

**GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE CENTERS
AT
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY**

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I. Introduction

As Oklahoma State University strives to help meet the needs of Oklahoma, the south-central region and the nation, there will be continued utilization of centers which contribute to the research, extension and instruction programs of the University. These centers should serve as focal points to meet the needs of the state, region, and nation and to achieve the goals and objectives of the University. They should help coordinate the efforts of individual faculty so that the most sophisticated and difficult tasks can be undertaken. Centers can constitute a stable and versatile arrangement which can strengthen the total University effort.

These guidelines relate to research and/or extension centers. The instruction function may be included as part of any center, and in those instances, the instruction function would be incorporated in such a proposal. Two types of organizational structure for centers exist at Oklahoma State University. One is a university organizational structure involving several colleges and the other is a center/laboratory which may involve one or more departments or colleges focusing on a particular area of interest.

University centers should be organizational structures which involve personnel and equipment from several colleges and which involve several individual faculty members and/or several groups of faculty member responsible for specific projects which are consistent with the mission and focus of the center. The purpose of the formation of such university centers is to coordinate the efforts of a number of personnel distributed in various colleges and departments in the University to focus on an identified university-wide thrust. Because of the nature of such centers it is anticipated that few centers with this university organizational structure will be established at Oklahoma State University.

The most common type of centers/laboratories at Oklahoma State University may involve one or more departments and/or colleges. These centers are established to help implement programs in particular areas of interest. The focus of the centers would not be university-wide. However, as the focus and program(s) evolve, a center could develop a university-wide thrust which would involve personnel and equipment from a number of colleges and could evolve into the more university center organizational structure after appropriate review by University administrators.

Centers at Oklahoma State University would have no degree programs or departments, and faculty assigned to these centers would also be assigned to appropriate academic home departments.

II. Criteria for Establishing Centers

As a general goal, Oklahoma State University should provide a proper balance of quality and breadth of educational programs within the constraints of available and obtainable resources to meet the needs of students, industry and society. As a part of their responsibilities, departments, schools and colleges at OSU may wish to establish centers to achieve certain program objectives. Proposals for such centers should address the specific criteria as identified below and such proposals should involve adequate input from department and college faculty and administrators and appropriate University administrators. Criteria against which judgments should be made for initiating new or discontinuing centers are listed below:

1. State and National Needs and Priorities

- Uniqueness of the program to the state, region and nation
- Extent to which there is a need for the expertise of the programs
- Extent to which this program is responsive to social and economic conditions prevailing today or visualized for future years, as determined by current research data
- Numbers, quality, and status of comparable programs as determined by current research data
- Extent of the locational advantage of this program at Oklahoma State University

2. Institutional Mission and Priorities

- Centrality and appropriateness of the program to OSU's institutional mission
- Extent to which initiating or discontinuing programs contributes to or impacts OSU programs and priorities in the mission for instruction, research and extension
- Appropriateness and extent of contribution of the program goals and objectives to the institution's goals and objectives
- Extent to which the program fits into the charge of a comprehensive university

3. Program Quality

- Adequacy of the program in achieving its own program goals and objectives
- The potential for the program in its environment
- Quality of support by academic disciplines in assisting in achieving the program goals and objectives

4. Consideration of Resources

- Cost effectiveness in relation to similar programs in the state and in the region
- Adequacy of resources to achieve program goals and objectives

- Amount of additional resources required to reach and/or sustain an acceptable quality
- Quality of facilities and equipment necessary to achieve program goals and objectives
- Adequacy of the current unit operating funds
- Opportunities and potential for external funding

5. Faculty, Staff and Student Considerations

- Potential student participation in the program
- Appropriateness of the participation of the faculty to achieve program goals and objectives
- Impact of initiating or discontinuing a program on faculty and students

III. College Centers and Laboratories

In the case of centers and laboratories that are located in one academic college or division, the director will be appointed by the dean of that college. Where one center or laboratory is important to the program of several colleges or divisions, a memorandum of understanding covering joint participation will be completed and approved by the deans involved. It is assumed that the centers/laboratories will serve to enhance and promote the research and/or extension goals of the units they represent. The director of the center or laboratory will be directly responsible to and submit annual reports to his or her dean or an appropriate person appointed by the dean. The operation of the center or laboratory, in terms of its effectiveness and funding, will be the final responsibility of the dean of the college or division wherein such organizations are located.

A. Personnel

A center /laboratory will be administered by a person (i.e., a director) appointed by the dean. If justifiable, other associates or assistants may be appointed. Effective administration of the center/laboratory must be assured through adequate secretarial and clerical personnel as well as technical support. The organization of each center/laboratory will be tailored by the director and the dean in such a way as to best meet the mission of the center/laboratory. Personnel involved in the operation of a center/laboratory can include faculty, adjunct faculty, post-doctorates, professionals, graduate students, technicians, and full or part-time secretarial and clerical help.

B. Standard Operating Procedures

Each center/laboratory will develop written and approved operating procedures at the earliest possible time. These procedures will include an introduction which outlines the reasons for the existence of the center, a table of organization, the names of personnel involved in the operation, and job descriptions for all permanent personnel. The nature and source of the sustaining funds for continuing operation of the center/laboratory will be documented. A detailed outline of how charges for service to other organizational units will

be determined must also be prepared for audit purposes. Obviously, in some cases a number of different accounts will be involved in the funding of a unit. Each of these accounts should be described in terms of the type of support which each account gives to the unit. The physical facilities and the capital equipment of a center/laboratory should also be listed in the operation procedures document.

C. Establishing Centers/Laboratories

In order to avoid unnecessary proliferation of centers/laboratories, a basic requirement for their establishment will be visible funding originating initially either from the dean in whose college the unit will reside or from funds outside the college (private, state or federal agency). Prior to establishing any center/laboratory a proposal defining the source or magnitude of funding together with the purpose, scope, and potential magnitude of effort in the center will be filed with the Deans Council for informational purposes. Should a potential conflict with an existing center/laboratory be recognized in the Deans Council and it cannot be resolved, the matter will be referred to the Executive Group for final decision. Proposals should be available for a suitable review period within the college prior to final presentation in the Deans Council

IV. University Centers

University Centers are comprised of faculty members from a number of different colleges or divisions at OSU. For this reason the director the university center will be selected by and will report to the appropriate vice president and approved by the Executive Group. These centers will strive to bring together a number of faculty with expertise pertinent to particular problem area(s) to establish insofar as possible a broad multidisciplinary unit. The university center director may have several sources of funds available for the operation of the center. However, potential participating faculty must submit plans which are approved by their department head and dean before funds are allocated by the director. The university center director will commit funds for faculty support to the appropriate dean. As noted above, these funds will only be committed for support of designated faculty as approved on a normal routing sheet. The director will monitor the expenditures of funds and insure that accounts are not overspent by the colleges.

A. Personnel

Each university center will have a director and other support personnel as needed. The majority of personnel involved in the pursuits of a university center will be faculty members whose participation in the program will be coordinated with their dean. In some cases it will be desirable to fund support-personnel or consultants directly from university center funds, but professional and technical personnel will be funded through the appropriate colleges. It is envisioned that university centers could help coordinate the efforts of several different centers/laboratories to gain the maximum application of effort. In such cases a memorandum of understanding will be completed by both the university center director and the deans involved, with the assistance of the office of the appropriate vice president. It will be possible for adjunct professor and professionals form business, industry, or other organizations or agencies to be assigned to university centers.

B. Standard Operating Procedures

Each university center will complete an operating procedure manual as rapidly as possible after its formation. This manual will be comprised of an introduction which states the reasons for the existence of the center and an organization table, including the names of personnel. Job descriptions of all personnel will be included. It will also include the method by which personnel will be contacted for possible participation in the university center and the procedure by which the deans can give their consent for participation and the procedure by which the deans can give their consent for participation of these personnel in the university center. Each university center will have an advisory committee which will consist of faculty members with particular competences in the area of primary importance to the university center involved. The funding of the university center will be documented in the operating procedures manual. Normally, several different accounts will be involved, and each of these will be specified as to the function of the account in sustaining the operation of the university center. The nature of service for which charges will be made and how charges are to be determined will also be documented for the audit purposes. In the operation of the university center every effort will be made to maximize broad, university-wide participation and to insure a smooth and effective coordination of effort among participating colleges and divisions.

C. Establishing University Centers

University centers must maintain high standards of excellence. Normally a university will maintain only a few university centers and, therefore, the procedure for establishing such centers must be clearly stated. These procedures are outlined as:

1. Suggestions for the formation of a university center can come from any source to the University Executive Group or the Deans Council.
2. A study will then be made to determine if an adequate number of faculty are already involved in the suggested program area so that a "critical personnel mass" is available. If sufficient personnel are not available, a cost estimate will be provided for attaining the minimum number of new appointments necessary for the program to succeed.
3. The study in (2) will be submitted to the Deans Council for its recommendation and then will be reviewed by the Executive Group to determine if there is University interest.
4. If the Executive Group decides to proceed, key personnel will be interviewed by the appropriate deans and vice president(s) to ascertain interest in participating. If sufficient faculty wish to participate, a formal proposal will be prepared for discussion at the Deans Council. The Executive Group would review the formal proposal and the Deans Council recommendation.
5. After receiving recommendations from the Executive Group and the Deans Council, the President will either approve or reject the proposal.

D. Evaluating University Centers

Each university center is to be evaluated every three years, and if it is to be continued, a justification should be submitted to the appropriate vice president by the center director in coordination with the appropriate deans. Justification of continuance should be based on achievement of identified objectives for the center and the criteria identified in Section II.

IV. Summary

Since the purpose of university centers, centers and laboratories, is to enhance all the functions and capabilities of Oklahoma State University, a cooperative attitude between all units participating in the University structure is expected. Information should be shared freely among the various units and each will endeavor to help the others to achieve their mission. This type of cooperative attitude, which already exists at Oklahoma State University, helps OSU compete with other universities having much greater funding. If there are questions about the operation of university centers, these questions should be immediately referred to the Assistant Vice President for Research and/or the Director of University Extension for investigation. A report would be filed with the Deans Council with suitable recommendations. Those matters not resolvable in the Deans Council would be referred to the Executive Group action.

NOTE: A listing of all centers/laboratories at OSU should be compiled as an attachment to this policy statement. Such listing would need to be updated continuously.