

Guidelines for Centers and Institutes

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Introduction

Brandeis University's research Institutes and Centers help define the unique identity of the University and make essential and powerful contributions to its academic life. This document presents guidelines for the creation, operations, and review of Centers and Institutes at Brandeis University. It is the result of the collective input of directors of Centers and Institutes that currently report to the Provost's Office. Implementation of these guidelines for existing Centers and Institutes will be gradual, accomplished through a process of strategic planning that will consider a range of options for each Center or Institute, including possible mergers of Centers/Institutes, where such mergers can result in stronger units both academically and financially.

I. Purposes of Centers/Institutes

A Center or an Institute at Brandeis University is a distinct entity within a Department, a School or the University at large that:

- Has a clear intellectual focus that defines its essential program and research activities;
- Advances the scholarly mission of a Department, a School or the University at large;
- Conducts research in emerging fields or in areas not covered by discipline-based departments, or in any area that can benefit from focused study;
- May provide educational programs, training, and services to constituents in the University and the community;
- Extends the visibility and reputation of the University in the public realm;
- Is financially self-supporting, including all direct and indirect costs as determined by the University, when under RCM (Responsibility Center Management).

Both flexible and entrepreneurial, a Center or Institute contributes to the academic life of the School or the University by fostering collaboration among faculty, departments, and schools, and facilitating external relations with other research enterprises and grant-making agencies. A Center or an Institute provides opportunities for faculty and other distinguished scholars to pursue research and education that is enhanced through collaboration with others. Centers and Institutes promote research activities that would/could not otherwise take place and add a dimension to the research potential of their members.

To date, the designation of an entity as an Institute or Center has been inconsistent. Without suggesting that existing entities necessarily be renamed, but also in the interest of introducing a semblance of order, the following distinction shall apply going forward: Generally speaking, an Institute is a research entity organized within a Department or School whose research activities focus on a single discipline or field of study. A Center is organized within a School or the University and promotes research activities that are multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary in nature, and may serve as an umbrella for multiple Institutes. When Centers and Institutes are appropriately designed, ably led, regularly reviewed, and carefully integrated with the University's core mission, they make essential and powerful contributions to Brandeis University's academic life.

II. Guidelines for the Establishment of a New Center or Institute

The case for the establishment of a Center or Institute can be made by a faculty member, by a department(s), by a Dean, or by the Provost or President. A proposal for a new Center or Institute must be submitted to and approved by the Provost prior to the initiation of, or acceptance of, fundraising or grants activity for the proposed unit. For Centers or Institutes to be established via a federal agency grant, the grant proposal may serve as the submitted documentation requesting approval for the Center or Institute. In such circumstances, the proposed principal investigator must confer with the Provost regarding the planned submission of a Center or Institute grant proposal sufficiently in advance of the proposed submission to enable a determination by the Provost.

For proposed Centers or Institutes to be supported by individual donors, foundations, or corporations, a written proposal to the Provost should include the following:

- **Rationale:** What is the need for the university and/or school of the proposed Center or Institute? How will the new entity advance scholarship in its field? What new opportunities will occur as a result of the new unit?
- **Benefits:** What is the benefit of the new unit to faculty, students, and/or staff? What is the benefit of the new unit to the non-university community and how will the results of the unit's activities be communicated to this wider community? What is the relationship of the proposed unit to currently available faculty, educational programs, and other Centers or Institutes?
- **Financial Resources:** What funding opportunities exist to support the proposed new unit? What level of funding will be needed for the proposed unit to fully cover all of its costs now and in the future? How long is it estimated that it will take to achieve the funding goals and from what sources will funding be solicited? (More on financial resources in Section III.)
- **Faculty/Staff Resources:** What faculty will be involved in the proposed unit and what will their roles be? What impact will the new center or institute have on the other responsibilities of those faculty members involved in it? What other personnel are necessary for the proposed unit? (see Section IV B on faculty appointments.)

- Administrative Structures: What is the proposed administrative structure for the unit? What space, equipment, or other physical requirements are anticipated?
- Consultations: What entities have been consulted, both within and outside the university, in relation to possible participation and/or overlap in activities? Are there letters of support or reports documenting cooperation or need for the unit?
- Naming the Center or Institute: The Provost shall designate an entity as an Institute or a Center, in accordance with Section I (see above). Its formal name is to be determined by the Provost in consultation with the President.

III. Financial Resources

A research Center or Institute is expected to support fully its ongoing direct and indirect costs from outside sources as a result of its own efforts. There are multiple ways Institutes and Centers may be funded.

As of 2002, the Office of Institutional Advancement periodically issues guidelines requiring specific levels of endowment for newly formed entities. Not all Centers or Institutes, either existing now or likely to be launched in the future, have or will have endowed funds. Other funding mechanisms, such as restricted gifts and/or foundation, corporate or public agency financing through grants and contracts are common sources of support for such entities. Moreover, while some Institutes or Centers may open with large endowments or considerable infusion of restricted gifts, others will grow slowly and over time. The Provost, in accordance with University budget policies and RCM policies and procedures, will determine whether sufficient funding exists to implement the initial goals of the Center or Institute. The fiscal plans of an Institute or Center should be reviewed periodically (see section IV for review procedures).

Centers or Institutes that are created within a department or School as a result of federal funding (that often requires the naming of the activity as a “Center”), and that may not be expected to be a permanent entity, are allowed and may be operated with different guidelines than those presented here, but must demonstrate full funding of all direct and indirect costs.

Regardless of the type or mix of funding, Centers and Institutes must maintain a level of financial support consistent with its mission, capable of providing support for adequate personnel, and sufficient operating funds to conduct its research, training, and service mission. Over time, as the capacity of the funds for a Center or Institute changes, or the university’s academic mandates shift, the university reserves the right to evaluate Centers and Institutes and to reallocate funding if necessary to serve the needs of the academy.

IV. Management of Centers and Institutes

The directors of Centers and Institutes at Brandeis report either to a Dean or to the Provost. The Dean or the Provost is responsible for ensuring

- that the Center or Institute continues to contribute to the academic vitality and visibility of the University,

- that the personnel and financial resources of the Center or Institute are appropriate for its mission and are properly utilized, and
- that there is periodic review of the overall functioning of the Center or Institute, consistent with the procedures described in this document.

A. Directorship of Centers and Institutes

The Director of a Center or Institute must be a member of the faculty, unless specifically approved by the Provost (regardless of reporting lines). The Director should be appointed for a specified period of time (typically no more than five-year terms), subject to renewal by either the relevant Dean or the Provost. The appointment of a Director must include a written enumeration of any additional compensation, change in workload, or other alterations of the faculty member's relationship with the university that accompanies the position as director.

The Director has day-to-day administrative oversight and must provide leadership to the Center or Institute. His/her responsibilities include:

- creating strategic plans and goals in the context of the academic mission of the university;
- ensuring that the Center conducts research, teaching or related activities consistent with its mission, goals, and objectives;
- establishing an organizational structure for the effective functioning of the Center: consistent with Human Resources policies and procedures;
- interacting with university faculty and administrators, as well as external constituents on behalf of the Center;
- securing resources to support the Center or Institute and overseeing fiscal matters and submitting financial reports as required;
- ensuring that grant and donor agreements are met.

Directors are reviewed for renewal of their term during the last year of their appointment period on the basis of the following criteria:

- strategic vision;
- contribution to the visibility and stature of the university;
- contribution to scholarship in the areas in which the Center is positioned;
- ability to involve faculty and students;
- ability to garner the resources to maintain, support, and achieve prominence for the Center;
- ability to utilize the Center's advisory board (if applicable) to enhance and expand the Center's goals and activities;
- management ability.

B. Faculty Appointments within Centers and Institutes

A Center or Institute's academic focus should be defined broadly enough to attract the intellectual and professional participation of a critical mass of faculty members, visiting scholars, senior scientists, and/or leading professionals. A Center or Institute's viability should not depend on the work of a single faculty member.

The Director of a Center or Institute may recommend to the Dean or Provost the appointment of members of the Brandeis faculty, visiting scholars and other outside professionals to the Center or Institute. A faculty member may become an affiliate of a Center or Institute, but tenure is not awarded in a Center or Institute. In exceptional cases and with the approval of the Provost, a Center or Institute may initiate a search for a faculty position, in cooperation with one or more departments or Schools. Faculty members or affiliates of a Center should be appointed for a specified period of time, should have a written description of their roles and responsibilities and any compensation, alteration of faculty workload, or other rewards associated with their appointment, and should report on their accomplishments associated with the Center or Institute in their annual activities report. Department chairs and the University administration will consider faculty contributions to Centers and Institutes when making decisions on compensation, promotions, and other recognitions of excellence.

C. Staff Appointments within Centers and Institutes

Staff appointments are permitted within Centers and Institutes in order to carry out the mission of the unit. Procedures for hiring of staff and the policies governing their employment, benefits, compensation, and related matters, are determined by the Office of Human Resources.

D. Establishment of External Advisory Boards by Centers and Institutes

If deemed appropriate by the Provost and Senior Vice President of Institutional Advancement, an external advisory board may be created for a Center or Institute to provide oversight for the unit and to:

- advise the director on the Center or Institute's mission
- review the Center's accomplishments in light of its goals
- provide long-range guidance for the Center's major direction and strategies
- contribute to and/or promote the financial viability of the Center

The external advisory board may include qualified representatives from academic communities, professional organizations, corporations, donors, or other groups or entities of relevance to the Center or Institute. Members of an external advisory board are appointed by the President, upon the recommendation of the Provost (regardless of reporting lines to a Dean or the Provost), in accordance with the following procedures:

- The director of the Center or Institute requests the permission of the Provost and the Senior Vice President for Institutional Advancement to approach a prospective board member. This request for permission, accompanied by a rationale for the

- proposed appointment and the nominee's qualifications, ensures coordination of the university's efforts to engage individuals appropriately within the university.
- If permission is granted by both the Provost and the Senior Vice President for Institutional Advancement, the Center or Institute director should confirm with the nominee that such an invitation would be welcomed.
 - If the nominee agrees to entertain an invitation for board membership, a letter from the President is sent to the nominee inviting membership for a specific term on the relevant advisory board. The President upon the Provost's recommendation may renew board appointments.
 - The Director or a nominating committee may recommend prospective board members but may not invite or appoint new members to the board independently.

External advisory boards are expected to meet at least annually. The Dean or the Provost to whom the Center or Institute reports serves as an *ex officio* member of the board and should be invited to attend the advisory board meetings. Appointments to advisory boards should make clear the expectations of membership, including the philanthropic expectations. Advisory boards should have a formal mechanism for membership and term rotation to ensure continuity.

V. Review Procedures for Centers and Institutes

Within a period of five years following their establishment, and periodically thereafter (on a schedule to be determined by the relevant Dean or the Provost in consultation with the Center or Institute director), each Center or Institute will be reviewed by the relevant Dean or Provost. At the Dean or Provost's discretion, an internal or external review committee may be established to participate in the review. The criteria for the review will be determined by the Dean or the Provost, but must include:

- the unit's ability to enhance the academic mission of the university;
- the unit's contribution to the visibility and stature of the university;
- the quality of scholarly activity, educational programs, and/or other intellectual contributions of the unit;
- the level of faculty and student activity and participation;
- the effectiveness of the management of the unit;
- the effectiveness of the unit's external funding activities and financial sufficiency;
- the effectiveness of the advisory board (if applicable).

The Director should prepare a written report responding to the criteria established for its review. If an internal or external review committee has been utilized in the conduct of the review, it will prepare a written report of its findings and recommendations to the appropriate Dean or Provost. The recommendations should be designed to enhance the functioning and development of the Center or Institute. In some circumstances, the recommendations may include alternative organizational arrangements, including phasing out of the unit.

All centers and institutes are fully responsible for understanding and adhering to all University policies and procedures, including but not limited to budget and RCM policies and procedures, the gift acceptance policy, sponsored research submission procedure, procurement policy, consultant policy, capital projects planning procedures, and all other relevant policies and procedures.