

Academic Affairs and the Office of Research

[January 17, 2017]

UW Tacoma Guidelines for Establishing & Reviewing Research Centers

The UW Tacoma research centers exist to support the research mission of UW Tacoma within the larger academic vision of the campus. Supported by sponsored research agreements, gifts, or other operating funds, research centers are multi-investigator units that foster stimulating interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary environments for a group of investigators whose work contributes to a shared research agenda with significant social or economic impact. Within the context of UW Tacoma, research centers are expected to seek external funding to advance the collective research agenda, to collaborate with external partners, and to generate student research opportunities.

Based on UW guidelines and tailored for UW Tacoma's academic and administrative structures and Strategic Plan, these guidelines describe the procedures to establish and review research centers. If research is not the primary purpose of a center, such centers do not need to follow these guidelines. However, these centers should not include the term "research" in their title or primary mission statements. A singular principal investigator (PI) who conducts sponsored research, manages a research project, or directs a "research lab" within an academic unit also does not fall under these guidelines.

The final authority to approve, revise, and ensure the implementation of these guidelines rests within the UW Tacoma Chancellor's Office through the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (EVCAA). These processes will be facilitated by the Office of Research and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Research (AVC for Research). These guidelines were established in consultation with other stakeholders—Faculty Assembly Executive Council, Deans and Directors, and Vice Chancellors—and any major revisions will require their input.

Creation, Administration, and Finances of Research Centers

Creating a Research Center

An academic unit dean or director (i.e. sponsor) may petition for the creation of a UW Tacoma research center on behalf of two or more faculty. If a center involves more than one academic unit, the request should come from all deans and directors (i.e. sponsors) involved and should be accompanied by an internal MOU that establishes the primary sponsor for administrative purposes. The application must address the following and should be submitted to the EVCAA and AVC for Research in an electronic format.

Required components

1. The name of the proposed UW Tacoma research center.
2. The mission statement for the proposed center.

3. A statement of the center's fit within the UW Tacoma Strategic Plan Impact Goals. The statement should specifically address how the center aims to advance publicly engaged scholarship, to contribute to the intellectual environment of the campus, and to facilitate student research.
4. A description of the organizational and reporting structure within the center as well as between the center and its sponsoring academic unit(s). For centers sponsored by multiple academic units, the academic unit that has the primary responsibility for the center should be clearly identified.
5. A list of the faculty members that will be involved with the center and an indication of the respective capacity of each faculty member within the proposed center and its activities.
6. If the center will involve existing staff or is planning to hire staff, a list of existing and proposed positions is required and an explanation of the resources (sponsored research support, gifts, departmental funding, etc) in place to support the staff positions.
7. A list of non-UW Tacoma collaborators and a description of their respective involvement in the proposed center and its activities.
8. A five-year (business) plan that includes brief descriptions of any current funding, proposed funding sources, and proposed revenue streams that will support the center's activities.

Additional components required of potential centers requesting UW Tacoma resources

9. A detailed budget for the internal UW Tacoma funds required to support the center, including associated start-up costs, personnel costs, and a justification for the disbursement of this funding.
10. A request detailing the space required for the center and its activities, and a justification for this request.
11. A timeline that addresses when the center will be financially self-sustaining and how this transition will occur.

The AVC for Research will lead the review process for all research center applications, which will occur over a 2-month period. If the application merits initial approval by EVCAA, then the AVC for Research will circulate a memorandum to the campus stakeholders—Faculty Assembly Executive Council, Deans and Directors, and Vice Chancellors—requesting their feedback within the first month of the review process. The AVC for Research will then review and address any issues or concerns within the next thirty days of receiving collective feedback. If no issues are presented or all issues are addressed, approval will be sent to the sponsoring dean or director. From the date of approval, the center will exist for a five-year term under the oversight of its sponsoring dean/director.

Within the first academic quarter of the establishment of the research center, the center's staff is responsible for creating and maintaining a center website that meets all the UW Tacoma Creative Communication guidelines prepared by the Office of Advancement for campus websites as well as all WA and federal requirements for accessibility. This website must be linked to the website of the UW Tacoma Office of Research.

Administrative Framework and Reporting Structure

Primary oversight of the research center and its director will rest with the academic dean or director that sponsored the center's initial application. If multiple academic units are involved, an MOU that clarifies the primary unit responsible for oversight and review should have accompanied the initial petition for the creation of the center. Under some special circumstances, a center may have a dual reporting structure, including a dean or director and the EVCAA. In these cases, an MOU should exist that clarifies the nature of the reporting structure and oversight. Oversight responsibilities include participation in all high-level administrative decision-making that impacts the center, including the internal review and approval of all center proposals, service contracts, human resources, travel, and procurement issues associated with the center.

Directors of research centers must hold a tenured position within an academic unit at UW Tacoma. Research centers cannot have faculty positions; they must draw on the expertise of faculty or research staff from academic units at UW Tacoma, from other academic institutions, or from community partners. Staff can be hired for a center. Participation by UW Tacoma faculty as affiliate members of research centers does not alter the expectations of teaching and service within their home academic units.

The center director will report directly to the sponsoring academic dean or director. The dean or director and the EVCAA will agree on the terms of the center director's appointment, including expectations, impact on departmental responsibilities, and compensation, as appropriate. If the center is sponsored by more than one academic unit, the reporting and review structure will be specified in an MOU when the center is established.

Research Center Finances

The director of the research center is responsible for the fiscal health and sustainability of the center, and must ensure that the center and its staff comply with all policies and procedures of UW, the State of Washington and, where appropriate, external sponsors. The primary sponsoring academic unit is responsible for the oversight of the finances of the research center.

Proposals and solicitations for external financial support may originate from research centers on a case-by-case basis and are subject to with pre-approval from all participating academic units. Research centers are eligible to participate in the UW Tacoma research cost recovery (RCR) disbursement plan based on proposals that are tied to the center's organizational budget code. The center director will be responsible for establishing a center policy for the use of RCR and for the disbursement of these funds to participating center members.

No direct UW Tacoma financial contributions to a center will be provided without the center director providing a business plan for the center's eventual self-sustainability.

Review of Research Centers

Annual Reports

After a research center has been established for an academic year (and annually thereafter), the center is required to submit an annual report by July 1st to the sponsoring dean or director. The sponsoring dean or director will then submit this report and his/her own assessment of the center to the EVCAA and the AVC for Research. The EVCAA and the AVC for Research will collaborate on feedback and suggestions for the director of the research center. These will be provided by August 1st; the sponsoring dean or director will be included in this communication.

The Office of Research and the AVC for Research will ensure the annual review of all research centers. The annual report will be made available to the stakeholders: Faculty Assembly Executive Council, Deans and Directors, and Vice Chancellors.

The annual report for each research center must include the following:

1. A report of center activities over the last year and an assessment of how these activities supported the center's mission and UW Tacoma Strategic Plan Impact Goals.
2. A list of center members and a brief description of the contributions of each in the center's activities over the last year. Highlight any new collaborations or partnerships that were formed over the last year.
3. The plans and goals for the center for the coming year.
4. A financial report of expenditures over the last year.
5. The names of undergraduate and graduate students involved in the center's activities over the last year and extent of their involvement.
6. A list of all grant submissions and new awards over the last year.
7. A list of all publications during the previous year by center staff and affiliates. This list should include books, journal articles, and reports. Clearly indicate author, title, and publication source.
8. Any intellectual property and/or licensing agreements.
9. A review of the Center Director:
 - a. A description of the director's accomplishments.
 - b. A description of the director's goals over next year.

Conducted by the sponsoring dean or director, an annual review of the center director is required for each research center. This review is to be a separate review from the merit promotion review of the center director as a faculty member.

Five-year Performance (Renewal) Review

The sponsoring academic dean or director, in coordination with the center director, will submit a five-year performance review of the center, requesting a renewal of the research center for another term. The length of the requested renewal term cannot exceed five years. The sponsoring academic dean or director and the center director may decide to not submit a five-year performance review and request for renewal; this will initiate processes to terminate the research center.

The Office of Research and the AVC for Research will ensure that the five-year performance review of a research center occurs within 30 days of the fifth anniversary of the center's founding.

Upon notification of an upcoming performance review, the research center will be asked to submit a report that addresses the following in ten pages or less:

A. Overview and executive summary

1. A brief description of the center and a summary of the main research focus of the center (include date of inception), the current mission of the center, the history of the center, and details of any changes in the center that have occurred since the review of the center's initial application.
2. A description of how the center aligns with the mission of UW Tacoma.

B. Organizational structure and space

1. A description of the organizational structure of the center (or an organizational chart of the center).
2. The names of faculty members, research staff, and community partners involved in the center's research or administration. Include a brief description of their activities.
3. The types and numbers of students involved in the center's activities.
4. A description of the amount of space currently occupied, space challenges, and anticipated space needs over next five years.

C. Financial Data

1. A description of current and planned revenue streams, including sponsored research support, service contracts, membership fees, gifts, in-kind donations, etc.
2. A detailed list of awards given to the center and expenditures over the last five years.
3. A projected budget for the next five years.
4. A description of anticipated resource challenges over the next five years.

D. Major Accomplishments over the preceding period

1. An overview of the progress and quality of the research accomplished and the research in progress. Highlight major achievements.
2. An overview of how the center's research has been transformational to the relevant field(s) or discipline(s) and how the center's research has advanced UW Tacoma Strategic Plan Impact Goals.
3. A list of new partnerships, including industrial and community partnerships.
4. A list of major publications or conference papers by faculty, affiliated members, and students (include publications in progress).
5. Any technology transfer information such as patents, licensing, and IP disclosures.
6. Evidence of public service and outreach. Include contributions at the local, state, or federal level.

E. Teaching and Education

1. The list of graduate students who have been/are supported by center funds or participated in center's research activities.

2. A summary of the direct or indirect contributions of the center to graduate and undergraduate programs within academic departments.

F. Major goals for next five-year performance period

Campus input and decision process

The AVC for Research will make the full 5-year performance report available to the campus stakeholders—Faculty Assembly Executive Council, Deans and Directors, and Vice Chancellors—and solicit their input. The AVC for Research will provide this feedback as well as an independent recommendation to the UW Tacoma Chancellor and the EVCAA. The AVC for Research will submit a review report to the EVCAA that will include:

1. A brief statement describing the center’s research focus, mission, history, alignment with the mission of UW Tacoma and its Strategic Plan. This brief statement will also address how the center fosters both internal and external collaborations.
2. A summary of the center’s accomplishments and goals.
3. An evaluation of the center’s impact with respect to research and programs within academic units.
4. A fiscal evaluation of the center, including an assessment of the center’s fiscal outlook.

The UW Tacoma Chancellor and the EVCAA will have the final authority regarding center renewal.