Decentralizing Centers

Report of CAA Ad Hoc Committee on Centers

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Budget Restructuring Drives the Proposal

Since 1995 the University has been considering budget restructuring. Now it is here. Whether anyone can explain it or the accompanying budgets, one thing is clear: the responsibility for success or failure is being decentralized. That must be true for centers.

Budget restructuring drives this proposal for all processes connected with centers: creating, funding, reviewing, stopping.

Kinds of Centers, their names, their review.

Centers are non-degree granting units undertaking activities that cross departmental, divisional, school, or college boundaries. The primary purpose of a center is academic (see BoT:3335-3-36A)

Parts of items (A-C) modify sections of BoT:3335-3-36. Where that occurs, the relative words are in italics.

A. University Centers. Any center with some central university support will be reviewed by CAA at initiation and on a four-yearly basis, as described below. Such centers can add the phrase – A Center at OSU – to their name. The initiation must be approved by the Provost, Senate and Board of Trustees. Subsequent reviews will be directed to the same with any recommendation proposal for continuation. In the absence of such a recommendation, the center can no longer use the designation: A Center at OSU.

B. College Centers. Any center whose internal support is wholly within a college, school or a group of colleges can be established by those units who will review it every year. The Provost will receive any such review. Such centers can added the phrase – A Center in the College(s) of (names) to their name.

Single departments cannot establish centers (BoT:3335-3-36) and should use labels such as laboratory, office or sandpile to call attention to some non-traditional organizations.

C. Start-Up Centers. External, special funding opportunities allow the establishment of start-up centers. See procedures below. The CAA will do the initial review after six years and determine whether the center is "university" or "college." That designation shall determine subsequent reviews. Such centers can add no phrase to their name prior to the first review process.
Review Procedures

1. Understanding the Center’s Mission.
   - The subcommittee charged with the review will identity **quantifiable targets** that were set for the center and uncover the center’s budget, using the original proposal and any information the Provost’s office has. This first effort will be shared with the center director for its accuracy and updating of information.
   - The Center will then be asked to write a brief but fact-intensive report that addresses specifically its record in making or missing the quantifiable targets. In either case, the report will define a new set of quantifiable targets to be assessed in the next review.

2. Subcommittee and CAA actions.
   - The review subcommittee will meet with appropriate individuals to assess the accuracy and specificity of the report. The report of the subcommittee **must** recommend one of three options: (i) closing the Center; (ii) revising the direction and budgetary support of the Center or (iii) continuing the center in line with the mission proposed in its report, perhaps with recommendations regarding funding.
   - This report shall be consider by CAA whose vote and recommendation will be passed onto the Provost and to those organizations that the Center currently reports.

Subsequent action.

1. For centers with central support, the Provost shall report to the CAA action taken.
2. For centers without central support, the responsible units shall send notice of the action taken to the Provost with a copy to the CAA.

Examples: The Appendix briefly analyses two recently approved centers: (1) Institute for China Studies that is *not* centrally supported and, if continued, would be reviewed at the college level; (2) John Glenn Institute that has substantial central support and would be continually reviewed by CAA.

Start-Up Center.

1. Proponents of a new center that might get substantial external funding must first convince department chairs and college deans of the likelihood. Those individuals could support the proponents in approaching the Vice President for Research for the necessary start-up fund and Provost for approval as a Start-Up Center. Those individuals have the power to authorize a new center subject to two conditions:
   - a. The Provost will notify the CAA, Senate and Board of Trustees that the Start-Up center has been approved including some details on any central fiscal support.
   - b. The Provost will specify the criteria that the center must satisfy to be considered as University or College center. The CAA will consider these criteria and make recommendation to the Provost on their appropriateness.
2. After five years the CAA will constitute a review committee to evaluate the center according criteria in item 1.b. The committee will follow the procedures above.

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Appendix: Sample Review Processes

Institute for China Studies (ICS)

1. Budget seems to involve funds from East Asian Studies Centers (EASC) that it, in turn, got from a 1986 Academic Challenge Grant. If that is the only source of funds, they have long ago been transferred to the unit (EASC) and hence subsequent reviews shall be conducted by whomever reviews EASC. That can’t be told from the proposal.

2. The ICS seems to have this goal: “Provide a research home in the linguistic and cultural region of their expertise.” The document is vague on specifics. But it does mention that there are eight relevant departments (without naming them). These departments could be identified and queried as to how the ICS has provided a “research home.” The specifics seem to include:
   - Interdisciplinary symposia: at least one a year
   - Annual lecture series, at least one a year.
   - “Institutional support to scholarly productions,” vague.
   - “Assist in China-related research programmatic and faculty development activities.” The Huntington archive is the only specific.
   - “Responsibility as a communications center for interdisciplinary information and exchange.”
   - “Training for K-12 educators.”

3. Oversight (Committee) is EASC, specifically its Executive Committee, and supplemented by the “Associate Provost for International Affairs and, as appropriate, other persons with concern for Chinese studies.” Future, ICS will be administered as “one of the activity centers of the East Asian Studies Center within the context of the Office of International Affairs.”

4. Budget. With respect to external funding, it says “possibilities to supported targeted activities in Chinese studies are excellent.”

5. Its own review in the third year (?June 2003): “The level and quality of the annual scholarly and outreach activities of the ICS faculty will be measured against levels achieved in the previous three years preceding its establishment. Thereafter it will be measured against the preceding four year period. Review will be conducted by the Oversight Committee, (see item 3) who will solicit the mandated input from peers external to OSU.”

6. Current situation. As this is being written, no webpage referring to ICS can be found. Indeed webpages for the East Asian Studies Centers have no link to the Institute for China Studies. If there is such an organization, it is very quiet. The proposal to OAA is dated December 28, 2000. The CAA approved it on Jones 32, 2001.

The John Glenn Institute.

1. Budget involves university funds, starting with $250,000 (in FY99) and ratcheting up to $500,000 per year. Initially the institute hoped to raised a $10 M endowment to provide $500,000 annually; current endowment is $400,000 providing $20,000 annually.

   In FY2003 it is possible to compare its staff estimates with actual (in parentheses): 6 (6) Local Administrative Staff; 0 (5) Management Development Programs; 8 (2) Washington DC Academic Leadership Program; 3 (1) High School Internship Program; 0 (2) Development

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Office; 0 (2) Office of Senator Glenn; 0 (2) John Glenn Archives Staff [on library budget]; (2) Off-Site Activities. Clearly the large university commitment require central review.

2. Its goals are laudatory and substantial: (a) enhance involvement and performance in public service; (b) develop sound public policies to address the problems facing our nation and our state. Successes in public service can be judged by the success of its three components: (i) Washington DC internship program, (ii) series of training sessions to enhance capabilities and capacities of people already in public life; (iii) research and scholarly activities that will range from High School Internship program to Media and Public Discourse project. Public policy goals include (i) sharing university knowledge base with decision-makers at all levels of government; (ii) stimulating more research activity on public policy issues facing decision makers; (iii) sponsoring outreach symposia and seminars.

3. There will both an Internal Oversight Committee reporting to the President and Provost, and a National Board advising the director on program thrusts and directions. From the institute webpage http://www.glenninstitute.org/glenn/contact.asp it is not possible to find anything about these oversight functions. On the other hand the webpage does give info on the operating program, including, for example, brief bio of the 13 current DC interns, and a frank set of graphs showing Ohio’s strengths and weaknesses.

4. The proposal promises (a) annual institute-staff evaluations by the Director that are shared with the Internal Oversight Committee, (b) annual report by Director to Provost and IOC on past and planned activities, (c) in the third year (FY2001?) self-review by Director and staff to be shared with IOC, Provost, the Vice President for Research, (d) in the fourth year (FY2002) panel of outside evaluators to review all functions and provide report to IOC, Provost and Research VP. "Continuation of the institute will depend upon a successful review at this stage and at 4-year intervals." If these occurred, the CAA review should be trivial: there are both criteria and plans to generate the relevant reports.

**Charge to Committee**

1. The committee is charged to study the current process and guidelines for establishment of Academic Centers and to make a recommendation about the need for change.

2. If the committee determines that modifications are needed they are asked to draft specific changes to the existing guidelines.

3. The committee is also charged to establish guidelines for 5-year reviews of recently approved and future centers. Specifically:
   a. Review the processes used at comparable universities.
   b. Seek input from members of the Ohio State community who have been involved in establishment of centers.
   c. Coordinate closely with the Research Committee’s Center Subcommittee.
   d. Review the proposal from the President’s and Provost’s Advisory Committee on Procedures for Creating Centers.
   e. Consider any fiscal implications associated with awarding or redirecting internal funds and any implications associated with budget restructuring.

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