

Guidelines for Academic Centers and Institutes

Rationale:

As part of the mission of William Paterson University, and in support of Strategic Plan 2012-2022, William Paterson University may establish specific academic centers or institutes to support and enrich research, creative activity, service, instruction, or a combination of these activities. Centers and institutes function to provide for a specialized focus for university faculty and staff and should provide a service to people outside of the University. Centers and institutes are functions of William Paterson University, and should support the mission, vision and strategic plan of the university. Centers and institutes address broader issues and serve larger audiences than programs that are department or discipline-specific.

Definitions:

Academic Center: Academic Centers function as a focused academic entity that exists within an academic department, college or the university. Academic centers focus on a research, service, creative activity or instructional activity (or combination thereof) directly in line with the mission of the Center. Centers do not have responsibility for, or authority over, academic curricula.

Academic Institute: An Academic Institute functions at the university level and exists to carry out the mission of the university. Institutes, as contrasted with Centers, should by nature be multi-disciplinary and should have multiple functions (research/creative activity, service, instruction) rather than focused on one function. Institutes do not have responsibility for, or authority over, academic curricula.

Process:

Request to create a new Academic Center or Institute

1. Submit a written proposal for the establishment of a new center or institute to the Provost/Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. The proposal must address:
 - a. Mission of the center or institute
 - b. Name of the center or institute
 - c. Rationale (why is this center/institute needed? Why is it not possible to address the mission inside existing programs? How will this support the mission and strategic plan of the university?)
 - d. Proposed organizational structure (departmental, college, division, cross/inter-disciplinary; leadership/membership; external connections, etc.)
 - i. The name of the director or interim director of the center.
 - ii. The proposed responsibilities of the director and any proposal for reassigned time or other compensation to serve as director.
 - iii. The function(s) and composition of the advisory committee.

1. Any advisory body that includes individuals external to the university must adhere to the guidelines established by Institutional Advancement for the creation of advisory bodies
 - iv. The reporting line—the dean, group of deans, or vice president to whom the center will report.
 - e. Proposed budget (projected costs and revenues)
 - i. The expected budget for the first year of operation
 - ii. Funding sources and one-time and recurring costs.
 - iii. Existing or new equipment, space, and facilities needed to establish the center.
 - iv. Existing or new personnel needed to operate the center (including any requests for faculty reassigned time)
 - v. The sustainability of the center—possibilities for external funding, and details of related funding proposal submissions.
 - vi. Specific criteria and benchmarks against which the center will be measured
 - vii. The written proposal must be signed by the individual (faculty/staff member, department chair, academic dean, associate provost) proposing the center and must also be signed by that person’s immediate supervisor
2. The proposal will be reviewed by:
 - a. Office of the Provost
 - b. Deans Council
 - c. Faculty Senate Executive Committee
 - d. Cabinet/President
3. Following this review, the Office of the Provost will contact the individual who submitted the proposal:
 - a. If needed, the individual will be asked to make revisions to the proposal
 - b. If review is positive the individual will be notified of the decision of the university to establish a new center or institute
 - c. Announcement of the new center or institute will be made to the campus from the Office of the Provost.
 - d. The new center or institute will work with the Marketing and Public Relations office of William Paterson University to publicize the new center or institute.

Process for operation and assessment of the center or institute

All centers or institutes are required to provide an annual report of each year’s activities, and undertake a full review once every five years. The annual report shall include:

- List of scholarship/creative activity, service and/or instructional activities undertaken through the center or institute
- Discussion of role and performance of director
- Revenue and expense analysis
- Proposed plan for the upcoming year

The five-year review shall include:

- Summary of scholarship/creative activity, service and/or instructional activities undertaken through the center or institute
- Five-year trend data of revenues and expenses
- SWOT analysis
- Proposal for any needed revisions to the original plans for the center or institute

The five-year review will also require that an outside evaluator review the operations of the center and submit a report.

Changing or discontinuing a center or institute

Once a center is in operation, external or internal conditions may change, the vision and mission of a center may need revision, or other issues may arise that call for significant changes to a center or institute, or even the discontinuation of a center or institute.

Change: Proposals for a revision to the mission, vision or overall function of a center may be started at the level of the Center/Institute, the Dean (or other supervisory official), the Office of the Provost or the President/Cabinet. Proposals should be reviewed by the Dean or other supervisory official and then submitted to the Office of the Provost. These proposals will be reviewed by the Office of the Provost and the President/Cabinet (as needed). The Office of the Provost will make the final recommendation to the President/Cabinet concerning the proposed changes. Please note: If, in the review process, it is determined that the proposed changes are so significant as to create a new center or institute, the new center or institute will need to undergo a full review as detailed in the request for a new center or institute, and may also need to be reviewed under the process, detailed below, for the discontinuation of a center or institute.

Discontinuation: When external or internal conditions (faculty support, budgetary constraints, completion of mission) occur that call into question the future of an existing center or institute, a full review shall take place to determine the future of the center. This review will follow the same guidelines as the five-year review (and, in cases where the five-year review has been recently completed, the five-year review report will be used). Once the review is complete, the Office of the Provost will meet with the center or institute leadership. Following this meeting, the Office of the Provost will submit a recommendation to the President concerning the discontinuation of the center or institute.