

CAL POLY HUMBOLDT
University Senate

Resolution on Centers & Institutes

01-24/25-University Policies Committee — September 24, 2024 — Second Reading

RESOLVED: That the University Senate of Cal Poly Humboldt recommends to the President that the Research Centers and Institutes Policy be approved; and be it further,

RESOLVED: That the policy be implemented after a consultation process with all existing Centers & Institutes has concluded, spanning no less than to the end of the 2024/2025 Academic Year.

RATIONALE: Cal Poly Humboldt does not have a campus-specific policy on the chartering and recertification of Centers and Institutes. The current *policy* is based on an executive memorandum from 2016, which does not provide a distinction between a Center and an Institute, nor does it define the types of support these groups shall have. Currently, 18 Research Centers and Institutes exist at Cal Poly Humboldt with varying degrees of structure and levels of support. *EO 751* establishes that campuses may develop campus-specific policies on Centers and Institutes, which this resolution and policy aim to achieve.

Policy on Centers & Institutes [Policy Number] University Policies Committee

Applies to: Faculty and Staff

Supersedes: *P11-04*

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear governing principles, guidelines, and procedures for the recognition, chartering, and recertification of “Centers” and “Institutes”, as well as to distinguish “Centers” and “Institutes” from other “Campus Interest Groups”. This policy takes effect at the end of AY 2024/2025 and supersedes all prior Center & Institute (C&I) campus policies and memoranda.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following key terms are defined as follows:

- 1. “Center”** is an organization intended for research, which is broader in scope than an institute; it is typically associated with a physical and organizational infrastructure for conducting research. It typically involves faculty and staff from multiple academic units who depend on a set of common facilities for their research. Centers typically have a higher volume of grant activity with dedicated administrative support staff to help oversee operational and financial needs, managing multiple streams of internal and external funding. Centers may also be actively involved in non-research related activities, including but not limited to instruction, community outreach, and/or artistic activities.
- 2. “Institute”** is typically organized to conduct research, usually on a specific theme or topic. They may involve faculty and staff from one or more departments, often from within the same school or college. Institutes may also be actively involved in instruction, community outreach, or research services.
- 3. “Campus Interest Group”** in this policy will refer to any entity, consortium, team, cooperative, alliance, council, project, hub, laboratory, facility, space, etc., which may have common research interests, collaborations, general groupings, and/or shared resources that do not fit into the classification as a formally chartered Institute or Center. Campus Interest Groups (CIG) must consult with Marketing & Communication to ensure appropriate and consistent use of the University brand standards (name and logo).

Policy Details

I. SCOPE AND GOVERNING PRINCIPLES

A. Scope

C&I are research organizations affiliated with Cal Poly Humboldt that offer non-credit instruction, information, or other services to constituencies beyond the campus community, serving individuals, public organizations, and private agencies. Per Executive Order 751 Cal Poly Humboldt may establish Governing Principles, Guidelines, and Procedures on the Chartering and Recertification of C&I, which are given in this policy.

B. Governing Principles

1. Alignment with the Strategic Plan

All existing and newly chartered C&I will complement and support the vision of the University and the [Strategic Plan](#).

2. Naming Conventions

Names for all existing and newly chartered C&I will have the word Center or Institute, depending on designation, as well as describe its general purpose. Some examples include the Fire Resilience Institute or the California Center for Rural Policy. CIG that have the words Center or Institute in their name do not automatically garner designation as such; for example, the Student Activity Center is not a Center per the definition given in this policy.

3. Charter and Recertification

All potential C&I must go through a chartering process described in this policy (Appendix I). The approved term of a C&I will be five years, after which time it must go through a recertification described in this policy (Appendix II). Annual progress reports will be requested from all active C&I each year to provide updates on programmatic and financial activities.

4. Self-Regulation and Support

The structure of the C&I, including qualifications for membership, shall be self-regulated through responsible individuals, governing boards, or committees. The C&I must specify its organizational hierarchy in its Charter and/or Recertification application (Appendix I & II).

5. Leadership

The lead person(s) of the C&I must be a tenure-track faculty, a permanent employee, or a Management Personnel Plan (MPP) employee of the University or Auxiliary.

II. GUIDELINES FOR CENTERS, INSTITUTES, AND CAMPUS INTEREST GROUPS

A. Distinction between Centers/Institutes and Campus Groups

1. Support

C&I and CIG will differ considerably in the types of support they receive. For example, a CIG may be created by two collaborating faculty or staff members working on a project supported by their nominal ancillary time for scholarly activities. In this case, the CIG does not need administrative support beyond what is typically available for a faculty or staff member in their respective department(s) or college(s). This CIG may still benefit from administrative support in the form of marketing, identification of funding sources, and the like, all of which are nominally available to any faculty or staff member through the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs Foundation and/or Marketing and Communications (MarComm).

On the other hand, faculty or staff that bring in large-scale and/or multiple grants under their respective C&I can often quickly become burdened by the clerical and financial administration of those grants, which detracts from their capacity to grow as a C&I. In such cases, dedicated management and centralized administrative support for these funds are crucial, making the designation of a C&I necessary. C&I are considered internal University users for the purposes of campus use policies and are expected to reimburse the University for 'above baseline costs' similar to comparable campus departments.

Institutes must have either a) dedicated release time for their director(s) or b) access to administrative support provided by the University to carry out the administrative functions of the Institute. Release time should be utilized to allow the director(s) time to build collaborations, seek mentorship, and manage other high-level work rather than primarily for administrative tasks that can be done more cost-effectively and efficiently by designated support staff.

Centers must have dedicated, University-provided space, along with self-supported administrative staff and operational funding. Emerging Centers greatly benefit from mentorship and consultation with established Centers. Engaging with established Center directors to gain insights into their operational structures and financial models is a crucial step that must be demonstrated prior to forming a new Center.

2. Purpose

C&I and CIG will differ considerably in their purposes. CIG will typically have a very narrow and specific set of goals, whereas C&I are much broader in nature. In either case, the purpose should align with the University's [Strategic Plan](#).

3. Longevity

C&I and CIG will differ in their lifetimes on campus. Individual passion projects of sole faculty or staff have led to incredible work on campus, but often do not have the sustainable infrastructure to continue past that initial champion. Succession planning needs to become a more thoughtful and proactive part of

the process. Therefore, it is expected that CIG may come and go; however, a successful C&I should have longevity beyond the initial creator as their purpose will be well aligned with long-term University plans.

APPENDIX I: PROCEDURES FOR CHARTERING A NEW CENTER/INSTITUTE

A charter application proposal for all new C&I shall be submitted to the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs and must include the following items and sections:

1. **Name:** Names for all existing and newly chartered C&I will have the word Center or Institute, depending on the appropriate designation, as well as describe its general purpose.
2. **Purpose:** This section shall describe the purpose(s) of the proposed C&I and its goals. This section shall also clearly define how the proposed C&I proposes to serve University roles and outline any relationships with other campus units with which the functions of the proposed C&I will overlap, or the C&I will regularly interact. Proposals should also specify how the C&I will complement and support the vision of the University and the [Strategic Plan](#).
3. **Need:** This section shall explain the need for a new C&I and how it will support the vision of the University and the [Strategic Plan](#).
4. **Personnel:** This section shall identify and describe the roles of all key personnel, including administrator(s), faculty members, students, staff, community members, and Leadership Committee members that will be connected with the proposed C&I.
5. **Resources and Support:** This section shall describe in detail the resources needed to establish the proposed C&I and the sources from which those resources will be secured. This should include the sources, duration, and a five-year annual projected budget as well as a clear statement of expectations of any financial contributions externally or from the University. All Centers are expected to be self-supporting unless specific provisions are made for their intramural support. All sources of intramural support must be documented and verified in writing; all external sources of support must be verified or projected. For the purposes of review, a financial plan must be presented that is plausible and itemized in a budget format. This section shall also outline all other necessary University resources, including space, equipment, and technological requirements. This should include a clear statement of expectations of the University's commitment during the duration of the C&I operation and written verification of those sources of support from the relevant campus units.
6. **Organizational Hierarchy:** This section shall outline all internal and external components and their relationships to the University. A chart shall be constructed that illustrates the administrative support structure of the C&I and its relationship to relevant campus units.
7. **Leadership Committee:** Each C&I must have an Leadership Committee that consists of a minimum of three voting members of the C&I that meets no less than annually. The Leadership Committee shall be tasked with creating by-laws for how leadership is selected and other pertinent C&I rules and regulations. All C&I bylaws must be aligned with expectations and codes of conduct outlined by the University.

8. **Letters of Support:** The proposal shall include evidence of support in the form of collegial letters by all campus units that may expect to be significantly affected by the C&I's activities. At a minimum, letters of support must be provided from the respective department and college in which the C&I will reside.
9. **Assessment Plan:** The proposal shall include an assessment plan that outlines indicators of success and achievement of goals throughout the five-year period of chartering.
10. **Compliance with Rules and Regulations:** All C&I must comply with internal and external rules and regulations in carrying out the purpose and function of the C&I. This section shall identify and address any additional special requirements or considerations to be compliant with such rules and regulations.

APPENDIX II: RECERTIFYING AN EXISTING CENTER/INSTITUTE

A recertification proposal for all active C&I must be submitted to the Office of Research & Sponsored Programs every five years to maintain active status. The proposal should include the items and sections specified in Appendix I, incorporating any relevant updates or changes since the initial charter. Additionally, a brief report detailing activities completed over the past five years, along with plans for the upcoming five-year period, must be provided.

Expiration Date *(if any; optional)*

History *(required)*

All changes must be listed chronologically in the format below, including all edits and reviews. Note when the policy name or number changes. Note if an edit or revision date is exclusively for the policy section or the procedure section:

Issued: MM/DD/YYYY

Revised: MM/DD/YYYY

Edited: MM/DD/YYYY

Reviewed: MM/DD/YYYY