



# CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY CHANNEL ISLANDS ACADEMIC SENATE POLICY

## SP 09-01 Committee on Centers and Institutes

**Policy #: SP 09-01**

**Policy:**

*California State University Channel Islands  
Committee on Centers and Institutes*

### ***Definitions and Procedures for the Establishment and Continuance of Centers and Institutes***

The Committee on Centers and Institutes (CCI) is given the charge by the Academic Senate to develop formal procedures for establishing new centers and institutes, reviewing existing centers and institutes, and developing operational definitions for both types of special units at the University. (The formal charge of the CCI is reproduced in Section A below.) The definitions and procedures presented herein are designed to fulfill those responsibilities, thereby providing a framework for facilitating such decisions collectively in a fair and transparent manner.

Beyond establishing procedures and definitions, the role of the CCI in the review process is advisory. The outcome of review processes within the CCI is a recommendation regarding establishment or continuance to be formally presented to the Academic Senate. In accordance with Senate policy (SP 04-025), Senate decisions regarding centers and institutes are subsequently forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs who will perform a review and forward a recommendation to the University President. Final action and ultimately authority for those decisions resides with the University President.

The CCI is also charged with the role of supporting existing centers and institutes. All review processes are designed to establish and maintain a close relationship between centers and institutes and the CCI such that areas of necessary and potential support can be identified through the process and initiated by the CCI.

#### **A) Charges for the Committee on Centers and Institutes** (Section 5.14a of the Bylaws of the Academic Senate of California State University Channel Islands)

The responsibilities of the Committee for Centers and Institutes shall include:

1. Creating the definitions and procedures for the establishment of Centers and Institutes at CSUCI;
2. Accepting and reviewing proposals for the creation of Centers and Institutes;
3. Recommending proposals concerning Centers and Institutes to the Academic Senate for action;



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4. Communicating with the Academic Senate on the progress of existing Centers and Institutes.
5. Supporting all centers and institutes under development;
6. Assessing and recommending structural relations and responsibilities among centers and institutes;
7. Serving the Provost, Academic Senate, and Centers and Institutes, in an advisory capacity; and
8. When functions of the Committee for Centers and Institutes also fall within the areas of concern of other committees, the Committee will work in conjunction with those committees.

### **B) Definitional elements for Centers and Institutes**

*Definition:* Centers and institutes are special organizational units within Academic Affairs established to fulfill some specific purpose related to teaching, research, and/or service, existing beyond the formal curricular mandate of any particular academic program. Centers and institutes will generally involve members of the campus community (faculty, students, or staff) from one or more programs, and may also include members of the community beyond the University.

*Distinction:* There is no universally consistent distinction made between centers and institutes. Therefore, a distinction must be made that works best for our campus to guide naming conventions for special units at CSUCI. Either designation (center or institute) is acceptable for special units that fall within the definition provided above. However, it is generally expected that units emphasizing a research role will be designated as institutes, while units emphasizing an instructional or service role will be designated centers. This general expectation can be circumvented if it generates any unreasonable obstacle to a proposed unit.

*Roles:* Centers and institutes will serve in some way to fulfill the several primary roles of the University: research, teaching, and service. Given the complementary relationship between those roles, centers and institutes will frequently serve more than one of those roles.

A research institute (or center) may be established to facilitate the research of faculty members, students, and/or community members engaging in focused study on a specific topical area. Those topical areas will most often be interdisciplinary in nature, since disciplinary research will most frequently be housed within existing academic units – but they need not necessarily be interdisciplinary.

An instructional center (or institute) may be established when highly focused curricula and training-related matters are addressed to audiences not usually served by or eligible for matriculation in regular academic programs. Such services will be specifically defined to address populations and topics not available through existing university programs.



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A community-service center (or institute) may be established when faculty and staff provide service in a designated field to members of the general public. Such services generally apply the expertise of faculty or other members of the University to issues in the community.

Centers and institutes may serve those roles in a variety of ways; for example, by offering research opportunities to students, providing access to specialized research materials, facilitating contact with experts outside of the campus community, developing interdisciplinary linkages within the University, providing specific university-related services to community partners, etc. Those examples (and any offered throughout this document) are provided for purposes of illustration only, and are not intended to limit in any way the range of purposes that might be adopted by any existing or proposed center or institute.

*Mission-based Centers:* At CSUCI, a special and unique role is assigned to mission-based centers in promoting one of the four campus mission pillars: experiential and service learning, integrative approaches, multicultural perspectives, and international perspectives. Those four centers are the Center for Community Engagement (CCE), the Center for Integrative Studies (CIS), the Center for Multicultural Engagement (CME), and the Center for International Affairs (CIA). In accordance with campus commitments, the CCI recognizes the unique role of Mission-based Centers at CSUCI, and accordingly a special responsibility for supporting those centers.

### **C) Criteria for review:**

The process of review for establishment and continuance of centers and institutes is designed to ensure that those units promise and continue to make positive contributions to CSUCI. Here we offer some very general expectations that underlie the evaluation process to assist those submitting materials for review to the CCI, defining minimal expectations for successful centers and institutes.

*Contributions to University roles and campus mission:* Materials submitted for review should clearly define how centers and institutes propose/continue to serve university roles (i.e. research, service, and instruction). Those roles must be clearly stated in the review materials, as should relationships with all other campus units with which the unit's functions overlap, or with which the unit will regularly interact. Likewise, proposals should specify any ways that the center or institute proposes/continues to assist in fulfilling the campus mission, and specify the nature of cooperation with Mission-based Centers, if applicable.

*Impacts on resources:* Centers and institutes generally draw on university resources, and also draw resources to the university. The balance between drawing on university resources and drawing resources to the university will be an important consideration in review. Generally, the more positive that balance (i.e. the greater the excess of resources drawn to the university relative to resources drawn from the university), the more favorable the contribution of the unit. This is **not** to suggest that a positive resource balance is a requirement for successful review, but that it is one positive component among others. Regardless of balance of resources, if a



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center or institute requires university commitment of resources for establishment or continuance, such commitments should be made explicit in review materials.

*Contributions to campus reputation:* Overall, centers and institutes must develop and maintain a positive reputation in their field of operation, presenting CSUCI in a positive light. Such success might be indicated if the unit helps to attract students or faculty to the campus; if it cultivates resources for campus; if it generates positive media attention; if it assists in job placement of CSUCI students and alumni; or any number of additional sources. At the most general level, successful institutes will make positive contributions to the reputation of CSUCI in our community (local, state, national, and international, as applicable) and/or professional associations. Evidence of those contributions (or expectations of such contributions for proposed centers and institutes) should be included in review materials.

### **D) Center & Institute Review & Reporting Procedures**

*Role of the Committee on Centers and Institutes in review processes:* The role of the CCI in reviewing centers and institutes is advisory. The CCI guides review processes and assesses review materials for the purpose of making recommendations to the Academic Senate, and collecting all necessary documentation to allow the Academic Senate to make appropriate review decisions. The procedures detailed herein are designed to facilitate that decision-making process.

### **Review for the Establishment of Centers and Institutes**

To seek approval for the establishment of a center or institute, a written proposal must be submitted to the CCI. The proposal must include the following components:

- a. *Purpose:* Explain the fundamental purpose(s) of the center or institute at CSUCI. Proposals should indicate whether the institute is designed to be a permanent (i.e. of open-ended duration), or if it is designed to accomplish goals that are finite (and, if so, how long the institute is expected to operate).
- b. *Need:* Explain the current need for the proposed center or institute, addressing needs both internal and external to the University.
- c. *Nature and scope of activities:* Describe in detail how the Institute will seek to accomplish its purpose and goals.
- d. *Personnel and key participants:* Identify and describe the roles of all key personnel, including center or institute administrator(s), faculty members, students, staff, community members, and advisory board members (if appropriate).
- e. *Fiscal resources:* Describe in detail the resources needed to establish the Institute, and the sources from which those resources will be secured. This should include the sources, duration, and a 3-year annual projected budget as well as a clear statement of expectations of any financial contributions from the University. All centers and institutes are expected to be revenue-generating or revenue-neutral, unless specific provisions



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are made for their intramural support. All sources of intramural support must be documented and verified in writing; all external sources of support must be verified or projected. That is, a financial plan must be presented that is plausible and itemized.

- f. *Other resources:* All other necessary University resources must be identified, including space, equipment, and technological requirements. This should include a clear statement of expectations of the University's commitment during the duration of the center or institute's operation, and written verification of those sources of support from the relevant campus units.
- g. *Organizational chart:* An organizational chart which includes all internal components, the relationships between them, and all significant relationships with external campus units. The chart should illustrate the administrative reporting structure and the relationship with academic programs. (If preferred, those relationships can be described in written form, rather than illustrated in a chart.)
- h. *Letters of support:* The proposal should be accompanied by evidence of support on the part of all campus programs or units which may expect to be significantly affected by the unit's activities – e.g., programs or units whose areas of activity overlap with those of the proposed unit, or with which the proposed unit will be expected to work closely in any way. Evidence of support will generally come in the form of a letter of support for the establishment of the center or institute.
- i. *Assessment Plan:* An assessment plan should be submitted which includes indicators of success and achievement of center or institute goals, including specific annual benchmarks for accomplishing those goals throughout the period of authorization (generally five years).
- j. *Curricular offerings (if any):* Include an academic rationale for the need of this center or institute to offer instructionally-related courses or programs. Such programs may include (non-unit) classes, internships, and research- and service-related opportunities. Provide evidence that academic programs affected by curricular offerings have been consulted and approve of the planned curricular offerings.
- k. *Compliance with all internal and external rules and regulations:* Institutes are required to comply with all applicable university policies in carrying out the functions of the center or institute, as well as any relevant external regulations (e.g., those applied by regulatory bodies or granting agencies). This section should identify and address any additional special considerations of that manner.

*Review process:* The review process is initiated by formal submission of a proposal to the CCI. A written proposal must be followed by a presentation to the CCI to address any necessary clarifications or questions. The CCI may request that the proposal be revised and resubmitted to integrate any necessary revisions. The purpose of such review is to ensure that when the proposal is submitted to the Academic Senate, foreseeable questions will be



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addressed and information necessary for making a decision regarding establishment will be readily available in the review materials. Subsequently, the committee will forward the proposal along with a recommendation on the proposal to the Senate Executive Committee in order to be considered by the full Academic Senate.

*Review outcomes:* If the proposal is approved by the Academic Senate, the center or institute shall initially be recommended for authorization for a period of up to five years, at which point it will undergo a continuation review (see below).

### **Review of Existing Centers and Institutes: Annual reporting**

Center and institute directors (or primary administrators) shall submit an annual report on the activities and financial condition of the center or institute to the CCI. The annual report shall include the following components:

- a. *Report on activities and accomplishments:* All activities and accomplishments should be itemized and described in a manner that is accessible to the general public.
- b. *Report on change in purpose or activities:* Any changes in activities, organizational structure, purpose, etc., of the center or institute since the last official reporting.
- c. *Report on fiscal activities and status:* A detailed itemization of fiscal activities should include all sources of expenditures and income. A general description of the fiscal status of the center or institute should also be included. If the center or institute is relying upon University contribution of resources (or requesting such resources), that should be clearly detailed.
- d. *Self-assessment:* The final component should be a general assessment of how well the activities of the center or institute are accomplishing its stated goals and purposes. Assessment should be directly related to the assessment plan delineated in the center or institute's initial proposal (as described in "Review" component "i." above).

*Annual review process:* Annual reports are to be submitted to the CCI by September 15 For years falling within the time frame covered by Senate authorization (normally five years), submission of the annual report will be the only responsibility of centers and institutes to the CCI (although the CCI might request additional materials for clarification if necessary). In exceptional circumstances – for example, if the CCI finds that the center or institute is no longer operating within its purview (e.g., it is no longer effectively serving its mission, is no longer fiscally viable, is in violation of internal or external regulations) – the CCI may recommend initiation of an early continuation review (see below).

### **Review of Existing Centers and Institutes: Continuance and Discontinuance**

Centers and institutes must undergo periodic reviews that are more substantial than the annual reporting process to ensure that they continue to serve the original purpose or



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purposes for which they were established, and continue to make positive contributions to the campus community. Centers and institutes are authorized by the Academic Senate for periods of up to five years; consequently, continuance reviews will routinely occur at five-year intervals. Such periodic continuance reviews establish procedures for ensuring the continuing viability and vitality of centers and institutes, and ensure that centers and institutes which are no longer active are not advertised in formal University materials or otherwise represented as existing centers or institutes at the University.

Procedures associated with the continuation review commence at the beginning of the final academic year of the authorized period of operation. At that time, centers or institutes seeking continuation shall submit a Request for Continuance to the CCI by September 15, in lieu of the annual report. The Request for Continuance will contain the following components:

- a. *Annual Report, and all prior Annual Reports since the previous authorization;*
- b. *Detailed description of the continuing need for the center or institute;*
- c. *Progress made toward goals* (providing evidence of such progress, using criteria and measures provided in the original proposal);
- d. *Support of CSUCI mission* (demonstrating the center or institute's contribution to University roles and campus mission, and describing all cooperative activities with other academic units);
- e. *Financial status* (providing evidence of ongoing financial viability, and projecting sources of financial support throughout the term of continuation requested).

*Continuance review process:* Upon review of the Request for Continuance and all accompanying materials, the CCI shall forward a recommendation to the Academic Senate (via the Senate Executive Committee) that either supports or opposes continuance for a period of up to five years. As with all review of centers and institutes, the role of the CCI is entirely advisory.

*Discontinuance:* Centers and institutes are not assumed to exist in perpetuity; consequently, it is crucial that procedures are in place for the discontinuance of such centers or institutes that are no longer active or otherwise no longer fulfilling the purposes for which they were established. This may occur when a center or institute adopts a purpose that is finite and may be fully accomplished at some point; when a center or institute is dependent on external resources that are no longer available; when a center or institute is dependent on the commitment and/or expertise of one or several individuals who opt to no longer be involved with the unit; etc. In such instances, it is expected that discontinuance will most often be decided upon by center and institute leaders and participants themselves, in which case they should submit a formal Notice of Discontinuance to the Academic Senate via the CCI. (Such a formal Notice of Discontinuance can consist of a simple letter informing of discontinuance, including an explanation of reasons along with evidence of formal decision-making processes



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as appropriate (e.g. the formal decision by a board of directors, if appropriate). In exceptional cases, the CCI may recommend discontinuance to the Academic Senate following a Continuance Review in which minimal evidence of continued vitality is not demonstrated.