2010-2011 Guidelines for Formation of Reynolda Campus Centers

(11/18/2010)

Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for faculty groups on the formation of Reynolda Campus Centers. Questions should be directed to Mark Welker, Vice Provost.

A critical facet of the application is to clearly define the topics or questions that will be addressed by Center faculty and to demonstrate why the faculty members identified in the application are uniquely qualified to conduct research or creative work on the proposed topics or address the proposed questions. The application should provide a compelling argument that if the Center is funded the University will get more than the sum of the individual faculty parts.

The Center proposals must address the following question: What will you do together and what important topics or questions will you address if the Center is funded which will not and cannot be addressed without this funding?

The Centers are funded and reviewed on an annual basis with the potential to be funded for five years. The five-year Center operational plan should address critical success factors:

1) Mission/Focus;
2) Operating Guidelines and Faculty Membership;
3) Resources;
4) Letters of support/collaboration

These factors are outlined in general terms below. The format for full proposals which addresses these factors is presented in a separate document.

i) Mission/Focus

A Center needs a purpose or focus that builds on, and extends, existing institutional academic strengths and interests, and should enhance the academic reputation of the University. Centers are designed to be interdisciplinary and more transitory than traditional departments and the mission/focus should be one that is better handled outside rather than inside traditional departmental boundaries. Centers should focus their efforts on topics or problems that require interdisciplinary approaches and have cross-departmental and/or cross-school affiliations.

The proposal must define the research or creative work areas that will be the focus of the Center. Describe how these areas build on, and expand, institutional strengths, and how they compete with or compliment other Centers around the country.

Generally the University will not consider establishing a Center unless there is a strong prospect that its existence will a) increase the level of research and/or creative work already underway and b) serve the University strategic plan priorities. Full details on the Provost’s Office Strategic Plan Initiatives can be found in WIN under infocentral in the forms and documents library under the Strategic Planning folder. In addition, the Center is expected to be interdisciplinary and in most cases will draw expertise from multiple departments and/or schools within the University.
ii) Operating Guidelines and Faculty Membership

Planning grants should be used to investigate and ultimately propose long-term Center operational guidelines.

The operational Center will need a mechanism for deciding faculty selection and continued participation as well as financial oversight or accountability. Full five-year Center operational plans will also need a formal plan for Center leadership, including a director and an executive or steering committee. Identification of this group and their duties as well as a proposed meeting schedule should accompany five-year operational plans. Some, but not all, Centers may need to develop handbooks or policy manuals that provide guidelines to internal and external users on how to access facilities and/or instrumentation housed in them.

Centers need faculty who are committed to the mission of the Center. The planning grant application should include information about who would contribute effort to the planning of the proposed Center. To insure stability, a committed team of at least six cross-disciplinary faculty members (inclusive of the four primary faculty) is normally expected. The planning grant should define what academic strengths would be built upon and where investments in new faculty would be welcomed in conjunction with an operational Center. Also, the grant application should address how information about best practices in faculty participation will be gained from similar Centers at other institutions.

Centers function more efficiently with a single director. Proposals recommending other leadership systems will also be considered if a compelling argument can be made for the leadership plan. Center Directors must be tenured faculty members at Wake Forest University. The Provost will normally appoint this person initially to a 3 year term. Center Directors will report to the Provost or her/his designate and staff affiliated with the Center will report to the Director. The Director will typically have a responsibility to evaluate the performance of affiliated faculty and report to their department chair(s) and/or deans, as part of the salary or reward process.

The Center must have mechanisms in place for a) deciding faculty selection and continued membership and b) financial oversight and accountability. Duties and rewards for faculty membership in the Center should be clearly defined. Faculty can be appointed as members of a Center but all tenured and tenure track appointments will continue to be made into departments or schools. It is recommended that the Centers have an Executive or Steering Committee to oversee the administrative items.

iii) Resources/Budget

The Center must develop a detailed budget. The budget must identify and propose sources of financial support (including potential sources of external funding). Proposed budget requests from the Provost’s Office should not exceed one million spread over six years. Centers will be awarded $100,000 in the first and sixth years. Budgets can request no more than $200,000 in years 2-5. Descriptions of in-kind support provided by other campus units that augments funding provided by the Provost’s Office will strengthen applications.

A Center budget should cover, as necessary, faculty, staff, students, supplies and space needs. Some examples of items that can be included in Center budgets are: director’s summer salary; salary support for staff; competitive summer stipends for faculty; money for Visiting Fellows from other institutions for short term visits; seminar support; graduate student or postdoctoral
fellowships awarded to Center members by the Center director or Executive Committee, money for member’s release time; equipment; and a mini-grants or seed money grants program.

Potential sources of funds must be addressed in the final Center proposal. These may include service fees, external grant/foundation support, university budget, and/or endowment.

The Center application should identify space where the research and/or creative work will occur and develop a plan for the acquisition of space as it grows.

iv) Letters of support/collaboration

Demonstrating support across departmental and/or schools is critical. Where the Center proposes overlap with departmental/school functions and faculty or in-kind support from departments or schools, the details of the collaboration and support should be addressed in a letter from the collaborator.