



Section:	
Title:	Policy on Centers or Institutes
Effective Date:	
Approved By:	Provost
Responsible Unit:	Office of Academic Affairs
History:	Created by CSPP February 28, 2018
Related Documents: Naming of Assets Policy Organizational Change Policy Program Closure Policy	

I. INTRODUCTION

This document establishes The College of New Jersey’s policy on the approval, assessment, and closure of centers.

II. DEFINITIONS

A center or institute (hereafter, “center”) is a unit that focuses on sustained work in an area of interest to a department, school, or College. Unlike academic departments, centers do not house or oversee academic curricula. For the purpose of this document, centers are defined as entities that may enhance the quality of the TCNJ educational experience through research or service, but that are not central to the delivery of the graduate or undergraduate programs of study. Examples include academic support offices, research centers, think tanks, and clinic outreach centers.

III. POLICY

Approval Process for Establishing an Academic Center

Step One: Preparing a Proposal

A written proposal is prepared by the department, school, or other unit proposing to house the center. This proposal must include three years of data showing sustained interest in the center and continuing resources for its support. For this reason, prior to the establishment of a center, the proposing unit may establish an office or institute to begin the work of the proposed center. The written proposal must include the following elements:

1. Proposed Name (See Naming of Assets policy, if applicable);
2. Rationale, including information showing that the proposed center would not duplicate the work of an existing unit at TCNJ; TCNJ Mission, Vision, and Strategic Plan
3. Mission and Goals of proposed center;

4. Organizational and Reporting Structure, with an organization chart; a position description and proposed compensation for the director, including reassigned time, if applicable; and information about the purpose and the selection of advisory committee members, if applicable;
5. Resources, including budget, staffing and facilities; the budget must include three years of past data showing the proposed center would have sufficient resources to continue its work in a sustained, high-quality manner. Centers should set a goal of being self-supporting wherever possible. The proposal should include a detailed, multi-year business plan, with examples of grant opportunities and a list of potential donors, where applicable. Information on staffing should include requests for faculty reassigned time, if applicable.

Step Two: Review of the Proposal

In most cases, the approval process moves from the proposing unit, to the school dean (if applicable), and then to the provost, who gives final approval to a new center. The proposal is first reviewed and approved by the proposing unit. If a center is to be interdisciplinary in focus, all affected units should review and approve the proposal prior to its submission to the provost. Before making a final decision on the approval of a new center, the provost will review the proposal with Council of Deans, the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities (CSPP), the Cabinet, and the President. Board of Trustees' approval is not typically required for the establishment of centers, but in cases where it is determined that Board of Trustees approval is required, the proposal is submitted by the provost or president to the Board of Trustees.

Step Three: Results of the Review

The Office of the Provost will communicate the result of the review to the unit that submitted the proposal. If the center is approved, the Office of the Provost will notify the offices of Advancement and Human Resources, and these offices will work with the proposing unit to establish the center. In cases where Board of Trustees' approval is not required, notification of the approval of a new center will be included as an information item to the Board of Trustees.

Assessment of a Center

Centers should submit annual reports to the unit housing the center, the school dean (if applicable), and the provost. The annual report should include 1) the projects and activities of the past year; 2) the achievement of goals and objectives as stated in the assessment plan; 3) evidence that the center continues to meet its mission and the mission of the College; 4) information on whether the center remains financially sustainable, including a financial statement; and 5) goals and business plan for the next year. A program review, including a self-study and a review by an external evaluator, should take place every five years, and should be submitted to the unit housing the center, the school dean (if applicable), and the provost.

Discontinuing a Center (Note: The process for closing a center is similar to the process for closing a program. See: Program Closure Policy)

Step One: Closure Criteria

The following should be taken into consideration before initiating the process of closing an academic center:

- a. Degree to which the center conforms to the stated mission of the College.
- b. Inability to staff a high-quality center with appropriate and interested faculty and/or staff.
- c. The degree to which the reputation of the work done by the center affects (either positively or negatively) the stature of the College among its various constituencies.
- d. The degree to which an appropriate level of external funding is maintained.
- e. The College's responsibility to external funding sources.

Step Two: Guidelines for Center Discontinuation

As for academic programs, the process for center discontinuation should roughly parallel that which was followed for approval. For those centers that needed trustee or central administration approval at the outset, the following procedure should be followed.

Step Three: Process for Discontinuing Board Approved Centers

In what follows, it is assumed that initiation of the closure process begins at the dean's level. This process might also be initiated by the provost or president.

- a. The dean meets with the faculty/staff involved in the center to discuss the intention of initiating the closure process. (In multi-school centers, all deans involved will meet with the faculty/staff.) Prior to such a meeting, the dean will identify all employees who will be affected if the center is closed. The dean notifies those employees of that possibility.
- b. The dean(s) recommends to the faculty/staff to close the center.
- c. The faculty/staff respond to the dean.
- d. The dean's recommendation for discontinuation is sent to the provost for review and concurrence or non-concurrence. The dean will provide the provost with a summary of the factors leading to the recommendation to close the center. The provost will review the proposal with Council of Deans, the Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities (CSPP), and, if appropriate, the Cabinet.
- e. Any faculty member or professional staff assigned to an academic center being closed will have the opportunity, in accordance with relevant collective bargaining agreements, to either move to another department or academic unit with a similar function to the one being phased out or to another position at TCNJ for which they are qualified at the same level as their current position.
- f. Should the dean and provost recommend the discontinuation of any center, the president will review this recommendation. If the president concurs, s/he will

inform the Board of Trustees of her/his intention to recommend that the center be discontinued.

g. In the event of closure, the provost will assure that all parties involved work to an orderly and equitable dissolution of activities and center assets.

h. The provost will assure that the appropriate campus constituents are informed of the closure decision and procedures.

IV. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Naming of Assets Policy
Organizational Change Policy
Program Closure Policy

V. HISTORY

Created by CSPP, 2/28/2018

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