[Gund] Institute\textsuperscript{1} Executive Summary

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Introduction

The environment has long been embedded in the vision of the University of Vermont: “To be among the nation’s premiere small research universities, preeminent in our comprehensive commitment to liberal education, environment, health, and public service.”

History

The [Gund] Institute has been four years in the making. In 2012 the Envisioning Environment exercise was initiated and in 2013 its working group\textsuperscript{2} recommended the creation of a university-wide Institute to encourage cross-disciplinary collaboration among UVM’s broad community of environmental researchers and scholars and to reduce fragmentation evident across the University. In 2014, a working group\textsuperscript{3} was charged with developing the Institute’s mission statement, strategic vision, and operating plan. In 2015, a working group\textsuperscript{4} focused on resourcing the Institute, and refining its governance structure.

Updates to the campus community throughout this multi-year process included the October 2012, February 2013, and September 2015 Faculty Senate meetings; the February 2014, May 2014, July 2015, January 2016, and April 2016 Across the Green memos; and a website launched in December 2014. Updates were provided also to the deans, as well as the Board of Trustees.

\textsuperscript{1} The “[Gund] Institute” is a placeholder until Institute staff can complete a naming process that includes consultation with stakeholders and donors. It is anticipated that the final name will be announced between October 2016 and January 2017.

\textsuperscript{2} Co-chaired by Prof. Stephanie Kaza and Prof. Beverley Wemple. Other members: Professors Bob Bartlett, Breck Bowden, Alison Brody, David A. Jones, Ernesto Mendez, Matthew Poynter, Taylor Ricketts, Donna Rizzo, Don Ross, and Regina Toolin.

\textsuperscript{3} Co-chaired by Prof. Taylor Ricketts and Prof. Donna Rizzo. Other members: Professors David Barrington, Pablo Bose, Breck Bowden, Alison Brody, Jan Carney, Christopher Danforth, Joshua Farley, Adrian Ivakhiv, Regina Toolin, Burton Wilcke, and Melody Burkins.

\textsuperscript{4} Co-chaired by Prof. Taylor Ricketts and Vice President for Research Richard Galbraith. Other members: Foundation CEO and President Richard Bundy, Dean Luis Garcia, Prof. Stuart Hart, Dean Nancy Mathews, Prof. Donna Rizzo and Dean Tom Vogelmann.
The [Gund] Institute will result from expansion of the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics (GIEE), a productive interdisciplinary research center in the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. The new university-wide Institute will operate with a broader focus and enhanced resources to ensure greater success, collaboration and impact. UVM has become a national leader in Ecological Economics due to the GIEE. To maintain this comparative advantage upon the GIEE’s sunsetting, which will coincide with the [Gund] Institute’s launch, the new Institute will retain Ecological Economics as one of several key strategic research themes.

**Mission**

To mobilize scholars and leaders to understand and solve the world’s critical environmental problems.

To fulfill this mission, the Institute will catalyze transdisciplinary research, nurture a community of scholars, connect research outcomes to local and global decision-makers, and help solve urgent environmental issues. It will provide opportunities for emerging leaders, and will use Vermont’s unique natural and social setting as a laboratory to test ideas of global significance.

The Institute is intended to add value for faculty and students interested in connecting interdisciplinary scholarship to environmental solutions. It will focus on several strategic themes and incentivize collaboration among scholars – at UVM and beyond – with interest and energy to participate.

The Institute will help to create a future that is ecologically sustainable, socially equitable, and economically viable.

**Strategy**

The Institute’s strategy consists of three major elements that promote creative collaboration:

- **Catalyze transdisciplinary research.** The Institute will provide seed grants to encourage new collaborations, support faculty, postdoctoral associates, and Ph.D. students, and help faculty identify funding opportunities and prepare proposals.

- **Connect UVM with the state, national and global communities.** The Institute will help connect UVM scholars to colleagues worldwide through symposia, visiting scholars, and sabbaticals. It will strengthen connections with the practitioner community, including governmental agencies, industry, development groups, and civil society. And it will communicate with the public to bring greater attention to the scholarly findings and problem-solving efforts at UVM.

- **Solve critical environmental problems.** The Institute’s most fundamental role will be to identify and pursue an evolving set of environmental challenges that are strategic for UVM to address. These challenges will serve as the focal points for the Institute’s work, including all of the activities described under Catalyze and Connect above. Most environmental challenges have vexed society for generations. They will likely not be solved by the work of this (or any) Institute alone, but solving them must be the ultimate goal of the Institute’s work.
Governance and Structure

Leadership: The Institute will be led by a Director, appointed by and reporting to the Provost. The Director will also have a reporting relationship to the Dean of their home unit on campus. The Institute will have a core team of five people (Director, Research Coordinator, Communications and Policy Leads, and Administrative Assistant). Internal and external advisory boards, as well as the Institute’s faculty affiliates, will advise and assist the core leadership team.

Internal Advisory Board: The Internal Advisory Board will include the Vice President for Research and four to six UVM Deans invested in helping the Institute succeed. The role of this committee is to help the Director build and maintain campus-wide engagement, and to provide strategic advice on program design, hires, etc. The Provost will appoint Internal Advisory Board members based on the recommendation of the Director, with input from the President.

External Advisory Board: The External Advisory Board will comprise nine to twelve academic, non-academic, and philanthropic leaders with a global focus. Their role is to provide guidance to the Director on research themes and programming, as well as assistance with fundraising and networking. Appointments to the External Advisory Board will be made by the Provost based on recommendations from the Director and the CEO of the UVM Foundation, with input from the Internal Advisory Board and the President.

Faculty: UVM faculty who become formally affiliated with the Institute will play a role in the governance of the Institute, advising the Director on funding and strategic decisions, new affiliates, fellowship candidates, and thematic priorities.

The Institute will be a campus-wide resource, open to participation of faculty and students from all units. All faculty, students, postdoctoral associates and visiting scholars that engage with the Institute will have primary appointments or affiliations in home colleges or schools.

Budget

The Institute’s budget in the first year is $1.3M, ramping steadily to a continuing level of $2.2M in year five. The Institute will be funded through a combination of (1) repurposed existing funds from the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics and the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources; (2) private philanthropy and grants; and (3) new strategic investment funds ($500,000 annually).

Repurposed existing funds, augmented by new philanthropy, will support the Institute’s core team, which includes the Director, Research Coordinator, Communications and Policy leads, and Administrative Assistant. All but one of these positions are already supported at the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics and will transfer to the new Institute. One hundred percent of the strategic investment funds allocated to the Institute ($500,000 annually), as well as a significant portion of new philanthropy will be allocated to activities for the benefit of participating faculty and students, including faculty seed grants, support for faculty research, Ph.D. students and postdoctoral associates, grant writing, course buy-outs, visiting scholars, symposia, conferences and major events.

The Institute is a Cost Center budgetarily responsible for all expenses associated with its core classified staff. Although the Institute may elect to support the salary/stipends, benefits, and/or tuition of certain participating faculty, postdoctoral associates, and students, the Responsibility Centers hosting the
primary faculty, postdoctoral associate, and student appointments will maintain budgetary responsibility for all costs associated with these appointments.

The F&A revenue generated by grants written by participating faculty will be allocated per IBB Algorithm 4a: 5% to the Office of the Vice President for Research - Research Investment Fund with the balance flowing directly to the RC of the PI/Co-PI.

Evaluation and Performance Metrics

Third-Year Review

In year three, the Provost’s Office will lead an internal evaluation assessing progress against performance metrics. This will ensure that the Institute is fulfilling its university-wide mission, is resourced appropriately, is expending resources appropriately, and is working toward achieving desired outcomes, allowing for course correction as necessary.

The third-year evaluation will include:
1. A self-evaluation against metrics that includes an accounting of the explicit return on investment (ROI) as well as an analysis of the impact of the Institute’s work prepared by the Director/Core Team.
2. An opportunity for input/comment from the Council of Deans, the Internal and External Advisory Boards, participating faculty, postdoctoral associates, and graduate students.
3. An electronic survey instrument available to all University faculty.

The President and Provost will prepare a written report of the review’s findings and recommendations. The report will be provided to the Director, and the Director will have the opportunity to provide a management response.

Fifth-Year Review

In year five (and repeated every five years thereafter), in collaboration with the Faculty Senate, the Provost’s Office will organize a formal evaluation, including a committee jointly constituted by the Provost and the Faculty Senate, and external experts who will evaluate progress against strategic goals and performance metrics.

The fifth-year evaluation will include:
2. A self-evaluation against metrics that includes an accounting of the explicit return on investment (ROI) as well as an analysis of the impact of the Institute’s work prepared by the Director/Core Team.
3. Consultation with the Council of Deans, the Internal and External Advisory Boards, participating faculty, postdoctoral associates, and graduate students.
4. An electronic survey instrument available to all University faculty.

The committee will prepare a report of its findings for the President and Provost. The report will be provided to the Director, and the Director will have the opportunity to provide a management response. The President and Provost will share a summary of the review’s findings with the University’s faculty, deans and other senior leaders.
Performance Metrics

In addition to the performance metrics, the evaluations should include assessments of budget, staffing, reporting structure, administrative processes, and the F&A arrangement to ensure these elements are adequate and supporting research and educational functions of the Institute as intended. The Institute’s performance metrics are organized around its three strategic elements. These metrics are established on the basis of an annual budget of approximately $2M. If this level of funding is not secured, the metrics may be revised. The Provost and Director will determine the revised metrics.

Third-Year Performance Metrics (in addition to the report accounting for the return on investment and impact analysis):

**Catalyze transdisciplinary research**
- Institute has at least 30 affiliated UVM faculty, all units across campus.
- Institute has issued 3 kick-start awards for new work by transdisciplinary groups that have not worked together before, worth a total of $500,000.
- Institute has attracted and funded at least 6 Ph.D. students and 6 postdoctoral associates that contribute to the diversity and excellence of the University.

**Connect UVM with the state, national and global communities**
- Institute has hosted 6 visiting scholars, 3 research gatherings on campus, and 1 national or international conference.
- Institute-related research has garnered significant media attention; at least 100 mentions/year and 20 mentions/year in top tier outlets.

**Solve critical environmental problems**
- With help of Advisory Board, Institute has identified key research areas that link UVM strengths to grand challenges, especially the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- At least 75% of Institute investments are targeted at these key research areas.

**Governance and operations**
- An Internal Advisory Board is established.
- An External Advisory Board is established.
- Metrics of broader societal impacts are established, with input from advisory boards.
- $1M in new gifts has been secured for the Institute.

Fifth-Year Performance Metrics (in addition to the report accounting for the return on investment and impact analysis):

**Catalyze transdisciplinary research**
- Institute has issued 8 kick-start grants, worth a total of $1.5M.
- These grantees submit at least 12 proposals to continue or extend the work supported by kick-start grants, worth $5M.
- New transdisciplinary research teams publish at least 25 peer reviewed papers.
- Institute has attracted and funded at least 10 Ph.D. students and 10 postdoctoral associates that contribute to the diversity and excellence of the University.
**Connect UVM with the state, national and global communities**
- Institute has hosted 10 visiting scholars, 5 research gatherings on campus, 1 national conference and 1 international conference.
- Institute-related research has garnered significant media attention; at least 150 mentions/year and 35 mentions/year in top tier outlets.
- Affiliated faculty are increasingly invited to present at conferences, non-academic venues, and to testify on related legislation.

**Solve critical environmental problems**
- Institute has engaged meaningfully with stakeholders in VT and nationally; at least 6 joint projects with stakeholders, with at least 3 leading to real impact on policy or decisions.

**Governance and operations**
- Internal and External Advisory Boards are functioning and continue to meet; membership is rotated as appropriate.
- $4M in new gifts has been secured for the Institute.