

**Policy Guidelines for Centers, Institutes,
Consortia and Special Initiatives at
The City University of New York
Approved by the Board of Trustees
27 February 1995**

In The City University of New York—as in most institutions of higher education—the normal locus for instruction and research is the academic department. Additional instruction is delivered through the University's continuing education programs. At the same time CUNY benefits greatly from the activities of centers, institutes, consortia, and special initiatives. These play an important role in the University's endeavors by meeting needs which fall outside the customary domains of academic departments. Since these organized research, instruction, and training initiatives do not operate under the established rules and regulations which govern departments, it is desirable—and even necessary—to set policy guidelines to provide for their orderly administration.

Centers, institutes, consortia and special initiatives should supplement, not supplant, activities of academic and administrative departments. Consequently, these entities are prohibited from duplicating functions of, or exercising routine prerogatives of, academic and administrative departments. In particular, they are not to be viewed as alternate routes to faculty appointments. Specifically, they are explicitly debarred from: (1) offering regular courses, (2) conferring degrees, (3) appointing—through their agency alone or without adequate faculty consultation—faculty members, (4) conferring tenure or providing certificates of continuous employment, (5) acquiring capital equipment not inventoried to an academic or administrative department, and (6) negotiating legal contracts on their own authority.

Organized research, training and instruction, and service units are expected to operate with substantial external support to advance the mission of the University beyond what is possible to accomplish through the basic institutional budget. While tax-levy support for centers and institutes is not prohibited, it should be viewed as an aid to developing external support, and never as a guarantee. Tax-levy support may be provided by either a college or by the University as outlined in the section of this document on financing policy. Historically, tax-levy support from the University has been provided from Organized Research funds. Tax-levy support from the University is usually—but not always—limited in duration and extent.

Centers, institutes, consortia, and other special initiatives carry out their diverse missions in a multitude of ways. Funding comes from the Federal, State, or City Governments and private

foundations. Detailed and rigorous rules applicable to all centers and institutes are not feasible.

Recognizing that the terms *center* and *institute* are used by many inside and outside the University to denote a variety of entities, this policy distinguishes between the TITLE by which an entity is known and its DESIGNATION by the Board of Trustees for the purposes of this policy. Within this document a center is a single campus entity, an institute or consortium is a multi-campus entity. An institute has a primary campus and a consortium is governed by a board, subject, like all units of the University, to the authority of the Board of Trustees.

§I. Definitions

A center, institute, consortium or a special initiative of the City University of New York is an organizational entity (other than an academic, continuing education, or administrative department) conducting research, instruction, training, service or other activity which, by its nature, methods of operation, or sources of funding, requires recognition as an entity outside regular structures. The purposes of such entities may be described as follows:

- 1) RESEARCH. Centers, institutes, and consortia are vehicles for interdisciplinary research, thematic research which unites subdisciplines within an academic discipline, or special projects of limited duration.
- 2) TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION. Groups whose education does not fall within the academic curriculum or continuing education programs of the University and is not applicable towards a degree can be brought together in campus-based centers or University-wide institutes which offer non-credit instruction more narrowly focused or of shorter duration than the customary curriculum.
- 3) SERVICE TO THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY. It is appropriate for the University or a campus to offer non-instructional services to the outside community based on its expertise in academic disciplines.

Regardless of its actual *title*, each such entity must be formally *designated* as one of the following mutually exclusive types and follow approval, financing, and accountability procedures described below for that designation in §II, §III, and §IV. The Office of Academic Affairs will maintain a current list of all approved entities with their formal designation and will publish such a list to the University Community every two years.

A. Research, Instruction, or Service Centers.

A *center* is an organized unit of a single college of the University whose mission is to sponsor, coordinate, and promote research, training, instruction, or service. Centers should not

duplicate or substantially compete with the mission of University-wide institutes, consortia, or special initiatives.

B. Institutes for Research, Instruction, or Service.

An *institute* is a organized unit staffed, supported, and governed by several colleges of the University under the leadership of a primary campus, whose mission is to sponsor, coordinate, and promote the research, training and instruction, and service, to enhance by collaboration the University's strength in specific areas. New institutes should not duplicate, substantially overlap, or subsume the mission of existing institutes, consortia, or special initiatives.

C. University-wide Consortia.

A *consortium* is an organized unit of the University formed by several campuses, institutes and/or centers, whose mission is to coordinate the efforts of its individual components and in which no single component leads. New consortia should not duplicate, substantially overlap, or subsume the mission of existing institutes, consortia, or special initiatives.

D. University Special Initiatives.

Occasionally, the University has a special opportunity or is specially requested to serve the City, State, or nation in projects which do not fall within any of the above categories. The University may then initiate an activity it hopes will grow into a center or institute of the types defined above or which may remain limited in duration and scope. Such projects are called *university special initiatives*, and while their form and function cannot be fully anticipated in sufficient detail to provide specific regulations for their conduct, by recognizing the possibility of these endeavors in this policy the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York indicates—in general terms—its support of special initiatives and affirms the legitimacy of their role in University affairs.

III. Approval Processes

A. Approval Process for Centers

Each College shall follow any applicable local approval process for creation of new centers consistent with its established governance plan. The process should include a recommendation from the college governance body. The college shall inform the Office of Academic Affairs of the intention to create new centers. After the Office of Academic Affairs has reviewed proposed centers for conformity with this policy, the college will place an item in the special actions section of the University Report, and the Vice Chancellor for Academic

affairs will present the new center to the Committee on Academic Policy, Programs, and Research as an information item.

B. Approval Process for Institutes

A proposal to create a new institute at the University requires approvals at the campus, system, and Trustee levels. Participating colleges will determine the process by which individual campus approval is conferred, but the process should include approval of the colleges's governance bodies and substantial consultation with faculty. At the system and Trustees levels, the process will consist of the following elements:

1. The participating colleges will provide to the Office of Academic Affairs a proposal that incorporates:
 - i) A governance plan for the proposed institute, including designation of a primary campus and the basis for participation by other campuses, as well as the structure of the governing board, steering committee, or executive committee.
 - ii) A funding plan for the institute (see below under II. B, "Financing," for details).
 - iii) A justification for the creation of the institute, including local, regional, and national significance of the contributions the institute is intended to make, as well as its relationship—if any—to existing centers and institutes at The City University and within the City and State of New York.
 - iv) Assurance that the institute does not duplicate, substantially overlap, or subsume the mission of existing institutes, consortia, or special initiatives except when the explicit purpose of establishing the institute is to replace existing structures.
 - v) A staffing plan, including an organizational chart, curricula vitae of proposed staff members, and letters of endorsement from individuals and organizations outside the University.
2. The Office of Academic Affairs will review the proposal and make recommendations to the Chancellor on the approval or disapproval of the proposed institute.
3. Institutes receiving the approval of the Chancellor will be transmitted to the Board Committee on Academic Program, Policy and Research for review and approval.
4. Institutes receiving the approval of the Board committee will be submitted to the full Board of Trustees for its review and approval.

C. Approval Process for Consortia

A proposal to establish a new consortium at the University will require approvals at the system and Trustee levels. The process will consist of the following elements:

1. The participating campuses will provide to the Office of Academic Affairs a proposal incorporating:

i) The governance plan of the proposed consortium, including the membership and structure of the governing board.

ii) A funding plan for the consortium (see below under II B, "Financing," for details).

iii) A justification for the establishment of the consortium, including local, regional, and national significance of the contributions the consortium is intended to make, as well as its relationship to existing institutes and centers at The City University and within the City and State of New York.

iv) Assurance that the proposed consortium does not duplicate, substantially overlap, or subsume the mission of an existing institute, consortium, or special initiative.

v) A staffing plan for the consortium, including an organizational chart, curriculum vitae of proposed staff members, and letters of endorsement from individuals and organizations outside the University.

2. The Office of Academic Affairs will review the proposal and make recommendations to the Chancellor on the approval or disapproval of the proposed consortium.

3. Consortia receiving the approval of the Chancellor will be transmitted to the Board Committee on Academic Program, Policy and Research for review and approval.

4. Consortia receiving the approval of the Board committee will be submitted to the full Board of Trustees for its review and approval.

D. Approval Process for Special Initiatives

Since the exact form of special initiatives cannot be anticipated, it shall be left to the Chancellor to bring them to the attention of the Board in a manner appropriate to their structure, function, and financial requirements. However, since the structure of special initiatives is not specified in advance, it is important that special care be taken to ensure that special initiatives adhere strictly to the limitations made explicit at the beginning of this document.

§III. Financing Policy

A. Financing Policy for Centers

Centers, as campus-based entities, will generally be funded through a combination of external sponsored program funds and campus-based support. It is University policy that tax-levy support for centers should be limited in extent and duration so that it does not constitute a burden on the instructional budget of campuses. While occasional central tax-levy support for campus-based centers is allowed, as a rule campuses should expect to support centers within their own budgets and from sponsored programs.

B. Financing Policy for Institutes and Consortia

Given the anticipated scale of their operations and the magnitude of institutional commitments they carry, institutes and consortia are an appropriate locus for major investments of tax-levy monies. The University does not place rigid limits on the dollar amounts of tax-levy support allocated to an institute or a consortium or prescribe precise matching requirements, but it does expect that over time tax-levy support will be matched with substantial amounts of non-tax-levy monies and that whenever feasible, institutes and consortia will make vigorous efforts to become fiscally self-sufficient. Proposals for the creation of new institutes or consortia shall include in their documentation a fiscal plan indicating the need for matching funds and a timetable for attaining all funding goals.

§IV. Accountability

A. Accountability for Centers

Accountability for centers will be assigned to campuses. The Office of Academic Affairs should be provided with an up-to-date listing of all centers once every two years for inclusion in the Chancellor's report.

B. Accountability for Institutes and Consortia

At the end of every other fiscal year, the colleges (for institutes), and the boards of directors (for consortia), shall submit to the Office of Academic Affairs, for informational purposes, a report from each institute and consortium. The report shall contain:

1. The Director's statement of the institute's or consortium's current progress toward meeting its goals;
2. The institute's or consortium's staffing;
3. A description of current and projected activities;
4. A current and projected budget, including individual project budgets, a tax-levy budget showing expenditures of these funds, and a chart indicating the sources of staff and faculty salaries.

If, on the basis of the report submitted, questions arise concerning the viability, governance, or mandate of a specific institute or consortium, the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs will seek clarification from the appropriate president of the College (for institutes) or the board of directors (for consortia). The report on the institute or the consortium, together with any supplementary materials, will be submitted to the Chancellor for review and appropriate action.

On the basis of the institutes' and consortia's reports, the Office of Academic Affairs shall prepare and submit to the Committee on Academic Policy, Program and Research, for informational purposes every other year, a report on research and training institutes and consortia, which will also include a listing of new, continued, and terminated institutes and consortia. The listing shall be included in the Chancellor's Report, for information purposes.

C. Accountability for Special Initiatives

The Chancellor shall from time to time as deemed appropriate or at the request of the Board of Trustees report to the Board on the status and progress of special initiatives.

SV. Evaluation of Centers, Institutes, and Consortia.

A. Evaluation of Centers

Centers shall be evaluated at least every five years through a campus-based process.

B. Evaluation of Institutes and Consortia

Institutes and consortia shall be evaluated every five years. The University will assess the success of the institute or consortium in meeting its stated goals, including the effectiveness of the institute or consortium as a University-wide entity. The presidents (for institutes) or boards of directors (for consortia) shall coordinate the evaluation process in accord with campus governance procedures. The evaluation shall include a self-evaluation report and a report by at least two outside evaluators along with a summary of financial support and progress toward fiscal self-sufficiency, which shall be given substantial weight in the evaluation. Failure to achieve reasonable progress toward an appropriate level of non-tax-levy support will constitute sufficient cause for discontinuing University-level support of an institute or consortium. Evaluation reports shall be submitted to the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who shall prepare a summary of the evaluations and submit it to the Chancellor for review and appropriate action. Recommendations for discontinuation of unsatisfactory institutes and consortia shall go to the Committee on Academic Policy, Program and Research, and to the full Board for action.