

**AMENDMENT TO THE**

**SPECIAL REPORT**

**of the**

**ACADEMIC PRIORITIES COUNCIL AND THE  
RULES COMMITTEE**

**concerning**

**CENTERS AND INSTITUTES: COMPREHENSIVE POLICY ON APPROVAL AND REVIEW**

**(Amended at the 751st Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate on October 8, 2015)**

**(Further Amended by Research Council at the 808<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate on November 18, 2021)**

**Presented at the  
736th Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate  
April 3, 2014**

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I.**Introduction**

The current policies of the University of Massachusetts Amherst with respect to Centers and Institutes are based on Trustee Document T96-096, as revised 10/9/96. That document asks the campuses to provide more specific policies and procedures. Sen. Doc. No. 97-027 is the University of Massachusetts Amherst's response. Although it contains most of the relevant policies, issues such as "change of name" and "reduction or termination" are covered in the Course Approval Procedure Guide, Sen. Doc. No. 90-064B and Sen. Doc. No. 91-014B. Related procedures established by agreement between the Rules Committee and the central administration are reflected in the relevant pages of the Faculty Senate website pertaining to Centers and Institutes.

In addition, the detailed procedures for terminating a Center or Institute, as distinguished from an academic program, have not been fully established. Although Centers and Institutes are mentioned in Sen. Doc. No. 91-014B, Part III ("This section of the Report sets forth the procedures that are to be used when the reduction ... of an academic unit [department, program, institute or center, hereinafter, referred to as "unit"] is under consideration ... ), it is worded as if departments, programs, institutes and centers should be treated similarly. The present report supersedes the above-quoted language by establishing a separate process for establishing the role of the Faculty Senate in the process of terminating a Center or Institute. Because funding, usually external, for Centers and Institutes varies over time, it would be inappropriate to establish a Faculty Senate role in the "reduction" of a Center or Institute. The processes described in this document are not to be construed as applicable to an academic department or an academic program.

This Special Report of the Academic Priorities Council and Rules Committee accomplishes three goals: it consolidates and supersedes the previous policies and procedures adopted pursuant to T96-096; it identifies the criteria and the processes which should be used to identify Centers and Institutes that might be terminated; and it establishes the processes to be used to arrive at a Faculty Senate recommendation with respect to such a termination. The contents are related to, but different from Sen. Doc. No. 91-014B, dated May 23, 1991. The 1991 document focused on the review of all academic programs, while the present document focuses exclusively on Centers and Institutes.

As is the case for all other academic and administrative units at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, Centers and Institutes are now subject to formal review. The present document provides a comprehensive policy on definitions, scope, creation, approval, name change, review and evaluation, continuation, and termination of Centers and Institutes.

II.**Definitions****A. General**

Centers and Institutes are organizational units created to foster activities related to research, outreach, or educational support that cannot be accommodated effectively and efficiently within existing structures. Centers and Institutes do not serve as tenure homes for faculty, nor do they award degrees or offer courses for regular University credit. They may support the educational mission, however, through activities such as workshops, seminars, training programs, internships or laboratory experiences for students, or exploration of new approaches to teaching to be incorporated into regular departmental offerings. Centers and Institutes, regardless of their funding source, shall be created, operated, changed and terminated in accordance with campus policy.

Centers and Institutes share the following characteristics: their activities are linked to the academic mission of the University and its long-range plans; their activities extend beyond the campus in some way, either through public service, funding or other resource arrangements; and their resources are sufficient to carry out their stated mission. While expenditure of campus general operating funds by Centers and Institutes is permitted, normally Centers and Institutes receive external support. Any commitment of personnel, space and other resources must have the prior and continuing approval of the appropriate Head(s)/Chair(s), Dean(s), and of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement.

**B. Centers**

**A Center is a subordinate unit within an existing institute, department, school, or college whose Director, Department Head/Chair, or Dean has management oversight and appointing authority. Centers should make a significant contribution to the unit of which they are a part.**

**The purpose of a Center is to concentrate research, educational support and/or outreach efforts within a clearly defined academic area. A Center should have an adequate concentration of talent to carry out its mission. All documents, publications and websites should clearly identify the Center as being part of the parent unit.**

**C. Institutes**

**An Institute is a distinct unit that spans multiple colleges and often occupies its own identifiable physical space. Its mission is the promotion of research on some subject of broad concern and, often, the communication of this knowledge to a broader public. Institutes may engage in a variety of research, public service, and educational support activities. Institutes are frequently interdisciplinary in focus.**

**Institutes will report to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement; the Dean(s) of the college(s) having faculty participating in any Institute will be kept informed of its activities.**

**III. Scope of Campus Authority Concerning Centers and Institutes**

**A. Scope**

**Every Center or Institute, regardless of its source of funding, shall be included within the purview of this campus policy.**

**B. Exceptions**

**1. This policy does not apply to entities that use the word Center or Institute as part of their name but do not conform to the definition of the term Center set out in II. B. above. At present, there are three classes of such entities. The first are entities called "centers" that provide various services to the campus community, such as day care centers, computer centers, the Center for Teaching and Faculty Development, the Fine Arts Center, the Writing Center, and the Learning Resources Center. The second are entities with the name "Center" that have used the word in their name for a long time and are not being required to change their name. The third are entities using the word "Center" as a condition of support from an external agency. Ordinarily there are no exceptions to the use of the word institute in the name of an entity on the UMass Amherst campus. Any institutes that are not addressed in exceptions two and three will operate as described above in Section II.C. and will be subject to the Policy on Centers and Institutes.**

**2. Entities falling within the second and third exceptions are listed in the Appendix.**

**IV. Creation and Approval of Centers and Institutes**

**A. General**

**Campus approval of new Centers and Institutes shall be based, at minimum, on the appropriateness of the Center or Institute to the mission and goals of the campus, and adequacy of resources, including both capital investment and operating funds. The formal establishment of a new Center or Institute shall require the approval of the University President upon recommendation of the campus Chancellor and the Provost following review of a proposal for formal establishment as provided in Sections C. and D. and recommendation of establishment by the Faculty Senate.**

Centers and Institutes should provide a brief yearly report summarizing their activities and accomplishments, accompanied by a summary version suitable for public posting. Center reports should be submitted to the administrator to whom the Center Director reports. That administrator's comments, the full report and the summary from the Center's Director should then be sent to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement. Institute reports should be submitted to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement with copies to the Deans of colleges that have any faculty participating in the Institute. Deans may provide the Vice Chancellor with any comments they wish to make.

**B. Interim Approval**

When faculty members or the University administration wish to establish a Center or Institute, including an externally-funded Center or Institute, they should submit a written request to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, following the instructions provided by the office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, including as much of the information needed for Faculty Senate review as they possess at the time of the proposal. Upon recommendation by the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, interim approval can be granted by the Chancellor and Provost. Interim approval shall expire at the end of three (3) years, at which time the Center or Institute shall automatically be terminated unless full approval has been granted. In exceptional circumstances, the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement may recommend and the Chancellor and Provost approve a one-year extension of interim approval. Any such extension shall be reported to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate. Faculty Senate review and recommendation along with campus and system approval at all levels will be required prior to the expiration of interim status for a Center or Institute to be fully approved upon termination of the interim period.

**C. Proposal Content (General)**

A proposal to establish a Center or Institute may be initiated by one or more faculty members or by the University administration. All proposals should provide the information described in the Centers and Institutes Approval Form (Form T). If responses to the items in Form T do not do so, other parts of the proposal should clearly address:

1. the purpose to be served and the needs to be met by the proposed entity;
2. the existence of an adequate concentration or talent;
3. the consistency with department, college, and/or campus long-range plans;
4. the proposed relationship with other academic units on the campus, including the use of faculty on released time;
5. the potential resource needs of the proposed unit, including personnel, equipment, office and other space, telephones, library facilities, and central computing services; and
6. the organizational affiliation of a Center, and the Institute Director, Dean or Department Head/Chair to whom the Center's leadership will report, with confirmation that this reporting line has approval from that unit.

**D. Approval Procedure**

The formal approval process begins with submission of a detailed proposal through UMass Amherst's Course and Curriculum Management System. The request for formal approval goes first to the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate with a copy to the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement by use of the electronic version of Form T, New Centers and Institutes Approval Form, plus Form S, New Centers and Institutes Signature Sheet. The proposal must then be reviewed at the following levels:

1. the Faculty Senate governance structure, including appropriate Faculty Senate Councils and/or Committees as determined by the Rules Committee, culminating in approval by the full Faculty Senate;
2. the Provost;
3. the Chancellor; and
4. the President.

If the proposal is approved, a copy of the signature sheet (Form S) and any conditions of formation will be forwarded to the originators of the proposal and all signatories. If the proposal is not approved, the Provost will send a written statement of that decision to the originators and all signatories. In either case, all memoranda, the original proposal and the signature sheet will be placed in the permanent file for this proposed entity, held in the Provost's Office.

If any Center or Institute is proposed to be housed on the Amherst campus by some outside agency, legal body, or office (persons other than faculty members or administrators on the University of Massachusetts Amherst campus), the date and circumstances must be recorded in writing, along with an official submission to the Faculty Senate as described above, and records relating to it placed on file in the Provost's Office.

Regardless of the source of funds, all faculty appointments that carry academic rank affiliated solely with a Center or Institute shall be reviewed and recommended by appropriate faculty peer groups (i.e., Departmental Personnel Committees and School or College Personnel Committees). For other professional appointments, the appropriate school or college administrator and department administrators shall be advised of the appointments.

**E. Allocation of Space**

The allocation of space for Centers and Institutes shall be treated in the same manner as the allocation of space to other academic units.

**V. Name Change**

Procedures for approving a change of the name of a Center or Institute depend on the purpose of the name change.

- A. When a change involves proposing a new name that more accurately describes the activities of the Center or Institute, those activities being essentially the same as those engaged in prior to the name change, the same procedures used for changing the name of an academic program should be followed, with consideration of the name change conducted by the appropriate Councils of the Faculty Senate, as determined by the Rules Committee.
- B. When a change involves proposing a new name to recognize a change or changes in the activities of a Center or Institute, the procedures for evaluating the change of name will include an evaluation of the entity and should include an evaluation of the Center or Institute as modified by the proposed activity or activities conducted by the same Evaluation Committee that reviews Centers and Institutes, in addition to the procedure described in V. A. above.

**VI. Review and Evaluation of Centers and Institutes**

**A. General Guidelines**

Trustee policy (T96-096), as amended) requires that, beginning with academic year 1997-98, all Centers and Institutes shall be reviewed at least every five years by the Provost in consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, on an initial schedule established by the Provost, with the

results sent to the Faculty Senate as a report for review and recommendation. Centers shall be evaluated on their success in meeting their own goals and objectives, as well as their substantive contribution to the campus mission.

**B. Continuation of a Center or Institute**

Once a Center or Institute has been reviewed, a recommendation to continue said Center or Institute must be approved by the President, upon recommendation of the Chancellor and Provost. Notice of such action shall be provided to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate.

**C. Termination of a Center or Institute**

Academic administrators {Chancellor, Provost, Deans, Directors, or Heads/Chairs} may request termination of a Center or Institute for reasons such as a prolonged period of inactivity, insufficient level of funding, inconsistency between campus mission and stated purposes of the Center or Institute, misconduct of employees, and disappearance of clientele served. Likewise, a Director of a Center or Institute may request that the Center or Institute be closed. The campus administration shall review the proposed termination and forward it to the Faculty Senate for review and recommendation as provided in Section VII. below. The termination of a Center or Institute must receive approval of the Chancellor upon recommendation of the Provost; final action is the responsibility of the President.

**D. Detailed Guidelines for Periodic Evaluation of an Existing Center or Institute**

Periodic review of existing Centers and Institutes is conducted under the direction of the Provost in consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, by the Center's and Institute's Evaluation Committee using a Center or Institute Self-Study as the basis for its work, as indicated in Section E., F., and G. below. The Evaluation Committee reports its findings to the Provost, who then submits a report to the Chancellor making a recommendation concerning continuation or termination of each Center or Institute. The Chancellor, in turn, makes a recommendation to the President of the University.

The General rubrics within which campus review takes place shall include:

1. Confirmation that the Center or Institute meets the test of appropriateness to the mission and goals of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
2. Considered judgment concerning the quality and effectiveness of the activities carried out by the Center or Institute.
3. Assessment of the adequacy of resources available and the efficiency of expenditures carried out to achieve the organization's stated purposes.
4. Recommendation regarding continuation, continuation with conditions, or termination.

**E. Centers and Institutes Evaluation Committee**

1. The Center's and Institute's Evaluation Committee shall include the Provost (or designee), the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement (or designee), and at least one faculty member from each college and school headed by a Dean on the Amherst campus.
2. The chair of the Committee shall be appointed by the Provost in consultation with the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement.
3. Each faculty member shall be appointed by the respective Dean (after consultation with the relevant Department Head/Chair) and shall be a full-time member of the faculty with the rank of Associate Professor or higher.
4. Faculty members shall serve for a two-year term; faculty members may be reappointed for a maximum of five terms (10 years).

5. **A faculty member appointed by a Dean to serve on this Committee shall not be a current Director of any existing Center or Institute; however, faculty participants in the activities of one or more of the campus-based Centers or Institutes are not excluded. Care should be taken in these appointments to avoid conflict of interest situations, and any faculty member who finds him/herself in a conflict of interest situation should immediately disclose the conflict to the Chair and Vice Chair, who will take appropriate steps to eliminate any real or perceived conflict of interest on the Evaluation Committee.**

**F. Duties and Responsibilities of the Executive Committee**

**A timetable for the review cycle will be established by the Provost's Office in consultations with the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement each academic year. Instructions for the Self-Study to be conducted by each Center or Institute under review will be sent to its Director by the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement at least four months in advance of review. On a case-by-case basis, individual evaluation criteria for the Self-Study and review may be added or waived at the discretion of the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement.**

1. **A pair of Evaluation Committee members, a primary reviewer and a secondary reviewer will be designated by the Chair as the Review Team to conduct the primary review of an individual Center or Institute. Each faculty member will normally be expected to serve as primary reviewer only once during each two-year term on the Evaluation Committee.**
2. **Each Review Team will meet with the Director, faculty members, and staff of the Center or Institute under review at the beginning of the process to discuss the Evaluation Committee's procedures and evaluation criteria.**
3. **The Review Team will review all written materials submitted by the Center or Institute under review, and it will draft a report to the Evaluation Committee concerning the strengths, challenges, and viability of the Center or Institute. The primary reviewer will have the principal responsibility for organizing the activities of the Review Team, calling meetings, conducting interviews and briefing sessions, and drafting a report to the full Evaluation Committee. The Review Team is expected to include one of the following recommendations in the report: a) approval for continuation; b) conditional approval for continuation, subject to certain changes; c) conditional termination, reversible upon the implementation of specified changes; or d) termination.**
4. **After completing its evaluation report, but prior to its presentation to the Evaluation Committee, the Review Team shall consult with the Director of the Center or Institute as well as the relevant Dean(s) and Department Head(s)/Chair(s) as appropriate, to discuss the evaluation report and whatever recommendation the Evaluation Team intends to submit. The Director(s), Dean(s), and Department Head(s)/Chair(s) may submit their own comments in response to the Review Team's report, and these comments will accompany the Review Team's report to the full Evaluation Committee.**
5. **After the Review Team has presented its report to the Evaluation Committee, the Director of the evaluated Center or Institute may request to meet with the full Evaluation Committee. That request should be made in writing within 14 days following the Evaluation Committee's discussion of the Review Team's report. The Chair of the Evaluation Committee will then schedule a meeting for the Center or Institute Director with the full Evaluation Committee. This meeting shall take place prior to the final decision by the full Evaluation Committee.**
6. **In cases where there is a positive report from the Review Team and a poll of all Evaluation Committee members reveals unanimous approval for continuation of the Center or Institute under consideration, the Chair may forgo a scheduled meeting with the Director.**
7. **The Evaluation Committee, after receiving the report of the Review Team, shall make a recommendation to the Provost regarding the future of the specific Center or Institute under review.**

8. As specified in Sen. Doc. No. 97-027, the Provost then submits a report including a summary of the Evaluation Committee's conclusions, along with a recommendation concerning the review of each Center or Institute to the Faculty Senate for its further deliberation and recommendation; copies should also be sent to the Director and relevant Deans and Heads/Chairs.
9. Recommendations to continue a Center or Institute must be approved by the President upon recommendation by the Chancellor and Provost, and such actions shall be reported to the Faculty Senate.
10. Recommendations to terminate a Center or Institute are subject to the additional procedures described in Section VII. below.

**G. Criteria and Measurements for Preparing the Self-Study**

The Self-Study shall respond to the following topics as they apply to the Center or Institute under review, with respect to its operation over the past five years. (It is recommended that no item's response should exceed a page or two; most should be handled as an executive summary.)

1. How the Center or Institute under review contributes to the mission of the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
2. How successful the Center or Institute has been in meeting its own mission, goals and objectives. Comment on the type and scale of activities or other accomplishments, and, if appropriate, in terms of organizational structure or change.
3. Whether financial and other resources have been adequate over the time period for the activities pursued. If the operations require running a deficit, specify whether the campus has provided money or other resources to assist the Center or Institute while it seeks additional funds.
4. Whether investments from the campus operating budget have leveraged other resources, financial or otherwise. If no direct campus funding resources are involved, specify how the external funding resources served to supplement campus funding for research, graduate support, or anything else.
5. Describe those you would identify as users, clients, or beneficiaries of the activities of the Center or Institute (such as students, private sector CEOs, other faculty, general public, etc.), and provide some sense of scale in terms or numbers for each grouping in a typical year.
6. Provide your assessment of users' evaluations of the quality and impact of Center or Institute activity, supported with data on usage and an overall summary of user evaluations when available.

**VII: Faculty Senate Review of the Provost's Recommendation for Termination of a Center of Institute**

This section establishes two sets of procedures for Faculty Senate review of a recommendation by the Provost for the termination of a Center or Institute. The first is a streamlined, fast-track procedure for non-controversial situations where there is no timely articulated objection to the Provost's recommendation to terminate a Center or Institute. The second procedure applies when an interested party or parties presents written objections to the Provost's recommendation. The Rules Committee, in consultation with the Academic Priorities Council, shall determine which procedure applies in any specific case.

**A. Criteria for Selecting the Procedure to be Applied**

1. Whenever the Provost recommends terminating a Center or Institute, that recommendation shall be forwarded to the Faculty Senate's Rules Committee, together with the Evaluation Committee's report and any formal communications received from Directors, Deans or Department Heads/Chairs relating to the recommendation. The Rules Committee will seek advice from the Academic Priorities Council and, at its discretion, such other Council(s) as the Rules Committee deems appropriate, such Council(s) being requested to reach a decision as quickly as possible as to whether or not to endorse the Provost's recommendation.

2. **Based on the information it has received, the Rules Committee, after consultation with the Academic Priorities Council, will determine whether the Provost's recommendation is non-controversial (i.e., there are no articulated objections), and thus eligible for the fast-track procedure, or whether the Provost's recommendation will be referred to the Standard Procedures (Section VII. C. below).**

**B. Fast-Track Procedure for Faculty Senate Recommendation on Termination of a Center or Institute**

**If the Provost's recommendation has been deemed non-controversial by the Rules Committee, after consultation with the Academic Priorities Council, final Senate action on the Provost's recommendation for termination shall be taken by the formal vote of the Rules Committee, acting on behalf of the Faculty Senate, and specifically recorded in the minutes of the Rules Committee.**

**C. Standard Procedure for Faculty Senate Recommendation on Termination of a Center or Institute**

- Step 1. Based on the Evaluation Committee's report, the Provost proposes the termination of a Center or Institute by developing a comprehensive brief setting forth the reasons a termination is being proposed.**
- Step 2. The Center or Institute in question shall be given 14 days to provide an initial written response and to convene a meeting with the Provost and the administrator to which it reports to discuss the proposed termination. In preparing the initial written response to the Provost's brief, the affected Center or Institute shall address each of the issues listed in the brief, and label them accordingly.**
- Step 3. If, after the Center's or Institute's response has been received, the Provost decides to proceed with termination, he or she shall, within 7 days, cause an executive summary of the brief and the Center's or Institute's response to be distributed to all faculty members within the relevant departments for Centers, and all faculty members within the relevant Schools or Colleges for Institutes. Individual members of the faculty may send comments to the Provost within 7 days of receiving the executive summary.**
- Step 4. The Provost shall consider all the materials received before determining whether to proceed with a Faculty Senate review. Should the Provost decide to proceed with a Faculty Senate review, he or she shall, within 14 days of receiving the Center's or Institute's response, forward the brief, the Center's or Institute's response, and the comments submitted by other parties to the Faculty Senate Secretary.**
- Step 5. The Secretary shall forthwith advise the Rules Committee of the Provost's request and shall forward all relevant documents to the Academic Priorities Council.**
- Step 6. The Academic Priorities Council shall conduct a review, based on all the criteria listed in Section VI. D. of this report, as well as any additional criteria as had been suggested by the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement. When a Center is under review, the administrator to whom it reports and representatives of the Center shall be invited to meet with the Council. When an Institute is under review, the Deans of Colleges having faculty who participate in the Institute and representatives of the Institute shall be invited to meet with the Council.**
- Step 7. Within 42 days of the Council's receipt of the Provost's request, the Council shall prepare a preliminary report, which shall be sent to the Center or Institute involved.**
- Step 8. The Center or Institute shall be given 7 days to provide a response. Within 7 days of receiving the Center's or Institute's response, the Council shall prepare a Faculty Senate Special Report which shall include a synopsis of the Center's or Institute's response, if one has been submitted, and an appropriate motion which shall be in the form of a recommendation to the Provost.**
- Step 9. The Academic Priorities Council shall submit its Special Report to the Secretary of the Faculty Senate who will transmit it immediately to the Rules Committee, together with a request that it be placed on the agenda of the next Faculty Senate meeting. Any Special Report or motion duly adopted by the full Faculty Senate shall be immediately transmitted as a recommendation to the Provost and Chancellor.**
- Step 10.**

**VIII. Final Disposition by the Chancellor and President**

As provided in T96-096, as amended 10/9/1996, final authority to approve, continue, or terminate a Center or Institute resides with the President, upon recommendation of the Chancellor.

**Appendix**

**Entities using the word "Center" or "Institute" not Subject to this Policy:**

**UMass Innovation Institute  
STEM Diversity Institute  
Center for Educational Software Development (CESD)  
Center for Language, Speech and Hearing (CLSH)\*  
Center for Multicultural Advancement and Student Success (CMASS)  
Center for Student Business  
Center for Women and Community  
Psychological Services Center  
Springfield Design Center  
Stonewall Center  
Translation Center  
UMass Family Business Center  
UMass Writing Center**

**\*Added to the list 15 July 2019 after voluntary transition from research center to service center status.**

**MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Amendment to the Special Report of the Academic Priorities  
11-22 Council and the Rules Committee concerning Centers and Institutes: Comprehensive Policy on  
Approval and Review, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 14-032C.**