Policy on Centers[1]
Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts

Centers should perform a function that would not normally be within the reach of a School, the College, or the University at large. By contributing intangible assets such as national recognition, special designation, or access to knowledge, research and networks otherwise unavailable, a Center can add value to the academic enterprise. In so doing, a Center should also provide a leveraging platform for further funding opportunities for associated faculty and students.

What originates, sustains and terminates a Center varies and, depends on the specific need it aims to fulfill. Centers can be opportunistic, developed in response to a large or small external funding opportunity, such as a Request for Proposals or an endowment. Centers may also be created out of internal need.

Characteristics of a Center

Centers in IAC may be established at the School or College Level. College level is appropriate for centers that draw on faculty and resources from multiple Schools on questions that span multiple disciplines. School level is appropriate for Centers that draw together the substantial, long-term research agendas of multiple faculty members, most of whom are within the school, on issues for which the School has a special claim to visibility.

Faculty are encouraged to organize new initiatives but they are discouraged from calling these initiatives "Centers" if another title such as "group" or "project" can be used instead, since there is a tendency to proliferate Centers which dilutes the impact of the more active ones. Using the title Center should reflect a commitment to substantial scope (beyond a single project), extended time (beyond the existence of a single project), expert staffing (including more than one principle investigator at the faculty level and multiple graduate students), and a reasonable expectation of sustained funding. In most cases this funding would come from external sources in the form of research grants.

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[1] Much of the text of this policy comes directly from "Final Report: Ivan Allen College Centers Committee," November 2004.; Revised December 2014. Current document revised December 2014

The word "Center" is currently attached to a wide variety of enterprises which fall outside these definitions, such as teaching support organizations, lab facilities, and research initiatives of individual faculty members, which should continue to use the designation and to submit annual reports as deemed appropriate by the Dean in consultation with the relevant Directors and School Chairs and the Associate Dean for Research.

Establishing a Center

The single most important criterion for establishing, evaluating and sunsetting Centers is value added or "need". Does the Center add value beyond what is provided by existing organizational and program structures? Does the Center build human and social capital, create learning and networking opportunities, and provide leveraging for research funding and program building? Doesl the Center engage the broader community, industry or other external stakeholders? Is there commitment by an internal or external sponsor to sustain the Center's operations with sufficient resources to permit the Center to operate as intended?

Faculty members wishing to establish a center should prepare a proposal covering the following elements:

1. Name of the Center
2. The Center's mission and scope
3. Leadership (Who will lead, in what roles, for what length of time? How will new leaders be selected?)
4. Affiliation (procedures for naming and removing affiliates and list of initial affiliates – there must be more than one faculty member participating in the Center)
5. Proposed educational activities, if any
6. Proposed research activities with potential sources of external support
7. Resources required and source that has committed to providing them: space, faculty time, administrative support
8. Metrics for evaluating the center, such as collaborations fostered, students supported, students graduated, proposals generated and success rate (including attributed proposals), publication and citation, patents, funding sources developed, dollar amount of funding, , attendance at hosted conferences and symposia, hits to online resources, visiting faculty and requests for consultation, media coverage, social engagement and impact, etc.

When faculty members propose a center to be housed within one school, they must have the approval of (1) the school chair, who may consult with that school's faculty executive committee or full faculty, and (2) the Dean of Ivan Allen College. When faculty members propose a center that stretches across schools of Ivan Allen College or across colleges, they

must have the approval of the IAC Dean, who may consult with the Associate Dean for Research, the school chairs, the EVPR, and others in making a decision.

It is important that PIs bring external proposals for the establishment of Centers to the attention of the relevant Chairs and of the Dean's Office in a timely manner. Center proposals that will require a commitment of internal funding, development support for fund-raising beyond the amount in the initiating proposal, cross-College collaboration, or participation by other institutions beyond Georgia Tech should be submitted for consideration to the IAC Dean Office for review no later than one month before the external submission date.

Reporting on Center Activities

IAC Centers (i.e., those housed administratively within the College and those shared with other colleges) should report their programmatic and financial activity to the Chairs and Deans annually, with reporting lines through the Chair of the School within which the Center Director has his or her primary appointment and through the Associate Dean for Research. The annual report may consist of a copy of reports required by external sponsors, but should be in writing and include the following:

- Organizational structure (chart), and succession plan
- Activities and programs, including workshops, lectures, roundtables, panels, training, and social events
- Annual income, funding sources, and summary of general categories of expenditures (faculty salaries, graduate student stipends, institute overhead, conferences, etc.)
- People involved in Center activities, including estimates of attendance at events, as well as lists of affiliated faculty, students, and staff funded by the Center
- Annual Lists of research publications and other creative products and deliverables, as well as media coverage, website access figures, and other indications of impact as appropriate.
- Self-evaluation of the Center's contributions to the College, the Institute, and the broader community within which Georgia Tech is situated, based on self-assigned metrics for success:
    - Customized metrics can include such items as: collaborations fostered, students supported, students graduated, proposals generated and success rate, publications and citation rates, patents, funding sources developed, dollar amount of funding, , attendance at hosted conferences and symposia, hits to online resources, visiting faculty and requests for consultation, media coverage, social engagement and impact, etc.
- Goals for the coming academic year, including metrics for evaluating success in meeting the goals.
- Special capabilities that might be shared across Centers, such as specialized equipment, expert researchers or staff, or access to databases or successful processes for fostering interdisciplinarity.
- Revised "special facilities" statement suitable to be included in grant proposals of affiliated faculty

Review Procedures

In addition to their annual reports, IAC Centers will also participate in and be reviewed as part of the usual cycles of external reviews of the programs and activities in their host School, such as the periodic reviews by the Board of Regents. College-level Centers will be assigned to a host school for the purposes of periodic review or will establish an alternate 5-year reviewing framework, such as a Board of Advisors or to a specially appointed internal committee.

Sunsetting a Center

Sunsetting is a normal part of the Center life cycle and is often evidence of the maturing of the focus area of the Center in integrating what was a new area of interdisciplinary collaboration into mainstream practices. IAC Center Directors will be asked to sunset their Centers when they lack both financial resources to perform their mission and the support of the relevant IAC School Chair or the Dean. Sunsetting should occur with a grace period of a year, during which the Center will be considered pending or suspended, but will have an opportunity to 'shape up' or present a resuscitation plan..

Annual Meeting

The Associate Dean for Research will convene an annual meeting of Directors of IAC Centers with the Dean to share their activities and managerial and creative insights, and to look for ways to consolidate or mutually leverage their activities.