

# UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

## GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMATION AND OPERATION OF UNIVERSITY INSTITUTES AND CENTERS

### I. Introduction

Institutes and centers are entities established to coordinate research, service, and/or educational/training activities that supplement and extend existing instruction, research, and service.

Within the State University System of Florida, Institutes and Centers are classified as either (1) State of Florida institutes or centers or (2) University institutes or centers.

The Florida Board of Governors Policy Guideline #PG 04.07.27 addresses the establishment and operation of State of Florida Institutes and Centers. State of Florida Institutes and Centers housed within the USF System are the Florida Institute on Oceanography; the Florida Policy Exchange Center on Aging; and the Lawton and Rhea Chiles Center for Healthy Mothers and Babies.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to address the formation and operation of University Institutes and Centers within the University of South Florida.

[Note on exclusions: There are entities within the University of South Florida System that use the term "Institute" or "Center" in their titles that are excluded from these Guidelines. Examples include the University of South Florida Health Sciences Center; the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute; and USF advising, student health, computing, faculty development, and certain other centers. However, these entities may have institutes or centers under their purview that are covered by the procedures described in this document.]

### II. Definitions

An **institute** is an *organized research unit* established on a continuing basis primarily for the coordination and promotion of faculty research interests organized around a broad subject area. Normally, the breadth of research projects and programs transcends department, school, college, or even campus boundaries. The creation of an institute requires clear and strong evidence of service to long-range University goals.

A **center** is (1) analogous to an institute but is more limited in scope, or (2) an *organized research unit* that serves a specific purpose within an institute, or (3) a unit that provides specialized capabilities to further research, enhance instruction, or deliver services.

The phrase "organized research unit" refers to collective research enterprises that typically contain in their title the word "institute" or "center" and are defined as follows:

- **University-level organized research units** report directly to a Vice President. These units are large scale, often multi-college, interdisciplinary organizations whose missions are directed toward the strategic strengths and initiatives of the University. University-level organized research units may receive some financial

support from the Vice President for Research. The Vice President for Research will approve proposals for institutes and centers that constitute or are part of a University-level organized research unit, and the Office of Research will participate in reviews and evaluations of institutes and centers that fall into this category.

- **College-level organized research units** report to a dean or designee. The mission statements of these units often have an interdisciplinary focus, but they are primarily sponsored by a given college. College-level organized research units may receive some financial support from the college or University.
- **Department-level organized research units** report to and are primarily sponsored and supported by an individual department. A department-level unit reports on a daily basis directly to the department chair.
- **Sponsored-Program Based organized research units** are established by the signatory authorization recorded on the initial proposal to a funding agency, and receive their designation from a grant competition or block funding offered by a federal or state governmental agency or private foundation. These units dissolve at the conclusion of the funding period unless they submit a successful renewal proposal or request status as an institution-, college-, or department-level organized research unit.

The University of South Florida System encourages the formation of organized research units to conduct and facilitate coordinated research programs and service activities, to promote collaborations among and across disciplines, to enhance the University's research strengths, to increase extramural funding, and to foster the application of research to meet societal needs. These units are, by design, entrepreneurial. Although the University or one of its units may commit internal resources to help initiate and support these units, external funding will be expected to provide the largest part of the support for such a unit's operation and activities. Thus, any proposal to initiate a new institute or center must make a compelling case for its establishment and its ability to attract external funding in a manner that the host unit could not otherwise achieve.

### **III. Formation and Operation of University Institutes and Centers**

The USF System President may grant authorization for the development and implementation of University institutes and centers.

It is important to distinguish between formally established institutes and centers and other units of a less formal nature. In order to request approval and formal designation as an institute or center, a unit must have two or more members, one of whom must be a USF faculty member who is formally assigned to and compensated (from E&G or some other source) for work in the institute or center. A unit that has not been approved to use the formal designation "institute" or "center" should not represent itself as such. Units in which faculty participation is informal and unassigned should adopt another designation such as Laboratory, Project, Initiative, Collaborative, Coalition, or Group.

## ***A. Proposals to Initiate New University Institutes and Centers***

The following basic descriptive, contact, and fiscal information must be provided in any proposal to initiate a new University Institute or Center. The format for preparing proposals may be found on the Academic Affairs web site at

<http://www.acad.usf.edu/Office/Academic-Programs/Institutes-Centers>

- A cover sheet that includes:
  - The name of the institute or center.
  - The proposed date of implementation.
  - The name and title of the director of the institute or center.
  - Signatures of appropriate academic officers.
  
- A directory information sheet that includes:
  - The name and discipline of the institute or center.
  - Contact information, including the mailing address; telephone and fax numbers; the institute or center's Web site; and the e-mail address for the director.
  - A mission statement of no more than 75 words.
  - Key terms that identify the primary areas of focus of the institute or center.
  
- A financial information sheet that shows:
  - Whether the institute or center receives a specific appropriation from the Legislature.
  - Estimated total funds to be expended by the institute or center in the next fiscal year (or current year, if mid-year proposal) by funding source (State Appropriation to the State University System, Contracts and Grants, Fees for Services, and Private & Other Funds) and by entity (Education and General, IFAS, USF Health).
  - Estimated total positions to be allocated to the institute or center for the next fiscal year (or current year, if mid-year proposal) by funding source and type of position.
  
- A narrative description that includes:
  - A statement of how the mission, goals, and purpose of the proposed institute or center relate to the mission and priorities of the University of South Florida System and the Florida Board of Governors.
  - A statement of the value and capabilities to be added by the new institute or center; how the proposed unit will allow faculty, staff, or students to accomplish what could not be accomplished within the existing department or college structure; and how the proposed unit will contribute to the research and instructional programs of the University.
  - A description of the administrative and organizational structure of the proposed institute or center, including an organizational chart showing the functions and FTE of all faculty and staff and their reporting relationships.

- The names of faculty members who will participate in the proposed institute or center, either formally or informally.
- A statement of how space, equipment, and other resource needs will be met.
- A list of other institutions affiliated with the institute or center (if applicable).

Completed proposals for new University Institutes and Centers should be submitted to the USF System Office of Academic Affairs for review and recommendation to the President. Once approved, the proposal will be forwarded to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs in the Division of Colleges and Universities so that the information may be added to the statewide database and to the list of USF approved institutes and centers.

### ***B. Annual Reporting Requirements for University Institutes and Centers***

No later than September 30 of each year, the USF System Office of Academic Affairs will review the inventory of authorized institutes and centers to determine the accuracy of information that is maintained by the Division of Colleges and Universities. Additionally, a report of actual and estimated expenditure and position data, as well as evaluation/review information, shall be submitted for all institutes and centers that are approved for all or part of a given fiscal year (July 1-June 30):

- Total funds expended during the previous fiscal year (July 1-June 30) by funding source (State Appropriation to the State University System, Contracts and Grants, Fees for Services, and Private & Other Funds) and by entity (Education and General, IFAS, Health Sciences Center).
- Total positions during the previous fiscal year (July 1-June 30) by funding source and type of position.
- The date of the last evaluation/review.

### ***C. University Institute and Center Evaluation/Review Requirements***

A formal review of each University institute or center will be conducted at least every seven years to determine if the institute or center should be continued, classified as inactive, discontinued, or should apply for classification as a State of Florida institute or center. At a minimum, each review should include an assessment of the institute or center's progress against defined goals and objectives within the context of the institute or center's mission, the University's mission, and the Florida Board of Governors' Strategic Plan. The review also should include an assessment of the return on investment of State dollars, if applicable.

### ***D. Review of Directors***

Institute and center directors will undergo an annual performance review according to normal University procedures for the evaluation of faculty and administrators. Annual performance reviews of directors should include a review of the institute or center annual report (see Section III.B. above). The director's performance is also reviewed as part of the seven-year review of the institute or center.

### ***E. Disbanding a University Institute or Center***

When a University institute or center is disbanded, the college or other unit within which the institute or center is located must notify the USF System Office of Academic Affairs. The University must then notify the Office of Academic and Student Affairs in the Division of Colleges and Universities, which maintains the State of Florida's central database of approved institutes and centers. If a disbanded institute or center has been funded by the Legislature, the University must provide documentation to ensure that Legislative intent has been achieved and that the institute or center is no longer required.

### ***F. College Responsibilities Regarding Institutes and Centers***

It is the responsibility of any college within which a given institute or center is organizationally located to provide oversight for the daily activities of the institute or center, including both E&G- and grant-funded activities. This is especially important in the case of multidisciplinary institutes and centers that involve faculty from multiple departments or colleges.

Deans will ensure that institutes and centers, like all other academic and administrative units, are conducting their daily activities in accordance with University policies and procedures with respect to financial operations, personnel actions, agreements with outside entities, and faculty activity reporting including outside activity and conflict of interest.

Colleges should also provide oversight of institutes and centers with respect to marketing and publicity, ensuring that institutes and centers accurately represent their affiliation with the University, appropriately use the University name, and comply with all applicable institutional requirements.

Colleges are also responsible for ensuring that the required formal reviews of institutes and centers are conducted at least once every seven years (see Section C above).

Annual evaluations of institute and center directors by deans and department chairs should include an evaluation of the extent to which the institute or center is meeting its mission and goals and contributing to those of the college.