

## **Culverhouse Research Center Policies**

**Purpose:** This policy describes operating policies for research centers in the college.

**Purpose and Nature of Revisions:** The university and college do not have policies for research center operations. These policies will help set expectations for research centers and lead to consistent operations across centers.

### **Estimated Impact on Faculty**

*Number of Faculty Impacted:* The policy directly impacts the three faculty members that serve as directors of Culverhouse centers. The policy indirectly impacts all faculty by making it more clear how faculty can be involved with centers.

*Benefits to Faculty:* The policy benefits faculty by making it more clear how faculty can be involved with centers.

*Benefits to College:* The policy will provide more consistent operations and accountability of research centers.

**Effective date:** Immediately upon passage

### **Version History:**

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| 11/26/16 | Policy revised by Senior Associate Dean Jonathon Halbesleben, presented to department heads for review  |
| 1/26/17  | Policy revised by Senior Associate Dean Jonathon Halbesleben based on initial feedback from department heads regarding implementation. Submitted to FEB for approval. |
| 2/2/17   | Approved by unanimous vote of FEB.  |

## **Culverhouse Research Center Policies**

Research centers are a key element to advancing the University of Alabama and Culverhouse College of Commerce missions. This document defines the function of centers within the Culverhouse College of Commerce, outlines the roles of center staff and College faculty, and clarifies the expectations for center administration, resources, and evaluation.

### **I. Definition**

A center focuses and concentrates efforts, usually multidisciplinary in nature, toward meeting a specialized need or dealing with a current issue.

Functionally, a center is a group of faculty and staff joined together to pursue research, instruction, and/or outreach goals that require the competence and capabilities of more than one faculty member. Goals to be accomplished by establishing a center could include: (1) facilitating research collaborations involving external research funding; (2) disseminating research results through conferences, meetings, and other activities; (3) strengthening graduate and/or undergraduate education by providing students with specialized learning opportunities; (4) providing services and facilities that enable research by other university entities; and (5) providing outreach programs related to the unit's technical areas of expertise.

The University of Alabama Board of Trustees recognizes two types of centers: Instructional/Research Centers and Service Centers. These policies apply to instructional/research centers that have been formally recognized by the University of Alabama Board of Trustees (from this point referred to as "centers"). The current approved instructional or research centers in the Culverhouse College of Commerce are the Aging Infrastructure Systems Center of Excellence and Human Resources Institute. These policies also apply to the Statistics Consulting and Research Laboratory.

Board of Trustees Rule 503 specifies three criteria for centers:

1. A clearly defined purpose related to the role and scope of the instructional, research and/or service programs on campus
2. An annual budget showing the source of funds along with an indication that there is sufficient human and physical resources to achieve the center's purpose
3. Identification of a director, internal reporting relationships, and a structure that enables the center to apply for, and receive, external funding such as grants and contracts.

### **II. Funding and Resources**

A basic expectation of all centers is that they generate external funding necessary to sustain their operations.

Center directors are responsible for the day-to-day financial transactions of their center. Center directors, working closely with Culverhouse grant accounting personnel, are primarily responsible for establishing business practices and internal controls within their organization to ensure compliance with university policies and procedures and ensure fiscal accountability and the proper stewardship of university resources. All financial transactions associated with centers shall be processed in accordance with established university policies and procedures.

Center directors will provide an annual budget for the center for review by the Director of Financial Affairs. Center directors will meet with the Senior Associate Dean regularly to review the financial status of the center.

It is expected that centers will generate revenue from projects funded by grant agencies, foundations, government agencies, or corporate partners. Those revenues will typically be managed by the center director, following University of Alabama policies and procedures, with support from Culverhouse grant accounting personnel and UA Contracts and Grants Accounting. In instances where external funding generates indirect cost recovery and the principal investigator (PI) indicates that the application was supported by the center, the center will receive 25% of the indirect funds received by the college for that project. In instances where the center director is the PI on an application, it is expected that the 25% of the indirect funds received by the college that would otherwise be set aside for the PI's use will be used to advance the mission of the center.

Any dues collected by members of advisory boards must be used in the manner specified by the bylaws. Sponsorships should be used for the specific purpose the sponsorship agreement specifies. Sponsorships should not be provided in exchange for corporate projects. Centers may occasionally receive gift funds from corporate or individual benefactors. If specific deliverables were provided, those funds should not be treated as gift funds and should instead be deposited in the appropriate university accounts to cover the expenses required to prepare those deliverables.

Center expenditures must advance the mission of the center and must be processed in accordance with established university policies and procedures. Center revenues should not be used to fund personnel or activities that would otherwise be expected to be funded by academic departments (e.g., instructional faculty delivering coursework, graduate teaching assistants for faculty, etc.).

### **III. Staffing**

Board of Trustees Rule 503 requires that centers have adequate human resources to achieve the center's purpose. Below are the typical roles within Culverhouse research centers.

#### **III.A Center Director**

Each center shall have a director who holds a faculty appointment in the Culverhouse College of Commerce. The Director has authority for fiscal, administrative, and programmatic/scholarly functions of the center. The Director shall have the responsibility to recruit, hire, evaluate, and dismiss center staff consistent with university policy and procedures. Recruitment and dismissal of staff requires approval by the Senior Associate Dean, who will review the need for the staff (in cases of recruitment) and center budget with the Director and, as needed consult with the Director of Financial Affairs and Dean prior to authorizing those actions.

To allow time for center activities, center directors will receive a reduction of their normal teaching load of one course per semester with the expectation that the director will generate external funds that cover the reduced teaching load. The first 25% of the director's nine-month base salary generated through external funding will be provided back to the director's appointed academic department to provide instruction in courses associated with the director's reduced teaching load. Academic departments must use that funding to provide instructors that meet the College's academic qualification requirements. Any additional salary funding generated by external funding beyond 25% may be used to provide the director with additional teaching load reductions, summer research funding (where appropriate), or operating funds for the center (including providing additional center staff).

Center directors may teach summer courses for academic departments; however, the expectation is that this will be an infrequent occurrence because their summer will be funded by external funds generated through their activities associated with the center. Because the purpose of the teaching load reduction during the academic year is to allow time for the director to focus on the operations of the center, center directors may only engage in overload teaching in very limited circumstances that must be approved in advance of scheduling the course by the Senior Associate Dean.

In instances where the center director holds a research faculty appointment with no expectation of teaching, external funding that covers the director's salary may be used for operating funds for the center, including providing funding for additional center staff.

The center director reports to the Senior Associate Dean for center activities. Given the central importance of centers to the overall mission of the College, the Senior Associate Dean will regularly update the Dean concerning center matters. The Dean will have final authority over the programmatic and financial matters of centers.

### **III.B Center Staff**

To fulfill their mission, centers may employ staff to provide necessary administrative or research support. Generally, full-time center staff will not hold an appointment in academic departments. Center staff will report to and be evaluated by the center director.

There may be instances where a center's activities require additional administrative support. Centers directors may request permission to fill additional administrative positions (e.g., an associate or assistant director). In the event that these positions are to be filled by tenured or tenure-track faculty appointed in an academic department, a specific memorandum of understanding will be negotiated between the center and academic department regarding the role of the faculty member relative to the center. Those agreements must be approved by the Dean's Office prior to moving forward with filling the position. Any benefit provided for additional staff members (e.g., a stipend, teaching release) must be funded by external funding generated by the center.

### **III.C Faculty Affiliates**

Faculty affiliates are faculty that have a relationship with the center but are not appointed to the center. Faculty affiliates shall hold and retain an appointment to an academic department. As such, the Department Head/Director and College Dean shall be involved in the approval and review of instruction, research and outreach activities for these faculty. The center director has no authority over the activities of faculty affiliates. Faculty affiliate status in no way changes the responsibilities of the faculty member to his or her appointed department. Rather, it is a mechanism for building collaborations with other faculty working with the center and, where applicable, utilizing the infrastructure provided by the center.

Since the function of a center is inherently multidisciplinary and not intended to duplicate the functions of an academic department, it is expected that faculty from a variety of different academic departments, including faculty from other UA colleges and other universities or academic institutions, will be faculty affiliates in centers. Appointment to a specific academic department cannot be a criterion for the acceptance of a faculty affiliate in any Culverhouse center.

Each center will develop procedures for the selection of faculty affiliates. The primary criterion for selection of faculty affiliates shall be a demonstrated interest in advancing the mission of the center. Centers will review faculty affiliate appointments periodically (generally, every two years) to ensure that faculty affiliates are actively engaged in center activities. Centers are encouraged to develop a formal renewal process to review the appointments. Active engagement will generally be defined as maintaining a research stream consistent with the mission of the center, applying for external funding with other center staff or faculty affiliates, utilizing the center infrastructure in a meaningful way, participating in center research seminars, workshops, or similar presentations, or other similar activities.

Centers must be clear in their documentation (including websites and annual reports) that faculty affiliates do not hold appointments in the center other than their status as affiliated faculty. Centers may not take credit for faculty affiliates that are not actively engaged in center activities. Centers may establish specific expectations for engagement of faculty affiliates to maintain affiliate status.

### **III.D. Advisory Boards**

Centers may have advisory boards that provide guidance on programmatic activities, opportunities for research, experiential learning opportunities for students, and financial support. Prior to considering establishing an advisory board, the center director shall work closely with the Senior Associate Dean and Dean to outline the purpose and role of the advisory board and potential members of the board. The Dean must approve all invitations to advisory boards prior to inviting a member to the board.

Prior to formally establishing an advisory board, the center director shall work with the Senior Associate Dean, Dean, and potential members of the board to develop bylaws that clearly outline the role of the advisory board, expectations of board members, leadership positions on the board, and the financial relationship between the board and center (including any required dues).

### **III.E. Reporting and Evaluation of Center Staff**

#### *III.E.1 Annual Review of Center Staff*

A center director who holds a tenured or tenure-track faculty position is expected to spend a portion of his or her time on research and teaching that is not uniquely for the benefit of the center. Therefore, while he or she reports to the Senior Associate Dean for all matters associated with the operation and administration of the Center, their annual performance evaluation will be conducted by their home department head/director, and salary adjustments will be recommended by the home department head/director, after consultation with the Senior Associate Dean and, when necessary, the Dean. When considering the performance of center directors, department heads/directors should adjust research or teaching expectations in a manner consistent with the time necessary to perform the duties of center director (e.g., accounting for the teaching load reduction associated with the role and the time commitments necessary to build up collaborative sponsored research programs). The Senior Associate Dean will work with the department head/director to provide an evaluation of the director's activities associated with the center. The center director should provide both a faculty performance report and center annual report to the department to be considered in the evaluation.

A center director who does not have a tenure home (e.g., on a research faculty appointment) and whose work is primarily for the benefit of the center shall have their annual performance evaluation, salary recommendations, and other administrative functions handled by the Senior Associate Dean.

#### *III.E.2 Annual Center Reports*

The University of Alabama requires that each center provide an annual report of center activities using a specific format (see appendix). Those reports are due to the Senior Associate Dean no later than June 1 (note that this is one month prior to the deadline established by the University; submission by June 1 allows the Senior Associate Dean to consider center activities when

consulting with the department head on the center director's annual review). The Senior Associate Dean will meet with the center director to discuss the report and, after consultation with the Dean, will submit the report and a recommendation for continuation of the center to the Provost and Vice President for Research.

### *III.E.3 Programmatic Review of Centers*

In addition to the annual report, Centers will undergo a more comprehensive programmatic review every five years. In preparation for the comprehensive programmatic review, the director will provide a report of the activities of the center for the preceding five-year period following a format very similar to that of the annual reports. It will be submitted to the Senior Associate Dean no later than June 1.

The Senior Associate Dean, in consultation with the Dean, will appoint a review committee to review the materials provided by the director. The Senior Associate Dean will appoint a chair of the committee. In addition, the review committee will meet with the center director, center staff, faculty affiliates, and other stakeholders as the committee feels necessary to provide a comprehensive review of the center. The review team shall include representatives from academic departments that have an active role in the center, but may also include faculty members from related academic departments. At least one member of the committee will not be a faculty affiliate of the center and should have experience with other centers on campus. When practical, a faculty member (preferably a director of a center with similar scope) from another university will be included on the review committee.

Typical questions to be addressed within the review will include, but not be limited to, the following considerations:

1. Is current funding of the center sufficient to allow it to be successful in attaining the goals and objectives stated in its approved Charter?
2. Is faculty participation sufficient to continue the center operations?
3. Is the quality of scholarly activity by faculty, professional staff, and students reflected in its output (e.g., publications, patents, presentations, copyrights)?
4. Do current operations reflect the most recent charter, goals and objectives of the center?
5. Does the unit unnecessarily duplicate the efforts of other centers and/or institutes?
6. Does the financial audit and overall professional evaluation demonstrate that the center is being managed properly? Did the review process reveal any serious issues that warrant special attention and remediation?
7. Do the financial resources of the center appear sustainable and able to appropriately support the unit over the next five-year period? Are center participants able to secure external grants and contracts to support the mission areas of the center?
8. Are the facilities required for continued operation of the unit adequate?
9. Are the center clients being well served? The clients may include students, faculty, university administration, practicing professionals, the general public, funding agencies, etc.

The review committee will consider any prior center review recommendations and actions taken

by the center director and/or the center administrator to address those recommendations.

The review committee will write a draft report of its findings that may include organizational/personnel matters, measures of research activity or education and outreach efforts, interdisciplinary interactions, leadership, financial data, and other relevant activities. The director will be asked to review the report at this stage and respond with corrections to factual data in the draft report. Recommendations of the review committee should not be shared with the director at this stage.

The review committee will prepare a final written report, which will make recommendations on the continuation of the center as well as any suggested changes to the programmatic focus of the unit, its organizational or administrative structure, or other relevant matters. These recommendations will be reviewed by the Senior Associate Dean and Dean. The Senior Associate Dean will meet with the center director to discuss the report and, after consultation with the Dean, will submit the committee report and a recommendation for continuation of the center to the Provost and Vice President for Research.

#### *III.E.4 Review for Renewal of Appointment of Center Directors*

A performance review of the center director should occur at least once every five years. This performance review is to take place in a different year from when the comprehensive programmatic review of the center.

A review committee composed of three or more members will be appointed by the Senior Associate Dean to conduct the review. The Senior Associate Dean will ask the center director for recommendations regarding the members of the review committee. The center director will provide a faculty performance report from the previous five years and a cover letter requesting consideration for renewal as center director that includes any additional information the director believes is relevant to that decision.

The review team will solicit feedback from stakeholders relevant to the center, including center staff, faculty affiliates, clients, advisory board members, and other stakeholders. Feedback must be solicited in a manner that allows all members of the stakeholder group to participate (e.g., if faculty affiliate feedback is considered, all faculty affiliates will be given an opportunity to provide feedback). The review team will review plans for soliciting feedback with the Senior Associate Dean prior to proceeding.

The committee will review the materials (faculty performance report, cover letter, and any feedback) to provide a list of strengths and weaknesses to the Senior Associate Dean. The review committee will not make a recommendation regarding the Director's continued service. The Senior Associate Dean will review the materials provided by the committee and the center director and, after consultation with the Dean, make a decision regarding the continuation of the center director. The Senior Associate Dean will meet with the center director to discuss the decision and any plans for performance improvement. The Senior Associate Dean will notify any relevant stakeholders (director's appointed academic department head, center advisor board members, etc.) of the decision.

#### **IV. Termination or Realignment of Centers**

It is recognized that, with the passage of time, changes in available university faculty and staff, and the evolution of institutional, collegiate, departmental or individual strengths and priorities, instances will arise in which the rationale that led to the creation of center no longer exists. For example, a programmatic review of the center would reflect a mismatch of accomplishments compared to stated goals. Alternatively, the center director may suggest that a center's mission be altered such that it better aligns with the activities of an existing center.

Termination or significant changes to centers is governed by Board of Trustees Rule 503, which states that the University President must notify the Chancellor of such changes, providing information about the purpose of the center, reason for the change, and a description of how funding, property, and staff changes will be handled. The Chancellor then must submit a recommendation to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Note: some of the language in this policy is adapted from other universities' policies, including the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University policies regarding Centers and University Institutes.