

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** University of Idaho Faculty and Staff

**From:** Dr. John K. McIver, Vice President of Research and Economic Development 

**Date:** October 4, 2010

**CC:** Dr. M. Duane Nellis, President  
Dr. Doug Baker, Provost and Executive Vice President

**Subject:** Integrated Scholarly Entities at the University of Idaho

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The University of Idaho is committed to quality scholarly activity, as well as to developing sustainable endeavors and to establishing positive practices. A necessary step in obtaining these goals is to improve the way centers and institutes that support scholarship and creative activity are handled within the University; very little formal guidance currently exists for the operation of these entities. Understandable and fair guidelines for centers and institutes will improve our scholarly efforts thereby enhancing our reputation in selected areas and increasing our funding.

Centers and institutes have a long tradition at the University of Idaho. They are often created to provide a focal point for research and other scholarly activity or as a requirement of external funding. Although centers and institutes are not clearly defined in University policy, generally institutes report to the vice president of research and economic development (VPRED) while centers report to a dean. There are exceptions such as the Martin Institute. Institutes generally receive funding from the University for the director's salary and administrative support, as well as a sum equivalent to the college portion of the overhead generated by the entity. Centers typically have a more diverse funding profile, extending from no support on up.

Over the past decade or so, the number of centers and institutes has continued to grow. Currently, there are six institutes that report to the VPRED and an unknown number of centers. The majority of these entities have not been reviewed for more than a decade nor do they have clearly articulated goals. This ad hoc process does not meet best management practices expected of a university of our stature.

In order for the University of Idaho to remain competitive and grow its scholarly activity, it must invest its limited resources strategically and continually assess the impact of those investments. To do this, it must have clearly defined processes and procedures that govern the creation, operation and possible change or closure of its

centers, institutes and related entities that are focused on enhancing scholarly activities. Current University policy allows for the creation of these entities, but does not specify a mechanism for their change or closure or clear criteria for their establishment, governance and operation.

Attached are two documents that establish new processes and procedures for the creation, operation, review and termination for three levels of University entities whose purpose is to enhance scholarship and creative activity. These processes and procedures were developed after a retreat in which deans, faculty, staff and administrators discussed the justification for these entities and the general ground rules under which they should operate. The details of the plan were developed by a committee consisting of faculty and staff members, as well as deans and myself. Faculty and staff members included representation from the University Research Council. The plan has also been discussed by the full Provost's Council and during the deans' summer retreat. The attached documents reflect input from all of these groups.

The first document--"Integrated Scholarly Entities at the University of Idaho"-- defines three levels of recognized entities. The differences between the three levels largely focuses on the nature of oversight and funding as well as the scope of their activities. Specifically, this involves the level of University funding assigned to each, and the level at which each reports, within the University of Idaho. The document also defines the process by which each is created, governed and reviewed. It limits the time any established entity can exist without applying for renewal. In order to level the playing field, as well as to review and assess current entities, all existing entities are required to apply using the process in the attached document in order to maintain or change their current status. Those that fail to complete this process, or are deemed to not meet the criteria for one of the three levels will cease to exist at the end of the current fiscal year.

Therefore, I encourage all center and institute directors to meet with their current membership and affiliates to discuss their plans for the future. I also encourage faculty members interested in creating new scholarly entities to meet with interested faculty and others to develop their concepts. In all cases, it is important that chairs, deans and upper-level administrators be included in the development of the concepts. The first stage in the process is the submission of a concept document. Details about the application and approval process including guidance on the information required at each step of the process may be found in the accompanying second document, "Application and Review Process." Please note that new entities can begin the process at any time and will be reviewed as they are received but must still follow the steps in the process document. **The deadlines listed in the process document only apply to existing institutes and centers.**

There will be an open forum on Tuesday, Oct. 5, at 11:30 a.m. PT, in the Idaho Commons Clearwater Room during which I will answer questions, listen to comments

and discuss any aspect of this document. A second forum will be scheduled for later this month. In addition, I will be happy to discuss concepts, answer questions, or provide clarification anytime during the process.

For additional information, and to track progress on this initiative, please visit our web site at [www.uidaho.edu/institutesandcenters](http://www.uidaho.edu/institutesandcenters). This site will contain the attached material, provides answers to frequently asked questions and allows for submission of questions and comments related to this initiative.

I am encouraged by the discussions we've had so far. I believe these changes will serve to enhance our scholarly and creative efforts and to increase our available funding by modernizing our processes. I look forward to working with you as we continue to improve and increase our scholarly endeavors.

# Integrated Scholarly Entities at the University of Idaho

## Introduction

Like most higher education institutions, the University of Idaho has established entities whose purpose is to provide a focal point for scholarly activity. For the most part these activities are associated with research and creative endeavors, outreach and engagement, and teaching and learning. These entities are variously classified as institutes, centers, programs, laboratories, core facilities and the like. Since there is no common theme within each category, this document will refer to them as “entities.”

There are currently five institutes that report to the vice president of research and economic development. These are the Microelectronics Research and Communications Institute (MRCI); the Environmental Biotechnology Institute (EBI); the National Institute for Advanced Transportation Technology (NIATT); the Idaho Water Resources Research Institute (IWRRI); and the Aquaculture Research Institute (ARI). In addition, the Center for Advanced Microelectronics and Biomolecular Research (CAMBR) is structured, supported and reports in the same way as the other five institutes.

There also are other entities called institutes, such as the Martin Institute within the College of Language Arts and Social Sciences. The number of centers, laboratories, core facilities, and the like is unknown. There is no formal record of a review of many of these entities, most of which have been in existence for at least 10 years. Over the past decade, the number of these entities has grown steadily with the creation of the Blue Ribbon and other initiatives. In parallel, the number of recharge centers also has continued to grow<sup>1</sup>. Currently, the procedures for the establishment, review and closure of any of these entities is not clearly defined within the University of Idaho. In fact, many entities operate with little oversight and have not been reviewed to determine their continued relevance to the mission of the University and its academic units.

The efficient and strategic use of University resources is essential if the University is to continue to thrive and become nationally known for its many forms of world-class scholarly activity. It is impossible for the University of Idaho, nor for that matter any university, to excel in all areas. Therefore, it is important that the University focuses its limited resources in carefully chosen endeavors where it can achieve national recognition. In this case, resources include faculty, staff, students, space and funds. This has become even more important in these tight economic times, where fiscal resources have been significantly reduced. In order to offset these reductions and grow

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<sup>1</sup> Recharge and cost centers are organizational units or activities that provide goods and services primarily to University operations and, secondarily, to external users, and charge users for these services like lab analysis, equipment use and data analysis; these will be addressed separately, and therefore will not be discussed in this document.

our national and international stature as a vibrant and intellectually stimulating institution, it is necessary for the University to focus its resources and energies in a smaller number but better supported set of entities.

As a first step in this process, the University has established a series of guidelines, procedures and processes that govern the creation, operation and closure of these entities. A second accompanying document details the application and review process for the creation of these entities and a timeline for processes specific to existing entities. These procedures must be effective in guiding the University in the use of its resources while engaging faculty members without hindering them in the use of their creative talents to support the University's mission.

### **Definitions**

An *entity* is the generic name for an institute, center, laboratory, etc., that is engaged in scholarship and creative activities (FSH 1565 C-2) in a defined area. It is not an academic unit and, therefore, is not responsible for academic degree programs although there may be strong affiliations.

A *unit* is the generic name for an administrative organizational structure that can be responsible for the creation, management and closure of an entity (e.g. college, school, office, department, etc.).

A *responsible administrative official* is the person to whom the entity reports. This could be, but is not limited to, a vice president, dean or chair.

A *Level III* entity will normally be called an institute and report to a vice president. Its region of activity will cross two or more disciplinary categories -- such as natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and applied professions -- and will draw resources from multiple internal units and include agencies and institutions external to the University. It will have an established internal advisory committee normally consisting of relevant deans which will advise and provide feedback on the activities of the entity. In addition there will be an external board to advise on strategic direction and potential funding sources.

A *Level II* entity will normally be called a center and report to a dean or deans. It is smaller in scope than a level III entity. Its activities will primarily reside in one or two colleges, although there may be participation from other colleges.

A *Level I* entity will normally exist wholly within a college, but should cross department lines. It will normally report to an academic administrator within a single college.

## **Establishment**

An entity can be established at the University (Level III), college (Level II or I) or department (Level I) level. An entity that spans more than one college or discipline (as defined herein) must be created at either the University or college level. In this case, spanning requires more than faculty participation from multiple colleges. It must include tangible support, such as funds, space, and support staff assigned to the entity whose salary is from a college or release time for a faculty member. Determination of the appropriate level for applications will be made jointly by the provost and executive vice president and the vice president of research and economic development after consultation with Provost's Council.

- All University-wide entities (Level III) must be approved by the relevant deans, the appropriate vice president and the president of the University before being submitted to the State Board of Education/Board of Regents of the University of Idaho for final approval.
- In the case of Level II entities a panel of deans whose faculty members are associated with the entity must approve the application before sending the application to the provost and executive vice president and the vice president of research and economic development for final approval. A Level II entity will report to the dean whose college most closely aligns with the strategic plan of the entity. In some cases these entities may require approval by the president and also the State Board of Education/Board of Regents of the University of Idaho.
- A dean and relevant department chairs must approve Level I entities.
- Each entity is required to submit a strategic/business plan as part of the application for approval (see Application and Review Process)
  - The plan need not be a lengthy document but must be complete enough to define the entity's vision, mission and goals. These must support and align with the University of Idaho Strategic Action Plan as well as those of the colleges and other units with which it is associated.
  - The plan must include metrics that can be used to determine progress that the entity has made toward satisfying its mission and achieving its goals and objectives. Although some of metrics may be universal, some key metrics should reflect the particular mission of the entity.
  - All currently established entities must submit a plan for review as well as a self-assessment of their performance over the last five years. Submission of a plan does not guarantee that the existing entity will continue in its current form. There are three potential outcomes for existing entities,

continuation for five years (with possibility of renewal) under a new strategic/business plan, re-assignment of level with changes in funding sources and quantities, or dissolution. This process will be completed on or about April 1, 2011.

- The plan must include a sunset provision, which is normally five years. Entities that are created as a requirement of external funding will normally have a sunset provision that coincides with the period of the award.
- The plan for the entity must include business components that outline the potential sources of funds to be pursued, its governance and organizational structure, and planned use of University funds if applicable or proposed.
- The application for establishment or renewal of an entity should explain how the proposed entity will distinguish itself from similar units in other universities, federal laboratories, etc.
- Those entities that are created as a result or requirement of an external award will be primarily governed by the conditions of the award, but must follow University processes governing entities to the extent possible.
- There are some entities for historical or other reasons that may be considered exempt from this process, although it is strongly recommended that all entities are reviewed on a regular basis.

## **Organization**

- A Level III entity is organizationally characterized by:
  - A director who is a tenured faculty member of the University and is partially supported by the vice president to which he or she reports. This salary is to support activities related to the management and growth of the entity. It does not support teaching, research or outreach activities. The director may buy out her/his directorship with teaching or research monies, but can never drop below 0.5 FTE as the director. The director is reviewed annually by the appropriate administrator on his or her activities as a director with input on teaching, outreach and research activities as appropriate.
  - Centrally financed administrative personnel to support the entity's activities and the director.

- Scholarly activity that is or has the potential to be substantially outside a single college as evidenced by expenditures, graduate students, and faculty/staff participation. This could include strong collaborations or partnerships with other institutions or agencies external to the University of Idaho.
  - A minimum return of funds equivalent to the same percentage of F&A funds distributed to colleges on those awards submitted through the Level III entity that are in direct support of its vision and mission. These funds are to be used to further the mission of the entity as well as provide return to the PIs and supporting units. The latter is to be based upon the academic unit's contribution to the entity. Deans are consulted in the budgeting process prior to the start of the fiscal year.
  - An internal advisory committee whose members consist of deans of colleges from whom faculty members are drawn. Other members may be appointed as needed. This committee provides advice and feedback on the operation and activities of the center to the director and the responsible university official as well as acting as an advocate. In the case where an academic program is associated with a Level III entity, the administration, oversight and operation of the program is invested in a dean or deans who are usually members of the advisory committee.
  - An external advisory committee whose members have expertise relevant to the mission of the entity and whose role is to provide feedback on the scholarly activity of the entity and to assist in identifying and securing external funding. External committees are appointed in collaboration with the associated deans. The members of this committee serve at the behest of the appropriate vice president and provide advice to the director and its appropriate administrator on the activities of the entity and its directions. They also serve as advocates for the entity.
  - Identifiable space that acts as the focal point for the entities activities.
  - As the budget climate stabilizes in the future, it is the intent to phase in funding for at least one faculty FTE per Level III entity that can be used to buy out faculty members, support visiting scholars or partially support new faculty members in areas of importance to the entity.
- A Level II entity is characterized by:
    - A director who reports to a dean or multiple deans and is supported in part by them.

- Administrative support where appropriate, but may be a shared position within the college to which they report.
  - Support funding is to come from college(s) funds or other approved sources. There is no expectation of support from the central administration.
  - An advisory committee chaired by the dean to which it reports and whose members consist of deans of colleges from whom faculty members are drawn. Other members may be appointed as needed.
- A Level I entity must have an identified director. Funding and other support are at the discretion of the appropriate administrator under which the entity is organized. Normally the innovators of the idea behind this entity will obtain funding from external sources to test those concepts with potential to grow into a Level II or III entity. In some cases, there will be a three-to-five year impact after which the individuals will move on to other projects.

## **Operation**

Each entity is required to submit a written annual progress report to the responsible administrative official and an electronic copy to the Office of the Vice President of Research and Economic Development. This document is to serve as the basis for an annual review. The report should focus on the progress made during the year with regard to achieving the stated goals and objectives of the entity, as well as the use of any University funds assigned to the unit. The purpose of the review is to provide timely oversight and feedback to the director and the participating faculty and staff, as well as to ensure quality performance and appropriate financial stewardship of University resources. The progress report will be reviewed by the advisory committee associated with each entity. The advisory group will provide a written evaluation of the entity to the director with copies to the responsible administrative official and the vice president of research and economic development.

Each entity will undergo a comprehensive periodic review that will normally occur in the final year of the entity's established period of existence. This review can be triggered earlier by the responsible administrator if, in his or her opinion, there is a reason to do so. Responsibility for this review is at the administrative level at which the entity was created. For Level III entities, the review must include input from external reviewers who are recognized experts in the area of specialization of the entity as well as appropriate deans. The outcome of the comprehensive review may be: continuation of the entity for another period of time not to exceed five years with a revised strategic plan; reassignment of the reporting level with a continuation not to exceed five years and a new strategic plan; or closure of the entity. Significant changes in the status of

an entity may require approval by the State Board of Education/Board of Regents of the University of Idaho. Those entities created with outside funding or at as a condition of an award will normally close with the expiration of the funding. However the entity may choose to undergo a comprehensive review with the result being one of the three options listed above.

Members of Level III entities may submit proposals through this entity provided the topic of the proposal is within the vision and mission of the entity. Those proposals that do not fall within the vision and mission of the entity will be submitted through the faculty member's home department. Members of Level II and Level I entities will submit proposals through normal channels.

## Institutes and Centers Application and Review Process

All current University of Idaho entities must apply through this process or will be deemed to be terminated at the end of the fiscal year 2011. Some exceptions will be made for named entities, such as The Martin Institute. A new entity can be created at any time during the academic year. The process for the creation of Level I entities is the responsibility of the relevant deans and department heads and may vary from unit to unit. Level II and III entities will undergo a more structured review and approval process. The approval process for the creation of Level II and III entities will vary only in the level of detail required in the strategic/business plan and the required level of final approval. The steps to be followed are:

- Preparation of a short white paper (< 5 pages, double spaced, 12 point type, .5" margins) that outlines the purpose and/or core activities of the entity, its goals, the key personnel, and justification for the proposed level of the entity. Suggestions for development of the whitepaper can be found at: [www.uidaho.edu/institutesandcenters](http://www.uidaho.edu/institutesandcenters). Items to address in the paper include:
  - Introduction and background;
  - Purpose and/or core focus;
  - Goals;
  - Key factors; and
  - Justification for proposed entity level (I, II or III).
- Review of white paper by dean(s), vice president for research and economic development and the provost and executive vice president. (Level II and III)
- Review of all proposed or continuing Level II and III entities by Provost's Council and input on viability captured and available for vice presidential review.
- Decision to proceed or not is based on input from Provost's Council and relevant administrators transmitted to applicants.
- Development of formal entity plan (strategic and business) not to exceed 15 pages. This does not include resumes or supporting documents. Detailed instructions on development of the full proposal can be found at: [www.uidaho.edu/institutesandcenters](http://www.uidaho.edu/institutesandcenters). Items to be addressed in plan include:
  - Vision and mission.

- Description of context including past performance if relevant; anticipated future of proposed area of concentration; existing and future funding sources and the potential impact on the University, local, regional, national and international scales.
- Goals that describe the purpose of entity; three-to-five goals to serve as basis of annual review and their associated measures of success; and identification of short, mid- and long-term metrics, as well as data to be collected to measure success.
- Relevance to the University of Idaho. How the entity would advance the strategic plans of the University and colleges, including linkage to University Signature Areas and to state, regional and national initiatives.
- Justification for proposed level (II or III) of entity, including how it is different from similar entities in the nation.
- Identification of potential barriers to success and methods to remove them.
- Five-year operational plan.
- Development of sunset plan.
- Review of plan (strategic and business) by relevant deans (Level II and III).
- Review by Provost's Council (Level II and III).
- Review by the provost and executive vice president and the vice president for research and economic development (Level II and III).
- Possible review of panel of external experts (Level III)
- Final approval within University of Idaho:
  - Review and approval of the president upon recommendation of the provost and executive vice president and the vice president for research and economic development (Level III); and

- Review and approval by relevant dean(s), the vice president for research and economic development and the provost and executive vice president (Level II).
- Formation of advisory committees (internal and external):
  - Appointment of relevant deans and directors for Level II entities by the provost and executive vice president and the vice president of research and economic development; and
  - Appointment of deans, director and external board members for Level III entities jointly by the provost and executive vice president and the vice president of research and economic development
- Preparation and submission of Notices of Intent (NOIs) to State Board of Education/Board of Regents of the University of Idaho, where appropriate.
- Implementation during Fiscal Year 2012, either at the start of the fiscal year or later, as appropriate given the need for completion of the NOI process.

Proposals for new entities may be submitted at any time and will be reviewed as they are submitted. The timeline for existing entities is as follows:

**Oct. 29:** Deadline for submission of a white paper—maximum of five pages—that outlines the purpose of the proposed center or institute, its goals, key personnel and justification for its proposed rating. Submit white papers electronically to [lodi@uidaho.edu](mailto:lodi@uidaho.edu).

**Oct. 30 – Dec. 9:** White papers reviewed by all of the deans as well as the vice presidents.

**Dec. 10:** Decisions will be communicated, inviting full proposals of selected groups.

**Feb. 15, 2011:** Full proposals due.

**Feb. 16 – March 30:** Full proposals will be reviewed by deans, vice presidents and, perhaps, several faculty committees. Level III proposals will also be reviewed by an outside set of experts.

**April 1:** Final decisions will be communicated on or about April 1.

**Fiscal Year 2012:** Operation under approved designation.