

Addendum A

Policies and Procedures for Establishing, Operating, and Reviewing Organized Research Units at the University at Albany

Introduction

The University at Albany encourages the formation of organized research units to conduct and facilitate coordinated research programs and service activities, to promote collaborations among and across disciplines, to enhance the University's research strengths, to increase extramural funding, and to foster the application of our research to meet societal needs. These units are, by design, entrepreneurial. Although the university may commit internal resources to help initiate and support these units, external funding will be expected to provide the largest part of the support for a unit's operation and activities.

The University desires that collaborative and innovative organized research units succeed and prosper. The following policies and procedures are designed to ensure and enhance their success and viability. The Office of the Vice President for Research, in cooperation with the Council on Research, is responsible for implementing these guidelines. Comments and suggestions concerning future revisions are welcome and should be addressed to the Vice President for Research.

Nomenclature

The phrase "organized research unit" refers to collective research enterprises that typically contain the word "center," "institute," or "laboratory," and that constitute a unique and limited set of institutional expressions of faculty research interests and expertise.

- ◆ An **institute** is an organized research unit established on a continuing basis primarily for the coordination and promotion of faculty research interests organized around a broad subject area. Normally, the breadth of research projects and programs transcends department, school, college, or even campus boundaries, and application of research to meet societal needs is a part of an institute's mission. Indeed, public service activities and programs related to and arising from research conducted within an institute help advance institutional goals. Indeed, the creation of an institute requires clear and strong evidence of service to long-range university goals.
- ◆ A **center** is (1) analogous to an institute but is more limited in scope, or (2) an organized research unit that serves a specific purpose within an institute, or (3) a unit that provides specialized capabilities to further research or enhance instruction.
- ◆ A **specialized laboratory** is a specific facility headed by a director who is a faculty member with a research staff that may include non-faculty personnel. These facilities are organized around a specific research need, i.e., one that involves or serves more than an individual faculty member's research.

Governance and Reporting Authority

Organized research units are further classified according to the governance structure outlined in the units' operating plans – the level at which units report or at which units are evaluated, i.e., the university office or officer that is directly responsible for evaluating the unit's performance and exercising fiscal oversight.

- ◆ **University-level organized research units** report directly to the Vice President for Research. These units are large-scale, often multi-college, interdisciplinary organizations whose missions are directed toward the strategic strengths and initiatives of the University. University-level organized research units may receive some financial support from the Vice President for Research.
- ◆ **School- or college-level organized research units** report to the dean, or dean's designee. The mission statements of these units often have an interdisciplinary focus, but they are primarily sponsored by a given school or college. School- or college-level organized research units may receive some financial support from the school, college and, occasionally, from the Vice President for Research.
- ◆ **Department-level organized research units** report to and are primarily sponsored and supported by an individual department (they may receive some additional funding from the dean or Vice President for Research). A department-level unit reports on a daily basis directly to the department chair.
- ◆ **Sponsored-Program Based organized research units** are established by the signatory authorization recorded on the initial proposal to a funding agency, and receive their designation from a grant competition or block funding offered by a federal or state governmental agency or private foundation. These units dissolve at the conclusion of the funding period unless they submit a successful renewal proposal or request status as a university-, school-, or department-level organized research unit.

Objectives of organized research units vary but will include advancing the strategic goals of the university, improving research responsiveness and facilitating external relations with other research enterprises and grant-funding agencies. (Please refer to *Appendix A* for illustrations of the various forms of organized research units.)

Resources and Expectations

The defining criterion for newly formed organized research units is that they add value to the University's research environment. All organized research units need to be accountable in these terms. Research programs conducted under the auspices of the organized research unit should also advance the University's strategic goals and provide for collaborative or interdisciplinary ventures.

Ultimately, the commitment of institutional funds is tied to the organized research unit's success in meeting these expectations. Since organized research units should be working toward 100% self-sufficiency, provision of institutional support normally will be term-based and predicated on the unit's performance as determined by periodic reviews and evaluations (see below).

Establishment and Application Procedures

The policies and procedures governing organized research units are designed to ensure the University's reputation for nurturing high-quality research and service. However, because the University has finite funds with which to support organized research units, these units are expected to secure funding to support their endeavors from external sources. All proposals for

Table 1
Examples of Desirable Features of an Organized Research Unit

- **Mission advances the strategic strengths and goals of participating academic units and the University.**
- **Unit features a research program that is a particular strength of the University.**
- **Unit operation provides for a leveraged return on the University's investment.**
- **Unit uses incentive funding effectively.**
- **Existence enhances research productivity and extramural funding.**
- **Unit provides special advantages to affiliated academic units and researchers that would otherwise not occur.**
- **Academic units participate and benefit.**
- **Activities strengthen the educational enterprise and integrate undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral education and training.**
- **Unit sponsors special lectures, seminars, symposia, exhibits, or conferences.**
- **Unit exhibits evidence of national or international reputation as relevant to mission and strategic goals.**
- **Unit undertakes research and educational programs relevant to societal needs.**
- **Discontinuance of the unit would have a detrimental effect on the University community.**

new organized research units should contain a concise but thorough, three-year operating plan for the research unit. *Appendix B* contains a proposal outline, and *Appendix C* charts the approval process. Applications may be submitted throughout the calendar year. The review would occur within the next two regularly scheduled meetings of the Council on Research.

A director, who is appointed by the officer to whom the organized research unit reports, administers the unit in consultation with a faculty/staff advisory committee. This committee will be appointed by the director, in consultation with the University officer with oversight responsibility for the unit (Vice President for Research, dean, or department chair). Organized research units do not confer tenured appointments; tenure is granted solely through an academic department. However, research staff, faculty associates or affiliates may hold non-tenured faculty appointments and have voting rights and serve on graduate student committees or as thesis advisors in a given department if the department so authorizes. Joint or adjunct appointments between research unit professional staff and academic departments are strongly encouraged.

Operational Procedures and Responsibilities

Effort must be expended on a regular basis to manage organized research units. All units should maintain a current operating plan and be prepared for internal or external audits at all times. In addition, as is discussed below, units should complete an annual report and undertake periodic self-evaluations for which they will need to document productivity and accomplishments. All organized research units should also maintain a web site and have appropriate brochures or publications describing their mission, goals and accomplishments.

The Division of Research is an available resource in assisting organized research units in meeting their operational needs.

Periodic Review

Each organized research unit will prepare a brief annual report to the relevant University officer with oversight responsibility documenting its performance relative to its stated mission and strategic goals, listing grants, publications, patents, etc. These reports would be available to the Council on Research. In addition, each organized research unit will periodically conduct an examination of its organization, activities, and research achievements working toward programmatic self-improvement. The period of this review (e.g., five years) would be established at the time of creation or at a full review of the unit. The form of this review will be determined by the unit's director and the University officer with oversight responsibility, in consultation with the Vice President for Research and the subcommittee on Centers and Institutes. It may involve self-study coupled with internal or external¹ review or a compilation of outside reviews by the funding sponsor. The evaluation – taking the form of a concise report – is then presented to the subcommittee on Centers and

Table 2
Examples of Evaluative Criteria

- **Quality of the research program, resulting body of scholarship, and reputation of the unit documented by such indices as publications (e.g., peer-reviewed journals), exhibits, performances, or presentations of results at national professional meetings and other forums. Formal citations of participating faculty and research staff, level of faculty/research staff involvement, and forms of recognition accorded the unit and its membership from the professional community.**
- **Leveraged return on University's investment, success in generating extramural funding as documented by the number of applications submitted, awards received, sources of support, percentage of the unit's personnel receiving extramural support, and degree of financial self-sufficiency demonstrated by the unit over time as it relates to the unit's plan. Proposals for new units should make a strong case that substantial extramural support is present or available from identified and described sources.**
- **Successful fostering of collaborative relationships based on the initiation, completion, dissemination, and application of the results of formal joint research efforts.**
- **Contributions to the education and training of University students and postdoctoral fellows as documented through a review of the involvement of unit personnel in the supervision of undergraduate, graduate and postdoctoral student research activities, theses, dissertations, and graduate course instruction.**

¹ Typically consisting of at least three outside reviewers

Institutes. This committee's evaluation and recommendations will, in turn, be submitted to the Council on Research and the Vice President for Research (see Table 2 for evaluative criteria).

Each organized research unit slated for periodic review should constitute a committee to conduct the evaluation and prepare the report. (See *Appendix D* for a sample outline.) For newly approved units, an initial evaluation will normally be conducted after a three-year interval. This evaluation focuses on the types of evaluative criteria shown in Table 2. The review period may be altered at the discretion of the Vice President for Research in consultation with the Council on Research. Advance notification of the timing change must be provided to the center or institute.

Evaluation

Upon receipt of the organized research unit's formal evaluation, the subcommittee on Centers and Institutes will discuss the report, and any evaluations thereof, and submit a summary recommendation to the Council on Research. The summary recommendation includes evaluative comments along with a set of recommendations regarding the programs and activities of the organized research unit. The subcommittee may recommend that the organized research unit be continued or renewed, combined with another unit, placed on probation, or discontinued. The Council on Research then issues a recommendation to the Vice President for Research who will make a final decision in consultation with the appointing officer (dean or department chair), or in the case of the university-level units, with the President. The Vice President for Research will either accept the recommendation or provide a written response to the Council explaining the rationale for not accepting it.

Instituting a Probationary Period or Suspension

The Vice President for Research may choose to place a unit under a period of probationary review if one or more of the criteria in Table 3 are satisfied. Multiple or severe violations of the criteria may result in immediate suspension, followed by review, whereupon termination may be recommended. Appropriate documentation will be made available to the unit placed under probation or suspension or termination noting the specific areas that need to be addressed to achieve a satisfactory evaluation. The Vice President for Research, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Council on Research, will determine the subsequent review interval and process for any organized research unit placed on probation. If after being placed on probation or suspension, an organized research unit fails to receive a satisfactory evaluation following a subsequent review, the unit will be recommended for discontinuance. In serious cases of performance failure, immediate discontinuance may be warranted before the second review. The Vice President for Research makes this decision in consultation with the Council on Research, and the appointing officer (dean or department chair), or in the case of university-level units, with the President.

Merger, Change in Mission, or Discontinuance

Directors of organized research units may request a merger with another organized research unit whose mission subsumes its own. Similarly, they may also request that their unit be discontinued. Typical reasons for requesting discontinuance include prolonged periods of inactivity, insufficient funding, changes in the research program so that it is no longer consistent with the stated mission and goals, or loss of key research personnel in the unit.

Appeals

Table 3

Criteria for Instituting a Probationary Period, Suspension or Termination

Evaluative Criteria:

- Significant deviation from stated mission, strategic goals, and financial plan.
- Precipitous decline in productivity as measured by the standards relevant to the disciplines involved.
- Failure to contribute to the educational mission as described under appendix D, part V.

Management Criteria:

- Poor management as documented by a lack of evidence of meeting objectives of operating plan, or of successfully adapting to changes in research opportunities and directions.
- Fiduciary or ethical violations.

In the case that a proposal for a new unit is not approved, or that probation, suspension, or termination is recommended, the applicants may appeal the decision, based on the written review of the evaluation provided by the Vice President for Research. Such appeals would consist of written documentation responding to points raised in the written summary. The Council on Research and its subcommittee on Centers and Institutes will consider appeals. Recommendations would then be forwarded to the Vice President for Research for final consideration.

Appeals must be filed within 90 days of receipt of notification of the action. Such appeals will be evaluated in one of the next two regularly scheduled meetings of the Council on Research or its subcommittee on Centers and Institutes, to be followed by a timely response from the Vice President.

Appendix A

Examples of Organized Research Units at the University at Albany

- Institute:** The primary function of the *Institute for Social Services Research and Development* (ISSRD) is to serve as an umbrella organization to coordinate, promote and oversee research, outreach programs, and workforce education and training in the area of social service programs and systems. As a school/college level institute, this unit reports directly to the Dean of the School of Social Welfare.
- Center:** *The Hindelang Criminal Justice Research Center* focuses on Criminal Justice research. Center faculty associates/affiliates are involved in numerous projects, including a multi-year, longitudinal examination of the causes and correlates of serious delinquency and drug use. They also compile and publish the internationally acclaimed *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* and have worked with the United Nations to develop the first comprehensive international archives on criminal justice data and procedures. As a school or college-level center, this unit reports to the Dean of the School of Criminal Justice.
- Laboratory:** *The Ion Beam Laboratory* is an example of a specialized laboratory. Housed in the Department of Physics, the Ion Beam Laboratory features a Dynamitron accelerator, NEC Tandem high-energy implantation, Extrinsic 50-400 keV implanter, and a Danfysik 30-150 keV implanter. Support systems include a scanning electron microscope, x-ray analysis, alpha-step profilometer, optical microscopy, and HV and UHV evaporators. As a university-level laboratory, this facility reports directly to the Vice President for Research.
- Sponsored-Program Based:** *The Center on English Learning & Achievement* (CELA) was established in 1987, when it received a small award from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) to focus on the teaching and learning of literature. Even as the Center's work was improving literature education, it became apparent that a broader approach was needed to address the language and literacy skills that students would need to develop in the 21st century. Accordingly, OERI awarded the Center a new grant that broadened its scope to include all aspects of English and language arts teaching and learning with the goal of helping students achieve the levels of literacy necessary for success. Dedicated to improving teaching, the Center provides information to teachers, schools, and communities so that they can choose approaches that will work with their students. As a sponsored-program based center, located within a specific school, CELA reports to the Dean of the School of Education.

Appendix B

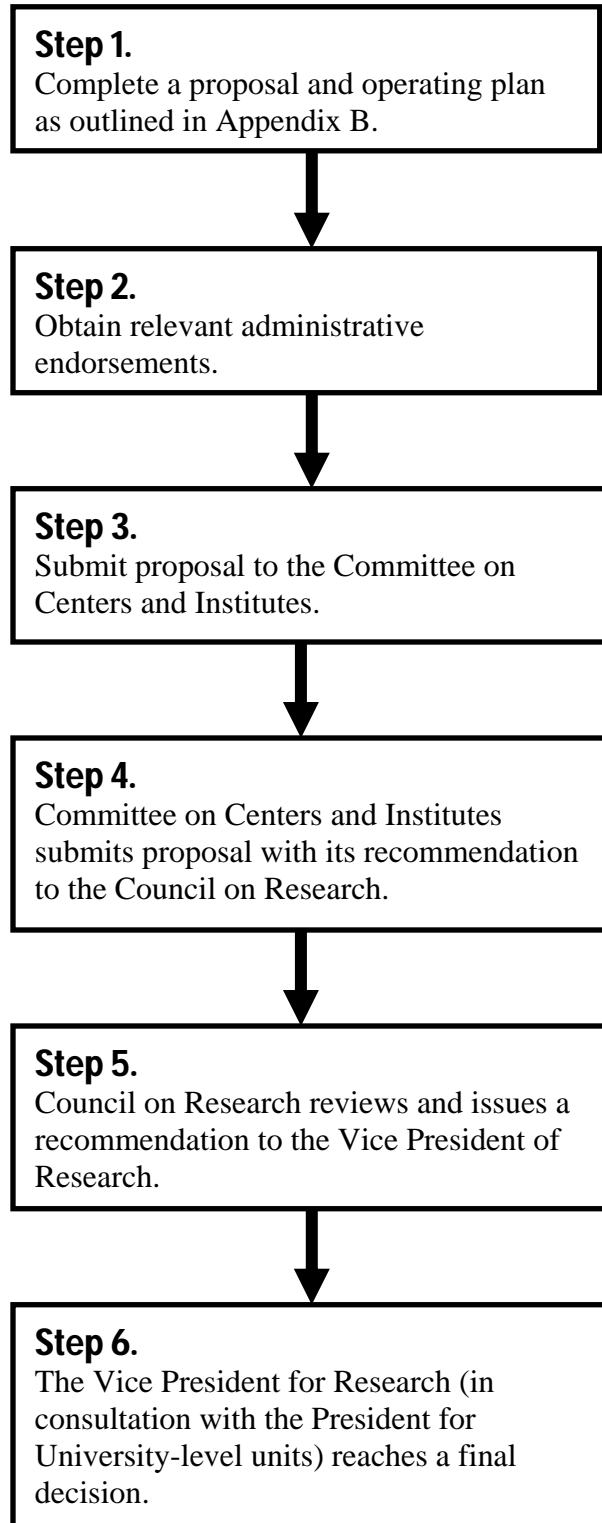
Operating Plan Outline for Organized Research Units Items to be Addressed

Title and Leadership:	Name of proposed organized research unit Name, title, address, phone number, and email address of director or contact person
Abstract:	Submit a statement of the organized research unit's mission and strategic goals and describe how the planned activities relate to the stated objectives. Stress the rationale and need for the organized research unit. Discuss how the establishment of the unit will benefit the faculty associates, affiliates, and research personnel and advance the mission and strategic goals of the University and affiliated academic units. Describe how the objectives of this unit differ from that of related research and academic units noting why this unit is distinctive. Consider the relationship and possible overlap into other similar entities in the University, in the Capital Region, in the State University of New York, and in New York State. Show the impact of the establishment of this unit on existing entities and discuss the anticipated relationship to those other units.
Activities:	Describe the main research, outreach, or training activities in which the unit plans to engage as well as any other projected activities (e.g., sponsorship of seminars, colloquia, informal lunch meetings, newsletters, journals, exhibits, performances, etc.). Indicate whether the unit envisions collaboration with individuals or organizations outside of the University (e.g., industry, other research organizations). Include plans for further development and collaboration with other units (both on and off campus) to further the mission and goals of the unit.
Organization/Staffing:	Organizational chart showing all affiliated personnel (appendices should include current curricula vitae for all faculty associates, affiliates, and research staff) and the nature of their duties and supervisory relationships. Description of governance and reporting structure and members of advisory committee – each director should constitute an advisory committee consisting of at least five members, at least one of who should not be formally associated with the unit.
Past Collaborations:	Describe in what ways proposed members of the unit have been collaborating either formally or informally in the past. Information detailing specific collaboration is important to verify the viability of the proposed unit.
Financial Plan:	Provide an itemized accounting of all start up expenses and a plan for funding these costs. Project operating costs three years out, noting source of funding (i.e., agency, foundation, etc.), amount, and duration. Note what funding is currently available and what, if any, is required from the University and for what time frame. Discuss how the University's investment will be leveraged. Describe arrangements for unit personnel to list the unit on grant applications and on the campus impact statement so that the unit will be properly credited should these proposals be funded. Note any seed or matching funding requests and provide justifications for requests.

- Other Resources:** List other resources required by the proposed unit. These may include space requirements or special facility needs, special collections of books or journals, computer support, laboratory equipment, or special collaborations outside of the University. Please distinguish between one-time start up needs and on-going needs. Describe plan for moving toward self-sufficiency.
- Educational Mission:** Describe how the proposed unit fits with the educational mission of affiliated academic units and the University. Note the nature of student and postdoctoral involvement. Discuss plans for any continuing education courses, exhibits, performances, or colloquia and seminars to be organized. Indicate any plans for unit personnel to teach in affiliated departments.
- Service Mission:** Describe any outreach activities with the profession and community.
- Evaluation and Review:** Indicate the criteria by which the unit will evaluate its effectiveness (e.g., number of publications with the unit listed as the affiliation, number of conferences sponsored, number of patents or copyrights obtained, number of grants submitted and received, number of students trained, seminars held, exhibits or performances, etc.).
- References:** Please note any similar types of endeavors you are aware of that exist at other universities. Letters of endorsement from the relevant department chairs and deans accompany the proposal to the Committee on Centers and Institutes.

Appendix C

Flowchart on Approval Process for Organized Research Units



Appendix D

Evaluation Outline for Organized Research Units

- I. Type of organized research unit
 - A. Statement of mission and strategic goals and how these relate to the University's mission and strategic goals
 - B. Historical summary and background of unit since inception
 - C. Description of outreach/service activities
 - D. Sponsored funding profile by year for the previous five years (or since inception)
 - E. Leveraging of University investment.

- II. Quality Assessments
 - A. Description of current research projects, including a list of unit participants and the level of external funding by project area (cite funding sources, level and duration of support)
 - B. Statement on the relationship of current research projects to unit's mission and goals
 - C. Summary of outcomes for each research project area for the previous five years or since inception, fully citing achievements in at least the following categories:
 1. articles
 2. monographs
 3. books
 4. working papers
 5. conference papers
 6. conferences sponsored
 7. exhibits
 8. performances
 - D. Evaluative statements on the reputation of the unit and its personnel, specifying the indices used for these judgments (e.g., commentary on unit in professional journals, center personnel service on national review panels, election as officer/fellow in professional societies, journal editorship)
 - E. Description of collaborative research activities undertaken with other organized research units or external organizations
 - F. Summary of future research plans and goals as well as funding projections for planned activities (cite anticipated funding sources and level of support requested, probable principal investigators, anticipated submission dates)

- III. Associates, Affiliates, and Research Staff and Administrative Structure
 - A. List of associates, affiliates, and research staff of the unit (include in appendix all current curricula vitae)
 - B. List of other affiliated personnel and the nature of their connection to the unit
 - C. Description of current governance and administrative structure of unit
 - D. Plans for further development of associates, affiliates, and research staff, as well as planned collaboration with other units (both on and off campus) to further the mission and goals of the unit

- IV. Resources and Facilities
 - A. Detailed summary of the resources available to the unit, showing the percentage of those resources attributable to University support and those attributable to external funds received by the unit
 - B. Summary of the facilities available to the unit (including square footage)
 - C. Description of other available support services integral to the activities of the unit (e.g., special collections, other laboratory equipment, computer facilities)
 - D. Resource implications (if any) for proposed new areas of research activity
 - E. Evaluative commentary on resources and facilities

- V. Relation to Educational Mission
 - A. Number of adjunct appointments to academic departments held by unit professional research staff
 - B. Involvement in undergraduate or graduate training in the following categories:
 - 1. Number of undergraduate students working/supported
 - 2. Number of graduate students supported on unit research grants
 - 3. Number of post-doctorates and their funding sources
 - 4. Number of dissertations on center-related projects directed by unit professional research staff
 - 5. Courses taught by unit professional research staff
 - C. Description of other collaborative activities undertaken with academic departments

Appendix E

Statement for Policy Amendment Provisional Establishment of Centers and Institutes

The Office of the Vice President for Research has identified the need to quickly establish organized research units (ORUs) where external funding opportunities may be jeopardized by the time constraints surrounding the established procedures as outlined in the Policies & Procedures for Establishing, Operating, and Reviewing Organized Research Units (revised 4/26/02).

The established process will remain in effect for all cases where external funding is not in jeopardy. In special circumstances, the Vice President for Research or President may grant extensions of provisional status for an additional one-year period.

The provisional process is as follows:

1. Establish major initiative or project.
2. Obtain the Vice President for Research or President's approval for provisional recognition as a UAAlbany organized research unit.
 - a. Director-to-be meets with the Vice President for Research or President at the outset to define expectations and goals for the first year of the ORU's performance.
 - b. The Vice President for Research or the President confers with the Council on Research or its Chair regarding the request for provisional status, prior to the President's or Vice President for Research's decision.
 - c. The Vice President for Research or President notifies the Council on Research and the director-to-be that a request for provisional recognition has been granted or denied provisional status.
3. Apply for formal recognition as an ORU through the Council on Research.



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