

## GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING COLLEGE/SCHOOL RESEARCH CENTERS

### I. INTRODUCTION

At George Mason University ('Mason'), the definition and creation of "centers" and "research institutes" is governed by the **Faculty Handbook** (Sections 1.3.10 and 1.3.11 respectively).

In AY 2017-2018, a review of the guidelines and procedures to establish, manage and renew research institutes and centers at Mason was conducted. As a result, the process for organizing, chartering and re-chartering research institutes and centers has changed.

As of July 2018, Mason recognizes two types of research centers: 1) university centers are chartered by the Provost; and 2) college/school centers are chartered by the relevant Deans.

This document is provided to help guide the development of college/school-level processes and procedures regarding the designation and re-designation of college/school centers. Each college and school publishes and maintains processes and procedures to support the designation of their college/school center(s) consistent with the guidance herein.

### II. ABOUT COLLEGE/SCHOOL CENTERS

College/school research centers ('centers' hereafter) ***promote excellence in research, scholarship and creative work*** by:

- facilitating collaboration among academics, and their government, for-profit, not-for-profit, and community partners;
- providing faculty, staff, and student researchers, scholars and artists with the infrastructure they need to excel and to effect wide-reaching impact; and,
- creating opportunities for Mason to shape public policy and to contribute to social and economic wellbeing.

Centers typically support multiple faculty and students in disciplinary or multidisciplinary endeavors, and may be designated by one or more departments/divisions, or one or more colleges or schools. In either case, proposing faculty must seek approval from the relevant Dean(s) for the charter or re-charter of a college/school center.

It is generally understood that centers are funded primarily from external resources. It is recognized, however, that in exceptional circumstances a center may be funded entirely from internal sources when it is strategically important to do so.

In most cases, research, scholarship and creative work that can be accomplished by individual faculty members and their students are not considered centers. These activities are more aptly designated "programs", "laboratories" or "initiatives" and are a part of the usual scope of authority, budget, oversight, and review of academic departments or divisions. Directors

should clarify in their proposal how the 'center' designation is needed and different from work that could be carried out by one or two faculty members, or by research groups.

### III. CHARTERING OR RE-CHARTERING COLLEGE/SCHOOL CENTERS

Centers are typically chartered or re-chartered for no more than three years at a time. The Deans are responsible for supporting the review and designation of college/school centers.

The Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) charged the college's *Resources and Long Term Planning Committee* to conduct center chartering/rechartering reviews with the CHSS Associate Dean for Research. The committee forwards their recommendations to the Dean, who makes the final decision on the charter/recharter request.

A center proposal, whether it be for charter or recharter, should be submitted to the relevant dean(s), or her/his designee(s), guided by faculty participation. Proposals typically are no longer than 10 pages of single-spaced text. For CHSS centers housed in academic departments, a letter of support from the Department Chair(s) is required. If there are other leaders and collaborators (such as another department chair), additional letters can be provided. These letters do not count as part of the 10-page limit.

Within the 10-page limit, center proposals should include the following information:

- **Introduction.** Describe the center's background, mission statement and vision. If applicable, consider the mission and vision within the context of centers at other leading national research universities.
- **Goals.** Outline the center's goals for research, scholarship, creative works, and related translational activities. For new centers, provide proposed goals. For centers seeking rechartering, provide current goals. If applicable, note any changes in goals since the previous charter approval.
- **Strategic Plan.** Describe the Center's fit with Mason's and relevant college(s)/school(s) strategic plans and academic strengths.
- **Governance Structure, Leadership, and Staffing.** Include responsibilities of all center leadership roles (e.g., executive director, director, deputy director), and describe both the leadership appointment and review/oversight processes that are/will be in place. Provide a list of participating faculty and other collaborators, distinguishing between "core" faculty (e.g. those responsible for carrying out core center activities, those whose grants are managed by the center), and "other affiliated faculty" (those who have mutual areas of interest but are more loosely connected with the center). By submitting these names in the proposal, the Center director is certifying that all core and affiliated personnel agree to be listed.
- **Comparable Mason Centers.** If another center exists at Mason that does similar or related work, discuss briefly how your center is different and unique.

- **Facilities, Equipment and Space.** Describe current facilities, equipment and space. Requests for additional facilities, equipment and space may be briefly noted but will be handled separately from the chartering review.
- **Center Website.** Centers must agree to maintain a frequently updated, current, and comprehensive website that is identified with George Mason University and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Current centers must provide the URL for the Center's website. New centers must submit the URL once the website is developed.
- **Funding.** Use the budget template to provide information about internal and external funding, center expenditures, and other information (e.g. personnel, future budget expectations, etc.) in order to provide a comprehensive funding overview of the Center.
- **If seeking rechartering,** provide a summary of how well the mission and goals were met during the previously chartered period. Be sure to include a listing of all external funding brought in since the last rechartering review. Also, discuss how the center met the vision and goals of the center through the production of research, scholarship and creative works

#### ATTACHMENTS

1. For CHSS proposals housed in academic departments, provide a letter of support from the department chair (required). A strong departmental letter of support describes the intellectual benefits and purposes of the center, how students, faculty and staff are involved in the center, and other areas of mutual benefit and support.
2. If a department chair is also a center director, the letter of support should come from a departmental faculty member who is not included as one of the center-affiliated faculty, but who can speak to the importance of the center to the department.
3. Provide the most recent annual report. If an annual report is not available, attach an appendix (not to exceed five pages) that describes a summary of activities, scholarly works and accomplishments since the last rechartering review.
4. Those seeking a charter for the first time may attach other information, not to exceed five pages, that supports the chartering request.

#### IV. ANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Each center director is expected to submit an annual report to the relevant Dean(s), or her/his designee(s), by the end of each fiscal year (June 30), providing details of (a) scholarly activities (e.g., research, educational, training and translational activities) conducted by center collaborators during the previous fiscal year, and (b) financial statements listing funding and expenditures of the center.

Annual reports would typically include information such as:

#### Research, Scholarship, and Creative Works

- Publications, including books, and journal articles, conference and symposia/colloquia presentations that were peer-reviewed
- Artifacts, compositions, designs, installations, exhibits, performances, presentations, and productions with date and location of event
- Awards, prizes, recognitions or critical reviews received
- Proposals submitted for external funding
- Externally funded awards
- External research, scholarship or creative partnerships
  - Ongoing partners
  - New partners
- Other completed research, scholarship or creative work
- Works in progress
- Honors and awards, professional recognitions

#### Educational Activities

- Undergraduate and graduate students and post-doctoral fellows mentored or financially supported
- Educational or training activities for student affiliates or post-doctoral fellows
- On-campus educational activities sponsored (e.g., lecture series, conferences)
- Off-campus educational activities sponsored
- Community-based educational activities sponsored

#### Training and Dissemination Activities

- Workshops, in service presentations, campus- or community-based presentations or trainings
- Media presentations, interviews and press releases
- Web-based postings or dissemination of materials or programs produced by the center or institute

#### Translational Activities

- Patent disclosures, applications and awards
- Copyrights
- Partnerships with industry, government or other institutions to promote translation of scholarly work

Each annual report typically also includes a spreadsheet that summarizes both revenues and major categories of expenditures of the center for the preceding fiscal year. Categories of income might include: funds from external sources, funds from internal sources, and program income. Categories of expenditures might include: faculty affiliate and staff salaries, student salary and tuition support, space rental, equipment costs, travel, food and catering, supplies, photocopy and printing costs, events, website development and maintenance, and other costs.

## V. SUNSETTING CENTERS

When a center is sunset, the charter expires and the dean(s), or her/his designee(s), is responsible for the dissolution process.