

## **Policies and Procedures for Academic Centers and Institutes at Boston College**

Academic Centers and Institutes at Boston College afford flexibility and vitality that complement existing Departmental and School units. Academic Centers and Institutes offer the University flexible organizational structures that can embody an entrepreneurial spirit and are engines of innovation, benefiting undergraduate and graduate education and research on campus, and making contributions to scholarship and service that extend to the wider society.

To assure that the University provides effective support in the founding and operation of Academic Centers and Institutes, Boston College has adopted the following policies for:

- Establishing a Center or Institute
- Management
- Directorship
- Faculty and Other Appointments
- Advisory Boards

### **Definition of Academic Centers and Institutes at Boston College**

Academic Centers and Institutes share the same purposes: to foster collaboration within a field or across existing organizational boundaries, around a problem or service that requires and benefits from multiple disciplinary perspectives. A Center or Institute at Boston College may be hosted entirely within a single School or extend across more than one School. This distinction is especially important in determining the flow of reporting, as detailed below under "Management." At Boston College, Academic Centers and Institutes are defined as follows:

*Center: an entity that is devoted to focused and sustained work in an identifiable area of interest not only to faculty, professional staff, a School, or a Department, but also to Boston College broadly.*

*Institute: an entity that houses two or more Academic Centers that share focus and mission.*

For both Academic Centers and Institutes, there is usually--but not always--reliance on outside funding. In some instances, there is complete reliance on outside sources of support such that the entity will continue to exist only so long as funding persists.

It is expected that Academic Centers and Institutes dedicated to research will also play an educative role in the lives of undergraduate and/or graduate and professional students; that Academic Centers and Institutes dedicated to teaching will, in time, conduct research to help undergird their activities; and that Academic Centers or Institutes dedicated to providing services will do so to the benefit of student learning and with the benefit of research on service implementation and delivery.

## **Establishing a Center or Institute**

To establish a Center or Institute, a written application and accompanying business plan must be submitted to the Vice Provost for Research; proposed Academic Centers and Institutes that are School-based must submit, to the Vice Provost for Research, an application and business plan already reviewed and approved by the Dean. The application and business plan should address all of the points outlined below.

1. **Rationale:** What role in the University's Strategic Plan will be played by the proposed Center or Institute? How will the goals and activities of the proposed Center or Institute serve the University's mission? How will the new entity advance scholarship or practice in its focused field of endeavor? Will it focus primarily on research, teaching, or service, and what steps will it take over time to extend its activities from its primary focus to the other areas? What is the need being addressed by the proposed Center or Institute? What will be measurable outcomes that can be used to determine success or failure?
2. **Benefits:** What new opportunities or benefits will the new entity provide for faculty, students, or staff within or across Schools or Departments? Will it bring benefits to the non-University community, and how will the work of the new Center or Institute be communicated to this wider community?
3. **Financial Resources:** The goal of a Center or Institute is to support fully its ongoing direct and indirect costs from outside sources. Where funding is not forthcoming, or where there are lapses in external support, the Center or Institute is expected to make adjustments in staffing and other operational expenses. Only in rare circumstances will the University consider providing bridge funding, most evidently where future funding is assured but not yet in hand. The business plan for a Center or Institute should therefore address these questions: How far into the future can the entity reasonably project income? What is the level of subsidy (both direct and indirect) that the entity may need at the time of start-up and for how long? What are the equipment and space needs of the proposed Center or Institute? Are there specialized needs that must also be taken into account, e.g., specialized library or computing resources?
4. **Operations:** How will the unit be organized? What will be its internal reporting relationships? How will the unit be staffed? How will the unit conduct fundraising? How will the unit demonstrate its value to the University and to communities beyond?

We note that existing Academic Centers and Institutes are reviewed annually as part of the budget process and are reviewed in depth every three years through a report that follows closely the application exercise for establishing a new Center or Institute. The three-year reports help to ensure continued alignment with University mission and proper and appropriate use of University resources. School-based reports are first reviewed by the Dean who then forwards the report along with the Dean's own assessment to the Vice Provost for Research and to the Provost.

## **Role of the Center for Centers in Establishing an Academic Center or Institute**

The Boston College Center for Centers will play a key role in advising the Center or Institute on business plans, budgets, and regular reporting on operations. The data provided to the Center for

Centers will be made available to the Office of the Provost, the Controller, and the School that may be hosting the Center or Institute. Specialized services--statistical consultation, meeting arrangements, and the like--will also be coordinated by the Center for Centers. Finally, when a Center or Institute is about to undergo internal audit, the Center for Centers will be instrumental in helping to put together systematic, longitudinal data of interest to auditors and administrators alike.

## **Management**

As noted above, Academic Centers or Institutes that are based entirely within a single School will have a different path of reporting from those that are University-wide entities.

1. For University-wide Academic Centers or Institutes, the required reports (budgetary and in-depth) are submitted directly and jointly to the Office of the Provost.
2. For School-based Academic Centers and Institutes, the reports are submitted to the Dean who then forwards the reports to the Office of the Provost, along with the Dean's own assessment.
3. Directors of University-wide Institutes that include School-based Centers should include the Centers' reports in their annual Institute report.
4. For School-based Academic Centers and Institutes, the Dean is responsible for ensuring that the Center or Institute contributes to the academic vitality of the University and makes a useful contribution to society. The Dean must also ensure that the Center or Institute personnel and resources are appropriate to the School's and University's missions, and are properly utilized.

In carrying out their reporting responsibilities, all Academic Centers and Institutes must submit an annual report on progress to date through the annual budget process. In addition, every third year, each Center and Institute should provide a more detailed report that tracks its original application. The due date for these three-year reports will be set by the Dean or by the Provost, depending on the nature of the Center or Institute. In these three-year reviews, the Center or Institute must receive written authorization to continue to operate under Boston College auspices. Authorization will be granted by the Provost for University-wide Academic Centers and Institutes and by the appropriate Dean for School-based Academic Centers and Institutes. The criteria for review will be adapted by the Dean or the Provost to reflect the focus of the Center or Institute. However, all Academic Centers and Institutes should be prepared to review in detail and in writing all of the following:

- the unit's demonstrated ability to enhance the academic and scholarly mission of the University;
- the unit's demonstrated contribution to undergraduate and graduate education and research;
- the unit's demonstrated level of quality in educational programming, research, and service within and outside the University;
- the level of faculty and student activity and participation;
- the demonstrated effectiveness of the unit's management;
- the unit's development (or creation) of intellectual property and a summary of IP assets and ongoing collaborations with the Office of Technology Transfer and Licensing;

- the unit's demonstrated ability to raise outside funds and sustain its chosen course of programming; and
- the effectiveness of the advisory board or, where there is no advisory board, the effectiveness of the Director's ability to seek out and benefit from outside and/or internal advice and guidance.
- whether the Center or Institute achieved its goals and objectives stated at inception

## **Directorship**

The Director of a Center or Institute, whether School-based or University-wide, will usually be a full-time, tenured member of the Boston College faculty. Any exception must be specifically approved by the Provost. The Director will be appointed for a specific term not to exceed five (5) years, subject to renewal by the Provost in consultation with the Dean, the Vice Provost for Research, and other relevant Vice Provosts. The appointment of a Center or Institute Director must include a written statement of any changes in the faculty member's relationship with the University (e.g., compensation, workload, sabbaticals, etc.) along with a written statement of any support the University will provide to the Center or Institute, including space, computers, administrative support, etc.

The Director will provide leadership and day-to-day oversight of the Center or Institute, including:

- developing strategic plans and goals in consonance with the academic and scholarly mission of the University;
- ensuring that the Center or Institute conducts research, teaching, or related activities consistent with its mission, goals, and objectives;
- establishing an organizational structure for the effective functioning of the Center or Institute, consistent with the University's personnel policies and procedures;
- providing information and service both inside and outside the University;
- securing resources to support the Center or Institute, overseeing all fiscal matters, and submitting financial reports, as required;
- ensuring that grant and donor terms and conditions are met or exceeded; and
- reporting Intellectual Property (copyrights, trademarks, and/or patents) to the Office of Technology Transfer and Licensing.

The Director of a Center or Institute may be re-appointed for successive terms. Candidates for Directorships, including candidates under consideration for reappointment as Director, should show potential or accomplishment in the following areas:

- demonstrated ability to formulate and implement a strategic vision appropriate to the Center or Institute and to the University, and in consonance with outside community needs;
- demonstrated contribution to the life of the University and its visibility and stature within and outside the academic community;
- demonstrated contribution to scholarship and/or practice in the focused area(s) of the Center or Institute's programming;
- demonstrated ability to raise resources and maintain a functioning entity over the course

- of several years; and
- demonstrated ability to use outside guidance and counsel to enhance the work and prominence of the Center or Institute.

### **Faculty and Other Appointments**

The Director of a Center or Institute may recommend to the Dean or Provost the appointment of faculty, visiting scholars, or other outside professionals to the Center or Institute. Academic Centers and Institutes cannot grant tenure to affiliated faculty. In exceptional cases, and with the written approval of the Provost, a Center or Institute may participate in a search for a faculty position in cooperation with one or more Departments or Schools. Faculty members or affiliates must be appointed to the Center or Institute for a specified period of time. Their appointments should be accompanied by a position description, statement of compensation, and a detailed description of any change in the terms of their service as faculty at Boston College or elsewhere (or other professional position at a place of research or practice). The work and contributions of such faculty will be reported annually in writing by the Director to the Dean or the Provost. Department chairs and University administration will consider faculty contributions to Academic Centers or Institutes when making decisions on compensation, promotions, and other forms of recognition for excellence.

### **Advisory Boards**

The University encourages the establishment of advisory boards to guide and counsel the Director and other senior staff of Boston College Academic Centers and Institutes. The role of such boards would include:

- advising the Director on the Center or Institute's mission and alternative ways to achieve it;
- reviewing annually the Center and Institute's progress on goals;
- providing long-range guidance on major directions and strategies; and
- contributing to and promoting the financial viability of the Center or Institute.

The advisory board may include qualified representatives from academic specialties, from professional organizations, corporations, donors, or other groups that may be relevant to the Center or Institute's mission. The Director of a Center or Institute will consult with the Provost or Dean as appropriate and University Advancement before discussing board membership with potential advisory board members.

If an advisory board is established, it must meet at least annually and preferably should meet at least three (3) times a year. The Dean and Provost or their designee will serve as ex officio members of all such groups.