institute will be transmitted to the proposers.

3.2 Governance

The request to establish a Center or University Institute, in the form of an approved Charter, shall detail the governance of the Center or University Institute as required in Section 3.1. The Stakeholders Committee, or (in the case of a smaller, single departmental center) the Department Head, will be responsible for governance of the Center or University Institute, will review the financial and administrative functions of the unit, and will receive annual reports from the Director as well as internal audit reports of the unit. Membership requirements for the Stakeholders Committee as well as more detailed information regarding the administrative workings of the Stakeholders Committee are found in Policy 3020 (Centers and University Institutes Financial and Administrative Policies and Procedures).

The authority to appoint and dismiss the Director ultimately resides with the Administrator to whom the Center or University Institute reports. The Administrator will seek the advice of the Stakeholders Committee in matters related to the appointment or dismissal of the Director. The Director shall have the responsibility to recruit, hire, evaluate and dismiss staff consistent with university policy and procedures, and contingent on Board of Visitors approval.

Maintenance of a central archive of records related to Centers and University Institutes will be integral to the successful governance and oversight of these units. The Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost will maintain a comprehensive archive of records that document the authorization of Centers and University Institutes, including the communication approving the Center or University Institute, a copy of the current Center or University Institute Charter, timetables for periodic review of the Center or University Institute as well as its Director, and the reports generated by those reviews. The Director and Administrator are responsible for maintaining the official records of a Center or University Institute, including Minutes of Stakeholder Committee, Advisory Committee and other meetings, membership lists, and meeting schedules. Likewise, copies of all annual fiscal and administrative reports as well as periodic audit reports as specified in Policy 3020 should be maintained by the Director and Administrator.

The Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost will notify the Administrator of each Center or University Institute when a periodic review of the unit or its Director is scheduled for that fiscal year. For University Centers or Institutes, the Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost will also notify the Chair of the appropriate University Commission regarding reviews that need to be conducted for that fiscal year. Reviews will be conducted according to procedures specified under Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of this policy.

The Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost will maintain an online list of all approved Centers and University Institutes, their Directors, and administrative affiliations.

3.3 Financial and Administrative Procedures and Responsibilities

Rules related to the fiscal and administrative policies and procedures that govern Centers and University Institutes are defined in a more comprehensive form in Policy No. 3020 (Centers and University Institutes Financial and



Administrative Policy and Procedures). The following text is a consolidated presentation of several key issues that relate to financial and administrative matters.

Each established university unit is responsible for administrative oversight and fiscal control of the university funds assigned to it. Center activities have primary accounting at the department, college, institute or university level. Administrative oversight and fiscal control of Center and University Institute activities are the responsibility of the administrative entity to which the funds are assigned.

All Centers and University Institutes will be separately identified and assigned a unique organization code within the university's accounting system. The Director, in conjunction with the responsible Administrator, Associate Vice President for Human Resources, and the University Controller, is responsible for establishing the appropriate signature authority for both personnel and accounting transactions of the Center or University Institute, and for keeping authorization up to date as personnel and responsibilities change. Signature authority approval lies with the Administrator and may be delegated as appropriate, within university rules and regulations.

The Directors of all Centers and University Institutes shall provide an annual report (to be submitted by September 30 following the June 30 fiscal year-end) to the University Controller's Office and to the senior administrator (e.g., Vice President for Research for research centers, Vice President for Outreach and International Affairs for outreach centers, etc.). The report will include an accounting of the income and expenditures for the prior fiscal year, and highlight the activities of the Center together with planned activities and proposed budget for the coming year. Annual reports will be endorsed by the Administrator and copies will be sent to all Stakeholders.

3.4 Administrative Oversight and Periodic Review of Directors

3.4.1 Administrative Oversight and Annual Performance Evaluation of Directors

Each Director of a Center or University Institute shall report to a single Administrator for the purposes of the conduct of their work with the Center or University Institute they are directing.

A University Institute Director is expected to spend the vast majority of his or her time in work conducted for the benefit of the Institute. Therefore, the Institute Director's annual performance evaluation shall be conducted by the Administrator of the University Institute, and salary adjustments will be recommended by the Administrator to the Senior Vice President and Provost. Other administrative functions such as leave and travel approval will also be performed by the Administrator.

A Center Director who holds a tenured or tenure-track faculty position is expected to spend a large portion of their time on research and teaching that is not uniquely for the benefit of the Center. Therefore, while they report to the Center Administrator for all matters associated with the operation and administration of the Center, their annual performance evaluation will be conducted by their home department head, and salary adjustments will be recommended by the home department head to the dean. The Administrator of the Center will be consulted within the evaluation process. This evaluation and salary adjustment process will be conducted by a senior university administrator if the Director holds an alumni distinguished professorship or university distinguished professorship. Other administrative functions such as leave and travel approval will be performed by the home department head. A Center Director who does not have a tenure home and whose work is primarily for the benefit of the Center shall have their annual performance evaluation, salary recommendations, and other administrative functions handled by the Administrator of the Center.



3.4.2 Procedures for the Review of a University Center or University Institute Director

A performance review of the Director of a University Center or University Institute should occur at least once every five years. This performance review is to take place in a different year from when the programmatic review of the University Center or University Institute takes place. Based upon review of ongoing circumstances and input received from individuals involved with the University Center or University Institute the Administrator to whom the Director reports may decide that a more frequent performance review may be warranted.

The following procedural steps should be followed in the conduct of such performance reviews:

1. A Review Committee composed of three or more members will be appointed by the Administrator to whom the University Center or University Institute Director reports to conduct this performance review.
2. The applicable University Center or University Institute Director will be asked to provide:
 - a. Faculty Activity Reports from the prior five years; and,
 - b. A list of names of individuals or groups that they would like included in the performance review process, both internal and external to Virginia Tech.
 - c. A report on actions taken in response to the most recent director performance review, as appropriate.
3. The Committee will develop a proposed performance review survey and review it with the Administrator and the chair of the University Center or University Institute's Stakeholders Committee. The list of individuals proposed by the Director will also be reviewed with the Administrator and Stakeholders Committee chair and names added as appropriate
4. The Committee will review the results of the performance review survey and provide a list of strengths and weaknesses to the Administrator to whom the Director reports as defined by the University Center or University Institute Charter. These will be accompanied by the Director's Faculty Activity Reports. The Review Committee will not make a recommendation regarding the Director's continued service.
5. The Administrator will review the results with the chair of the Stakeholders Committee and ultimately make a decision regarding reappointment of the Director.
6. The Director will be notified of the Administrator's decision within 15 days of the Administrator's meeting with the chair of the Stakeholders Committee at which the performance review results were discussed.
7. The Administrator will notify the relevant entities (e.g., Commission as appropriate, Stakeholders Committee and Advisory Board of University Center or University Institute, Director's home department head for tenured or tenure-track faculty, etc.) regarding the outcome of the review. These notifications will occur within 15 days of notifying the Director of the outcome of the performance review process.

3.4.3 Procedures for the Review of a College, Department, or Institute Center Director

A performance review of the Director of a Departmental, College or Institute Center Director should occur at least once every five years. This performance is to take place in a different year from when the programmatic review of the Departmental, College or Institute Center takes place. It is recognized that the overall time commitment and administrative responsibility for a Director leading one of these Centers would typically be significantly less than that related to leadership of a University Center or University Institute. As such it is reasonable to presume that the overall performance review procedure may be similar to but not completely the same as that described in 3.4.2.



The Administrator to whom the Center Director reports is ultimately responsible for defining the performance review process that will be utilized. As a minimum that procedure will include the appointment of an appropriately sized Review Committee, collection and review of relevant performance information from the Director, collection and review of relevant information from individuals or groups who have substantial interaction with the Center, and preparation of a final report by the Review Committee to the Administrator. The Administrator has the final decision regarding reappointment of the Director.

3.5 Programmatic Oversight and Evaluation Aspects of Centers and University Institutes

For all Centers and University Institutes, programmatic issues (as distinct from fiscal and administrative matters) will be addressed on an ongoing basis by the Director, Principal Investigators, the Administrator and, where relevant, the Stakeholders Committee and, ultimately, the Senior Vice President and Provost. Advisory Boards for Centers and University Institutes will provide further reviews of programmatic progress. All Centers, regardless of administrative level (e.g., Departmental, College, University, Institute-level), and University Institutes must be formally evaluated regarding programmatic activities at least once every five years. The following subsections provide procedural guidance regarding the systematic programmatic review of Centers and University Institutes.

3.5.1 Overall Criteria for the Review of a Center or University Institute

The overall task of the Center or University Institute Review Committee is to evaluate the accomplishments and performance of the Center or University Institute; measure these against the mission of the Center or University Institute as defined in its approved Charter; review the financial status of the Center or University Institute; and recommend re-authorization or termination of the Center or University Institute. Specific components of this review would include the following:

1. The Review Committee will develop procedures that best fit the specific Center or University Institute under review.
2. The Review Committee will identify individuals and groups from whom to solicit information. It is anticipated that these will include the Director, affiliated faculty and staff, other relevant faculty, relevant department, college, and university administrators, client groups, members of the Center or University Institute's Advisory Board or Stakeholders' Committee, and appropriate persons outside the University if the Center or University Institute has a state-wide or national mission.
3. The Review Committee will identify the methods it will use to collect information. It is anticipated that the methodology will include surveys and interviews with many key personnel from within the Center or University Institute as well as those outside the unit who interact substantially with it.
4. The Review Committee will consider and report on any prior center review recommendations and actions taken by the center director and/or the center administrator to address those recommendations.
5. The Review Committee will write a draft report of its findings that may include organizational/personnel matters, measures of research activity or education and outreach efforts, interdisciplinary interactions, leadership, financial data, and other relevant activities. The Director will be asked to review the report at this stage and respond with corrections to factual data in the draft report. Recommendations of the Review Committee should not be shared with the Director at this stage.
6. The Review Committee will prepare a final written report, which will make recommendations on the reauthorization of the Center or University Institute as well as any suggested changes to the programmatic



focus of the unit, its organizational or administrative structure, or other relevant matters. In the case of University Centers and University Institutes, this report will be presented to the University Commission responsible for this relevant mission area. The Commission will be asked to vote on the question of approving the recommendations of the Review Committee. The report, along with the outcome of the Commission's vote, will then be submitted to the Administrator of the Center or University Institute.

7. The Administrator will then have 45 days to act on the recommendations of the Review Committee. A copy of the final written report as well as a written statement from the Administrator regarding final actions made following the review process will be sent to the Senior Vice President and Provost, and to the Vice President and the Commission in the relevant mission area.

3.5.2 Composition of Review Committees for Centers and University Institutes

The expected membership on a Review Committee will be a function of the specific Center or University Institute under review, as described below:

1. The Review Committee for a Departmental Center will be appointed by the Head of the Department in which the Center is administered. The committee will include at least one representative from each department which has a substantial level of involvement in the Center. If all faculty involved with the Center are from the home Department then the Head should appoint at least one faculty member from outside the Department but relevant to the discipline of the Center to serve on the committee. The Head will either chair the Review Committee or appoint a faculty member to do so.
2. The Review Committee for a College Center will be appointed by either the Dean of the College in which the Center is administered or their designee (e.g., Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies in the College could appoint the review panel). The committee will include at least five members, with representation from all departments and colleges that have a substantial level of involvement in the workings of the Center. The Dean of the College in which the Center is administered will appoint the chair of the Review Committee.
3. The Review Committee for a University Center will be appointed by the appropriate Vice President based upon the primary mission area of the Center. The committee will include at least five members, with representation from all colleges that have a substantial level of involvement in the workings of the Center, as well as a liaison from the relevant University Commission based upon the mission area of the University Center. The Administrator of the Center will appoint the chair of the Review Committee.
4. The Review Committee for a Center housed in a University Institute will be appointed by the Director of that University Institute. The committee will include at least three members, with one of the members being from outside the University Institute itself but with suitable knowledge of the disciplinary focus area of the Center being reviewed. The Director of the University Institute will appoint the chair of the Review Committee.
5. The Review Committee for a University Institute will be appointed by the senior administrative official (e.g., Senior Vice President and Provost, appropriate Vice President based upon the primary mission area of the University Institute). The committee will include at least five members, with representation from all colleges that have a substantial level of involvement in the workings of the University Institute, as well as a liaison from the relevant University Commission. At least one member of the panel will be a Director of another University Institute. Further, it is recommended that extensive input to the review process be sought from experts from outside the university who work in one or more of the disciplinary focus areas of the University Institute under review. This input may come from the appointment of one or more external experts to the review panel, and/or it may involve the appointment of the external experts to a subcommittee of the Review



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Committee who will prepare a report to the Review Committee based upon their own review of the University Institute. The Administrator of the University Institute will appoint the chair of the Review Committee.

Typical questions to be addressed within the review will include but not be limited to the following considerations, which are consistent with the criteria applied at the entity's founding:

1. Is current funding of the Center or University Institute sufficient to allow it to be successful in attaining the goals and objectives stated in its approved Charter?
2. Is faculty participation sufficient to continue the Center or University Institute operations?
3. Is the quality of scholarly activity by faculty, professional staff, and students reflected in its output (e.g., publications, patents, presentations, copyrights, etc.)?
4. Do current operations reflect the most recent Charter, goals and objectives of the Center of University Institute?
5. Does the unit unnecessarily duplicate the efforts of other Centers and/or University Institutes?
6. Does the financial audit and overall professional evaluation demonstrate that the Center or University Institute is being managed properly? Did the review process reveal any serious issues that warrant special attention and remediation?
7. Do the financial resources of the Center or University Institute appear sustainable and able to appropriately support the unit over the next five-year period? Are Center participants able to secure external grants and contracts to support the mission areas of the Center or University Institute?
8. Are the facilities required for continued operation of the unit adequate?
9. Are the Center or University Institute's clients being well served? The clients may include students, faculty, university administration, practicing professionals, the general public, funding agencies, etc.

3.6 Termination or Realignment of Centers or University Institutes

3.6.1 Voluntary Termination or Realignment of Centers or University Institutes

It is recognized that, with the passage of time, changes in available university faculty and staff, and the evolution of institutional, collegiate, departmental or individual strengths and priorities, instances will arise in which the rationale that led to the creation of Centers or University Institutes no longer exists. In such instances, it is possible that the most recent performance review of the Center or University Institute would reflect a mismatch of accomplishments compared to stated goals. In any event, it is desirable that procedures be defined for the orderly and elective termination of the Center or University Institute at the request of the Director and Stakeholders.

The process of voluntary termination of a Center or University Institute will be initiated by written notification from the Director and endorsed by the unit's Administrator and associated Stakeholder group, outlining the reasoning behind the request and detailing a plan to transfer to appropriate entities the oversight of resources, both human and material, that have been under Center or University Institute jurisdiction. Prevailing policies regarding re-assignment of FTEs and the custody/ownership of any capital equipment within the Center or University Institute will apply.

The process for review and approval of the termination plan will be the reverse of that followed in the establishment of the Center or University Institute, and will be conducted by those with the requisite administrative authority. The



termination plan will be reviewed by the Senior Vice President and Provost (or designee) in consultation with the Administrator of the Center or University Institute. Once approved, the appropriate University Commission will be notified as to the impending changes, and the plan will be implemented with all deliberate speed by the Center or University Institute Director working in conjunction with the Administrator of the unit.

Other circumstances may arise where the administrative leaders or Stakeholders of an existing Center desire either to change their particular departmental, college, or University Institute affiliation or to alter their administrative category (e.g., from department to college-level Center or vice-versa). In such cases, the request and review process will mirror that described in Section 3.1.1 for the establishment of a new Center or University Institute, including the submission of a Letter of Intent and an accounting of the expected benefits of the proposed altered status of the Center in question. Endorsements of the proposed changes by both administrative authorities involved (those relinquishing existing oversight of a Center and those newly accepting oversight) will be included. It is expected that entities requesting changes in affiliation or administrative category will be in good standing with respect to periodic reviews of performance of the Director and the Center.

3.6.2 Involuntary Termination or Realignment of Centers or University Institutes

Apart from circumstances in which the leadership of an existing Center or University Institute desires to either terminate or redefine an existing collective entity, it is possible that other external or internal conditions may erode the effectiveness of a Center or University Institute or weaken the rationale for its continuation. These conditions may include changes in available university faculty and staff, the evolution of institutional, collegiate, departmental or individual strengths and priorities, shifts in resource allocation external to the university, lack of significant financial expenditures within the unit, or a poor performance review received by the Center or University Institute. As is true with voluntary changes to Center or University Institute status, it is desirable to define procedures for termination or realignment when the Center or University Institute Director and their Administrator and/or Stakeholders Committee are not in accord regarding the necessity for changes.

Involuntary termination or realignment of an existing Center or University Institute may be considered when either:

1. A periodic (scheduled) review of the Center or University Institute results in the recommendation from the review committee that the Center or University Institute not be reauthorized as currently configured for an additional period, and this recommendation is accepted by the Administrator (and appropriate University Commission as necessary); or
2. A mid-cycle (unscheduled) review has been requested by either a) the Administrator responsible for the Center or University Institute, b) the Stakeholder's Committee for the Center or University Institute, or c) the Senior Vice President and Provost, and this mid-cycle review produces, as above, a recommendation of non-reauthorization that is accepted by the Administrator (and appropriate University Commission as necessary).

In these instances where non-reauthorization of an existing Center or University Institute is recommended, the final document prepared by the review committee should include specific suggestions for ameliorating the deficiencies noted in the review. As noted in Section 3.5.1, #6, such steps could include changes to the programmatic focus of the unit, its organizational structure or administrative affiliation. In instances where no options other than termination appear viable, the review committee will so recommend.

As is the case for the initial establishment and periodic reauthorization, final authority for the involuntary termination or realignment of a Center or University Institute will reside with the responsible Administrator. Similar to the process of voluntary termination or realignment, a plan for the reassignment of human and material resources will be



prepared by the Director in consultation with the Administrator, reviewed and approved by the unit's Stakeholders Committee, and implemented by the Director in a timely fashion.

4.0 Definitions

A CENTER is a group of faculty and their associates formally recognized by the university, joined together to pursue research, instruction, and/or outreach goals that require the competence and capabilities of more than one faculty member. Goals that could be accomplished by establishing a Center could include: (1) facilitating research collaborations seeking external research funding; (2) disseminating research results through conferences, meetings, and other activities; (3) strengthening graduate and/or undergraduate education by providing students with specialized learning opportunities; (4) providing services and facilities that enable research by other university entities; and/or (5) providing outreach programs related to the unit's technical areas of expertise.

Centers may be categorized along two dimensions: (1) primary scholarly objective; and (2) administrative home. The primary scholarly objectives can be either instruction, research, or outreach. The administrative home may be in a department, a college, a University Institute (defined below), or housed in a senior administrative office (e.g., Vice President for Outreach, Senior Vice President and Provost, etc.).

Centers may have advisory boards, committees, and review boards as determined by the Stakeholders Committee (defined below).

- A UNIVERSITY CENTER has objectives which require the substantial input of two or more disciplines and involvement across a broad spectrum of the university. As a defining element, University Centers are typically funded by appropriations, grants or contracts, for which administrative and fiscal control is assigned to the Senior Vice President and Provost's or Vice President's office, rather than to a College or Department.
- A COLLEGE CENTER has objectives which require the substantial input of two or more disciplines contained within a single college, or two or more colleges. As a defining element, College Centers are typically funded by appropriations, grants or contracts, for which administrative and fiscal control is assigned to a Dean's office, rather than to a Department.
- A DEPARTMENTAL CENTER has objectives which require the competence and capabilities of more than one faculty member, but primarily within the province of a single department or cooperating departments.
- AN INSTITUTE CENTER receives funding and other support from the University Institute to which it reports. Its administrative activities are rolled under those of the Institute and it shares the same Stakeholders Committee which has purview for all Institute Centers.

A UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE furthers a major strategic objective of the university and receives a substantial annual investment of university funds for the conduct of its mission. Otherwise, a University Institute has many of the same goals as previously defined for a Center. The Administrative Home for a University Institute would be with either the Senior Vice President and Provost or an appropriate Vice President based upon the Primary Scholarly Objective of the University Institute. A University Institute must have a Stakeholders Committee and may have advisory boards, committees, and review boards as determined by the Stakeholders Committee.

The ADMINISTRATOR is the person holding the position of authority in the administrative home of the Center or University Institute (Vice President, Institute Director, Dean, or Department Head). The Administrator has



responsibility for fiscal oversight and accountability at the operational level. The Director reports to the Administrator for all fiscal and administrative matters.

The DIRECTOR is the individual who has the day-to-day authority for the fiscal, administrative, fiduciary, and programmatic/scholarly functions of a Center or University Institute.

A STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE is a group of representatives from academic or administrative units of the university providing substantial fiscal or programmatic support for the Center. Members typically will include department chairs, deans, university administrators, and representatives of other university organizations that provide sustaining support to the Center, including support in the form of faculty time. The Stakeholders Committee shall have oversight of all financial, administrative, and fiduciary affairs of the Center.

An ADVISORY COMMITTEE is a group of representatives from units and organizations that are served by the Center or University Institute, or experts in the technical affairs of the Center or University Institute who provide guidance for its scholarly and programmatic affairs. This Committee typically consists of clients, industrial representatives, faculty and agents of organizations concerned with the technical direction and development of the Center. Advisory Committees shall be formed only after approval of the Administrator and Stakeholders Committee. An Advisory Committee may also be referred to as an "advisory board."

5.0 References

6.0 Approval and Revisions

Approved December 12, 1990, by Commission on Research Approved November 5, 1991, by University Council
Revised and approved October 23, 1996

- Revision 1
 - Section 2.2. Changed title from Associate Provost for Research to Associate Provost for Interdisciplinary Programs.
 - Section 2.5 eliminated "small operating budget" as possible center funding from the Research Division.
 - Section 2.9. Revised process for reauthorization of a center.

Approved August 1, 1999, by Associate Provost for Interdisciplinary Programs, Kenneth L. Reifsnider.

Annual review October 30, 2001 by Vice Provost for Research, Leonard K. Peters. No revisions.

- Revision 2
 - Entire policy reviewed and revised to reflect evolution of research, outreach, and instructional centers at Virginia Tech and to establish guidelines for consistent treatment and accountability.
 - Policy retitled from Interdisciplinary Centers to Centers and University Institutes: Establishment, Governance and Programmatic Oversight to reflect applicability to all types of centers at the university.
 - Expectation that all centers across the mission areas of research, outreach and instruction would be subject to guidelines, such as establishment of charter and periodic review, not just university-level research centers.
 - Differentiation of key University Institutes with requirements for their establishment and review from other types of centers.



Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Approved April 6, 2011 by the Commission on Research
Approved May 2, 2011 by University Council
Approved May 2, 2011 by the President

- **Revision 3**
Clarification to Sections 3.4.2 and 3.5.1 was made with respect to the need to consider the recommendations of prior reviews and subsequent actions taken in response to those reviews when review committees conduct programmatic reviews of centers and University-level institutes as well as when conducting performance reviews of center/institute directors, per recommendation by Internal Audit.

Approved May 14, 2014, by Commission on Research
Approved May 14, 2014, by Robert Walters, Vice President for Research
Approved May 14, 2014, by President Charles W. Steger