

Proposal for an Academic Center or Institute

From the University Manual:

204.5 Academic Centers and Institutes

Centers and institutes facilitate the performance of interdisciplinary or focused research or other scholarly or creative activities not otherwise conducted within the structure of Programs, Departments, Schools, or Colleges. Centers and institutes that involve any or all of the following are considered academic centers and institutes: curriculum or instruction, research, scholarship or creative arts. Proposals to establish, substantially change or eliminate academic centers and institutes must be approved by the Board of Trustees, upon recommendation of the President and Provost following application of appropriate governance protocols, the latter to include Faculty Senate approval. Academic centers and institutes are subject to regular review by the Faculty Senate. The scope of academic centers and institutes can vary from a sharply defined focus within a school or college to an interdisciplinary subject or specialized field of study spanning two or more academic units. The terms can be used interchangeably according to preference. Other synonymous terms may be used in the working title in order to best reflect current practice in a field. Academic centers and institutes do not grant degrees or appoint faculty, nor do they offer credit-bearing courses except in cooperation with the academic unit(s) that constitute their participants.

In general, a University-wide or cross-college center or institute will be hosted in one of the participating colleges or schools. It may also be housed within the Office of Vice President for Research or the Provost's Office depending on the primary mission of the center or institute. Its Director will be appointed by and report to the Provost or the Vice President for Research. Academic centers or institutes that are housed within a single college or school will typically have a Director who is appointed by and reports to the Dean or other designated college administrator.

Section Two

The following procedures govern review of proposals to establish a new academic center or institute as defined in the University Manual and which spans multiple colleges and schools in the University.

- a. A proposal to establish a new cross-unit Center or Institute is initiated by the Provost or the Vice-President for Research (the sponsor), codified in a letter addressed to the Faculty Senate.
- b. Upon completion of the review, the President of the Faculty Senate should submit a letter of support for or lack of support for a proposal to the sponsor. In the case of approval, the letter should include information relevant to the review by the Faculty Senate and the results of the body's vote. In case of non-approval, the letter should include indications of why the proposal is not supported.
- c. The timeline of review will begin when a proposal is considered complete by both the sponsor of the proposal and the Faculty Senate President.

- d. The principal review of proposed new centers and institutes will take place in the Research, Scholarship and Creative Arts Committee. In cases where a center or institute contains significant curricular components, two members of the Curricular Affairs Committee shall participate in the review of the RSCA.

Section Three: Proposal Format

Introduction

The main body of a proposal for a center or institute should be divided into five primary sections and relevant appendices comprise a sixth section and should be attached to the main body of the report:

- Section One: Abstract and General Information
- Section Two: Introduction/Rationale/Goals
- Section Three: Alignment with University goals and Vermont Needs
- Section Four: Resources, Budget and Staffing
- Section Five: Review Plan
- Section Six: Appendices

The first two sections of the report provide an abstract of the proposal, general information needed to understand the rationale for its establishment and the goals of the proposed center or institute. Section Three describes programs and activities and their alignment with the goals and mission of the University and the State of Vermont. Section Four provides an anticipated annual budget and personnel plans for the first three years, and Section Five should provide the criteria by which the center/institute will be reviewed after three years. Section Six can be used as an appendix for any additional information relevant to the proposed center/institute (e.g., organizational chart, grants funded, anticipated proposal opportunities, letters of support, stakeholder groups and/or advisory board members if applicable, etc.). Each of these sections is described more fully below.

Section One: Abstract and General Information (1 page)

The General Information section provides factual data about the center/institute being proposed, including name of the center/institute, affiliated college(s) or school(s), name of the director and to whom the director will report, as well as additional key leadership and department/college affiliations.

Section Two: Introduction/Rationale/Goals (1 page)

The Introduction/Rationale/Goals section establishes the background for the center/institute proposal and a rationale for its institutionalization at UVM (what will the center/institute do that isn't being done already?). It should include a brief description of its present status (e.g. already a working group, lab, initiative, etc.), its mission, the primary goals that will be the focus of the center/institute (in numbered form), unique and distinguishing characteristics, major research and/or outreach initiatives planned and ongoing, educational activities planned

and ongoing, and significant collaborations planned and ongoing.

Section Three: Alignment with University goals (2 pages)

In this section the proposal should describe how the center/institute will:

- A. Contribute to the University's Mission
- B. Meet a societal need or have an impact on the state of Vermont

To demonstrate commitment to the university's mission, the center/institute proposal should describe how the center/institute aligns with the vision, mission, and strategic priorities of the University by (address all that apply):

- Supporting research and creative activities that generate new knowledge and understanding and enrich the intellectual environment for students, staff, and faculty.\
- Engaging in relevant application of new knowledge to contemporary problems through teaching, scholarship, creative activities, service and outreach, depending on the specific focus of the center or institute.
- Promoting a global perspective and appreciation of cultural and intellectual diversity.
- Contributing to university-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts
- Fostering the qualities of respect, integrity, innovation, openness, justice, and responsibility as expressed in *Our Common Ground*.
- Addressing additional center/institute-specific indicators.

In defining how the center/institute will meet its goals listed in section two, the proposal should describe how the center/institute will:

- Promote the quality of the research and scholarship of the faculty, post-doctoral fellows and other affiliates.
- Ensure the center/institute has adequate leadership, faculty, support staff, financial resources, library resources, equipment, and facilities to accomplish its purpose.
- Attract extramural funding and/or donor commitments that contributes to long-term stability.

In describing how the center/institute contributes to society and has a positive impact on Vermont, the proposal should describe if/how the center/institute will:

- Promote work that contributes to society
- Ensure that the work of the center/institute will have a positive impact on the state.

Section Four: Resources, Budget and Staffing

A. Faculty:

1. Brief biographies of participating faculty;

2. New positions to be added and qualifications to be met:
 - a. Director, if any;
 - b. Other compensated positions
- B. Library support:
 1. Address whether additional library support will be required to support the work of the center/institute;
- C. Equipment needs and funds required to meet them.
- D. Physical space needs and plans to meet them:
 1. Laboratory, research, and field experience space;
 2. Office space.
- E. Budget—please provide a projected annual budget (in table form) for years 1-3 that includes those costs associated with:
 1. Personnel (listed singly), include time devoted to center/institute activities and the costs associated with that time
 2. Programming costs including fellows, events, pilot programming
 3. Equipment and renovation
 4. Contracted costs (admin, business services, communications)

And sources of revenue/support for each of these cost areas or items, indicating whether commitments for these costs are already in hand or contingent. Please include internal support provided by UVM.

 5. Notes: explanations for any of the costs above or sources of support that are not obvious in the table.

Example:

Category	Item	Detail	Annual Cost	Source of funds	Committed (Y/N)?
Personnel	Director	25% effort	\$32,000	ABC Foundation	Yes
Programming	Pilot Grants	4 grants of \$5k/grant	\$20,000	Not yet identified ¹	No
Equipment	Printer/Copier and supplies	Donated by Anthropology Dept	\$500 service /supplies	OVPR support	Yes
Contractual	Business Services	ABSC contract	\$10,000	Anonymous Donor	Yes

¹We have identified three Foundation Opportunities with anticipated funding dates this year that we will apply to. If we do not receive the funding, this program will be cancelled.

Section Five: Goals to be Reviewed after three and five years

- A. Establish goals and address how they will be met
- B. How and by whom will the program be evaluated?

Section Six: Appendices

Any supporting data and materials that would be helpful to understanding the proposed center/institute, its organizational structure, background on its leadership team and any national context may be appended to the main body of the report.

Section Three: Process and Timeline for Proposals to Establish a new cross-unit Center or Institute

- a. Proposals to establish a new center or institute will be forwarded by the Provost or OVPR to the Faculty Senate with a request for review. Proposals should be accompanied by a cover memo of the development process.
- b. The proposal abstract will then be circulated via email to all faculty, academic deans, and department chairs with a link to a survey to submit feedback/comments. The proposal must be circulated during the 9-month contract period. The survey will be available for **two weeks** (the reviewing committee may access comments on a rolling basis). The full proposal will be made available by the Faculty Senate office to any faculty member upon request.
- c. At the time of circulation, the Research, Scholarship and Creative Arts Committee will begin its work to review the comments and evaluate the proposal. The committee may solicit comment (either in writing or in person) from faculty, and the proposal's authors, or request additional relevant information needed to make a recommendation to the Senate. This review period will last for **30 days**.
- d. Upon completion of the comment and review period, the RSCA will meet to discuss and vote on the proposal. Should they accept the proposal, they should forward it to the Senate. Should they not accept it, they should return it with recommendations to the sponsor of the proposal (the Provost or OVPR).
- e. The Chair of the reviewing committee (normally the chair or co-chair of RSCA) will write a report that includes an executive summary outlining the decision of the committee and a brief summary of the rationale for the decision. In addition, the report should include a summary of commentary received, communication between the committee and the proposer, and other information received during the commentary period as well as a discussion of the proposal and fuller discussion of the committee's recommendation. The committee's report will be sent to the Faculty Senate President, the FS Executive Council, the VPR, and the Provost **within 7 days** of the committee's vote.
- f. Once reviewed and accepted by the FSEC, the proposal will be placed on the agenda for a vote at the next Faculty Senate meeting. Materials including the RSCA's memo report, recommendation, and any other information deemed relevant by the FSEC will be **sent to all Faculty Senators immediately** to allow sufficient time for consideration prior to the Faculty Senate meeting.
- g. Results of the Faculty Senate vote will be communicated to the President and Provost **the day after the Faculty Senate meeting**.
- h. All proposals must also be approved by the Board of Trustees.