



A Framework for Institutes and Centers (IC) at Virginia Commonwealth University

Recommendations of the VCU Institutes and Centers Standing Committee

Approved by the Board of Visitors February 14, 2008

VCU2020: Theme IV, Initiative 6:

Institute a process of systematic, periodic review of all VCU research centers and institutes to assess their state, effectiveness and alignment with the overall goals of the University, and to recommend actions to improve centers and institutes and the institution

Institutes and centers add value to the University in varied and numerous ways

The VCU2020 initiative aims to promote visibility, transparency, and accountability across all institutes and centers

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
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<http://www.research.vcu.edu/vpr/institutes.htm>

VCU Standing Committee on Institutes and Centers

Dr. Francis L. Macrina, Vice President for Research (Committee Chair)

Dr. Robert Balster, Director, Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies

Dr. Russell Jamison, Dean, School of Engineering

Ms. Sheryl Garland, Co-Director, Center on Health Disparities

Dr. Thomas Huff, Vice Provost for Life Sciences

Dr. Ronald Hunt, Dean, School of Dentistry

Dr. Kenneth Kendler, Virginia Institute for Behavioral and Psychiatric Genetics

Dr. Nancy McCain, Director, Center for Biobehavioral Clinical Research

Dr. Laura Moriarty, Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs

Dr. Ronald Polk, Chair, Department of Pharmacy

Dr. David Sarrett, Associate Vice President for Health Sciences

Dr. Scott Vrana, Chair, Department of Psychology

Mr. Marcos Irigaray (ex officio), Associate Vice President for Clinical Enterprise,
Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences

Definitions

Institute: an organizational unit, approved and recognized by the institution, with a major focus on research and scholarship. However, institutes may contain educational, service, and patient care goals.

Center: an organizational unit, approved and recognized by the institution, with a broad, interdisciplinary mission which is typically manifold, focusing on elements that may include teaching, service, patient care, and/or research.

By definition, the work of Institutes and Centers should support the overall mission of Virginia Commonwealth University

Background

Institutes and Centers (IC) typically include faculty from a variety of departments, schools and units, often across both campuses. IC activity may include collaboration with industry and other institutions. IC activity may include outreach to the local community, region, state, or other areas of the country.

ICs must be guided by a mission statement and organizational plan that propose to add value to the university in terms of intellectual power, resources and collaborative potential, extramural funding and resource development. Approval of IC formation must be based on a rational and compelling plan with an explanation of the contributions the IC will make above and beyond those expected from existing institutional units (e.g., departments). Tangible evidence of achievement must be evident in annual reporting.

How Institutes and Centers at VCU may add value to the research enterprise

- Enhance interdepartmental and interschool interactions and collaborations leading to significant multi-investigator awards, e.g, training grants, program projects, etc.
- Lead in promoting strategic initiatives that position the institution to develop and expand the institutional research enterprise
- Play a significant role in transferring science into practice: as much as possible they embrace and promote translational research
- Play significant roles in ensuring the retention of outstanding VCU faculty as well as in attracting new faculty to the institution
- Create a mentoring environment for junior faculty that augments and extends beyond that provided by individual departments
- Provide unique educational opportunities for faculty and trainees
- Develop and maintain core facilities or services that promote and support research
- Build linkages between the university and the community

Proposed Classification and Nomenclature

ICs will fall into one of two categories under this proposal. Any IC approved by the VCU Board of Visitors and, when appropriate, by the VCU Health System are termed *chartered*. IC proposals seeking chartered status must be interdisciplinary endeavors that cross administrative boundaries.

The official designation of a chartered IC will be the use of the VCU prefix in the name of the IC.

Non-Board approved ICs extant or formed through the process of this proposed policy are termed *general ICs*. No VCU prefix will be used in the name of the general IC.

Whether chartered or general, both kinds of ICs will be considered official and listed on a VCU web page to provide notice of this.

Use of the terms “unchartered” or “non-chartered” to describe official VCU ICs that have not elected to seek Board approval is not recommended. This will avoid any misinterpretation that failure to seek Board approval is a negative feature.

Institutes and Centers at Virginia Commonwealth University

Examples of current institutes and centers (ICs) using the proposed nomenclature:

- *VCU* Institute for Drug and Alcohol Studies*
- *Center for Biomarker Research and Personalized Medicine*
- *VCU Philips Institute for Oral and Craniofacial Molecular Biology*
- *Insurance Studies Center*
- *VCU Massey Cancer Center*
- *VCU Institute of Women's Health*
- *Interactive Marketing Institute*
- *Mood Disorders Institute*
- *VCU Pauley Heart Center*

http://www.research.vcu.edu/vpr/institutes.htm

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A web page similar to this will be maintained by the Office of Research.

Each chartered IC entry will be footnoted with a date corresponding to the next formal review of the IC (phased in at 7 year intervals)

Each IC will contain a link to an IC web site maintained by the IC; maintenance of the web site is the responsibility of the IC director

ICs named on this site will be considered official institutional ICs and this designation will be affirmed explicitly; the VPR will request that any web site purporting to report the existence of an IC –but not officially approved as a general or chartered IC – be removed from the VCU web

Formation, Operation, and Evaluation of General ICs and Chartered ICs

Formation

Proposal to form an IC involves preparation of written proposal in an appropriate evaluation template. An example of an institute evaluation template is found at:

<http://www.research.vcu.edu/vpr/ReviewofISBDD.pdf>.

Preparation of a written proposal is required for formation of both general and chartered ICs

This proposal must include the rationale for selection of an IC director and a definition of membership for IC faculty. Seeking chartered IC status involves additional steps.

This proposal document is reviewed and approved:

1. General ICs: Relevant departmental chair(s) and dean(s), VCU Standing Committee on ICs and the appropriate academic vice president
2. Chartered ICs : Relevant departmental chair(s) and dean(s); Standing Committee on ICs, President and Vice Presidents, University Council, and VCU Board of Visitors and, when appropriate, by the VCU Health System Board
3. All ICs that propose to develop educational programs additionally must have those reviewed by the Academic Affairs Committee of University Council, and, if appropriate, by SCHEV.

Formation, Operation, and Evaluation of General ICs and Chartered ICs

Operation

IC Director reports to

1. General ICs: depending on scope of mission, ICs report to a department chair or dean, vice provost, or senior administrator of the VCU Health System
2. Chartered ICs report to a dean, vice provost, or vice president, or senior administrator of the VCU Health System

Responsibility for space, budget appropriation, and management for both general and chartered ICs resides with the person to whom the IC director reports.

Formation, Operation, and Evaluation of General ICs and Chartered ICs

Evaluation

Annual report

1. General ICs must provide an annual report to the chair or dean to whom the director reports.
2. Chartered ICs must provide an annual report to the dean, vice president or senior administrator to whom the director reports, with a copy to the Vice President for Research.

In both of the above cases, if the IC is supported from a grant dedicated to the operation of the IC, the report to the funding agency may suffice. This option will be exercised at the discretion of the chair, dean, or vice president. Otherwise, the format of the annual report must cover the elements articulated in the planning proposal and contain quantitative and qualitative information on the performance of the IC.

Annual reports of chartered ICs will be reviewed by the Vice President for Research and the Committee on Institutes and Centers. Such reports may be presented to the President and Vice Presidents at the discretion of the Vice President for Research. To the extent possible annual reports of chartered ICs will be posted on the IC web site. Such posting must not violate any rights of confidentiality or privacy associated with the work of the IC.

Formation, Operation, and Evaluation of General ICs and Chartered ICs

Evaluation

External evaluation

1. General IC evaluation will occur at 7 year intervals. This review typically involves constituting a panel of experts which, at the discretion of the chair or dean, may include reviewers external to VCU. The format for this review process is agreed upon between the IC director and the person to whom the director reports. The report of the reviewers is transmitted to the individual to whom the director reports who renders a final decision. Notification of this decision is made to the Standing Committee on ICs.
2. Chartered IC evaluation will occur at 7 year intervals and must include the use of outside experts to review the program. The format for this review process is agreed upon between the IC director and the person to whom the director reports and must be approved by the VCU ICs Standing Committee.

For chartered ICs, the 7 year evaluation must involve the preparation and review of a comprehensive document detailing the operation, accomplishments, and future plans of the IC. The process will involve on site interactions with investigators, staff, and trainees. The review team must prepare a written review of the IC. The institute director will be given an opportunity to provide a written response to the review team's report. The review team's report and the IC director's response will be analyzed by the chair or dean, who will make a recommendation regarding a disposition (e.g., continuance, modification, dissolution) to the VCU IC Standing Committee.

The VCU Standing IC Committee will review all written documentation associated with the 7 year review of chartered institutes and centers. The report of the review team will be presented by the Vice President for Research to the Provost, the Vice President for Health Sciences and the President. The President and Vice Presidents will make final decisions regarding IC disposition following any 7 year review.

The Official List of the Institutes and Centers will be developed from the 2007 Survey Of Deans and Vice Provosts

- A draft of this list will be circulated to Deans and Vice Provosts for additions, corrections, and deletions.
- Based on this information all extant ICs will be “grandfathered” and placed on the web site
- The reporting and evaluation components of the **Elements of Formation, Operation and Evaluation** will begin immediately upon posting of the web site.
- This date will serve as a guide to determine the evaluation cycle of the chartered centers and institutes. This date will be established by mutual agreement between the IC director and the person to whom he or she reports. This evaluation must occur within 7 years.
- Annual reporting requirements will become effective immediately, and the due date for annual reports will be August 1st.

Role of the VCU Standing Committee on Institutes and Centers

Review and recommend all requests for the formation of all chartered ICs

Provide guiding principles to be used in the evaluation of ICs

Receive certification of annual reporting from individual to whom institute director reports for all ICs

Review evaluation protocols for 7 year evaluation of all chartered ICs

Review and comment on the 7 year written evaluation report for all chartered ICs

Periodically review the policies of the VCU Standing Committee on ICs, proposing changes to the President and Vice Presidents as necessary.