INTRODUCTION

Centers, institutes and related academic/research units play a significant role in the community at SUNY-ESF. Because these represent and highlight College programs, their establishment and operation is formally governed by College policy. The following guidelines and procedures for establishment of centers, institutes and other similar academic/research units at SUNY-ESF were developed based on prior practice during the inception or reporting of many of our Centers/Institutes (RAM Model); they derive also from procedures currently utilized at several prominent universities. These include Stanford University, University of Connecticut, Wayne State University, Louisiana State University (Board of Regents), and the University of Texas at San Antonio. Existing Centers, Institutes, et al. at ESF are listed at: http://www.esf.edu/research/ric.htm

Definitions: Centers and institutes can be remarkably similar, and distinctions between them often are lost over their useful lifetime. Other terminology has also been employed at ESF. The following definitions should prove useful as new centers, institutes and similar units are proposed:

**Center**- Organized and structured around a well-defined, often interdisciplinary, research effort. The primary purpose is to conduct research; closely related academic or public service activities are usually included. A center typically resides within a Department (e.g., SUNY Center for Applied Microbiology), but it may cross departmental lines (e.g., Adirondack Ecological Center). At ESF, “Center” has been the most frequently utilized descriptor.

**Institute**- Organized around an interdisciplinary research effort, but often with clear connections with the commercial sector. The primary purpose is to conduct research and associated instruction; closely related academic or public service activities may be included. An institute often serves as a formalized link between the academic and the professional or business communities (e.g., Empire State Paper Research Institute)

**Consortium**- Organized on behalf of a group of Colleges and Universities with common goals and needs for facilities and expertise (e.g., Great Lakes Research Consortium)

**Council**- Organized around a set of faculty research endeavors that may extend beyond ESF to faculty, facilities and programs at Syracuse University (e.g., Council on Hydrologic Systems Science)

**PROPOSING A NEW CENTER, INSTITUTE, COUNCIL OR CONSORTIUM**

New centers, institutes or other units at ESF can provide opportunities for future growth and attraction of intellectual and financial resources, and their development is encouraged. The process does require a formal proposal to be reviewed by the Vice President for Research and Provost, who ultimately will make recommendations to the President. Following initial, favorable review by the Vice President for Research and Provost, the proposal will be open to the College community (particularly Department Chairs, Center/Institute Directors) by way of an e-mail and/or web posting for comment and clarification, before being submitted for Presidential approval.
Elements of the Proposal

Theme and role

1. What is the central theme of the new unit, and what role would it play at the College and (where appropriate) at supporting or coordinating institutions?
2. Is it clear that existing units at ESF do not or cannot address such a theme? Have you talked with representatives of related units?
3. What is the compelling evidence that this theme/role addresses a state, national or global need?
4. What other institutions, representing actual or aspirational peers, have established comparable units?
5. If this is the first unit of this type proposed in the United States, are there such units existing or under discussion in other countries?

Contribution to ESF Mission and Goals

How would the new unit and its activities contribute and enhance the mission and goals of SUNY ESF, as outlined in the Vision 2020 document? Could this represent a new goal or aspect of our mission or vision?

Academic home(s)

What Department or other unit at ESF would represent the academic home of the proposed center, institute, council or consortium? In some cases the unit has been a Departmental focus over a long period, and would readily be centered in a single Department, at least at its inception. In other cases the theme and roles are far beyond Departmental in focus, and in fact the reason for establishment is to highlight interdisciplinary contributions. Discussions with the Vice President for Research and Provost may clarify the options best pursued with regard to the designated home; in some cases ESF or even SUNY (e.g., SUNY Center for Sustainable and Renewable Resources) is the most appropriate.

Relationship and Synergy with Other Institutions

New Centers/Institutes may provide needed synergy with other academic institutions or governmental entities.

1. Have discussions with these entities proceeded to the point of formally linking them with the proposed Center/Institute?
2. Has their leadership provided formal recognition and support of the proposal?
3. What is the potential for enhancement of student programs or projects as the result of the activities in the new Center/Institute?

Budget and Funding

1. Who will take responsibility for the budget and funding sources (Typically the Director or Co-Director)?
2. How will day-to-day operations be carried out? For example, will most activity occur in the summer or throughout the year. Will this be primarily in the laboratory, field or office?
3. Will existing secretarial assistance be needed and available?
4. How much will be budgeted for items such as office expenses, travel, or symposium development associated with the proposed Center/Institute?
Existing Resources

**Faculty and Staff**- Names and planned contributions; activities or contributions that may need to be modified in support of the new unit

**Facilities**- Buildings, laboratories and classrooms, green houses, conference spaces on Syracuse and field campuses;

**Instrumentation or equipment** – NMR, DNA Sequencer,

**Vehicles**- ordinary transportation and special use, e.g., boats, 4-wheelers

Proposed Resources

**New Faculty and Staff**- How might these needs tie synergistically with other College needs?

**New or Renovated Facilities**- Are these already part of College planning?

**Funding**- Grants and Contracts to be sought; continuity with existing funding sources

Potential Competitive Effects on Current Programs

Potential competitive effects may not be fully evident to the proposing team, but an initial consideration is required to facilitate the review process. For example, if the proposed Center/Institute has a name and a theme similar to another at ESF, or if some of the participating faculty are already stretched to their limits. As described above, it is important to speak with representatives of centers, institutes etc. that have related roles and aspirations. Is there a similar unit at Syracuse University or Upstate Medical University?

Potential Board of Advisors

A creative, engaged Board of Advisors (or Governing Board, etc.) can greatly enhance a Center or Institute. ESF recognizes the unique nature of the boards among Centers/Institutes; thus board composition, length of member appointment, and role are open as an integral part of the proposal process.

Determination of Membership and Participation

How will the eligibility of participants (e.g., faculty, businesses, universities) be determined? For example will the board, Director or other responsible party make this determination; will decisions require unanimous or majority vote? **Credentials, experience and accomplishments of leaders and members of a proposed center or institute should be in accord with the academic and scholarly standards of a doctoral-granting research university.** **Materials needed to assess these qualifications will be included in applications for membership or leadership.**

Bylaws

Membership and Participation are significant aspects of Bylaws. These generally cover topics such as how directors are elected, how meetings of directors (and in the case of a business, shareholders) are conducted, and what officers the organization will have and a description of their duties. A common mnemonic device for remembering the typical articles in bylaws is NOMOMECPA: **Name, Object, Members, Officers, Meetings, Executive board, Committees, Parliamentary authority, Amendment.** Bylaws typically cannot be amended by an organization's **Board of Directors**; a super-majority vote of the membership, such as two-thirds present and voting or a majority of all the members, is usually required to amend bylaws.
ANNUAL REPORTS AND REPORT PATH

An annual report is required which details the research and scholarly activities performed, funding opportunities captured, and additional contributions such as graduate programs enhanced, and new academic pathways opened. A budget explanatory section and a proposed budget for the coming year are required as an integral part of the annual report.

Most Centers, Institutes, Councils and Consortia and related academic/research units will report to the Vice President for Research, who in turn reports to the Provost. Units that lie primarily within a single Department and are primarily research in orientation may report through the Department Chair to the Vice President for Research. The Vice President for Research is responsible for ensuring appropriate review and assessment and forwarding recommendations to the Provost. Units that are not primarily research in orientation may report directly to the Provost.

Annual/Periodic Review Procedure

1. How might the annual and periodic review process at ESF (outlined below) be enhanced or modified for this particular Center/Institute?

2. For example, how might a board of advisors or other entity, graduate student group, and/or external review team designated by the Center/Institute be utilized to enhance its contributions and potential?

3. How might outside reviewers from peer institutions assist in annual or periodic review?

PERIODIC REVIEW

Each Center, Institute, Council and Consortium will undergo a review at least every 3 years, with a subset of the (~28 units) at ESF completed annually. A proposed Time Schedule for these reviews will be provided beginning in the spring of 2010 to facilitate planning. The review will entail examination of the annual report, web sites, and research products coupled with a discussion with the Director(s) and other participants about future directions and opportunities, constraints, funding, and personnel needs.

Units that appear to contribute little to the mission and goals of the students, faculty, staff and goals of ESF will not be continued. However, a period that allows for recovery/enhancement will be provided in these cases. Units that are outstanding will be, to the extent possible, recognized through an Exemplary Center/Institute Award and other appropriate means.