

Senate Policy Governing the Establishment, Reporting and Review of a Research Centre or Institute at St. Thomas University

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Preamble

St. Thomas University (hereinafter referred to as the University) supports the establishment and continuing life of a Research Centre or Institute (physical or virtual). A Research Centre is an entity internal to the University which has research as its main focus. A Research Institute may be internal or external to the University. In addition to a primary focus on research, a Research Institute may have a broader educational function which can include teaching. This Policy refers to internal research entities. For governance of external research entities see **Appendix 5**.

Such entities will vary in type and structure depending on the objectives they are designed to accomplish and the scope of their activities. Although most scholarly research may not be aligned with a specific Research Centre or Institute, it is nevertheless essential that guidelines be developed to clarify the definition and expectations of such a Research Centres or Institute at the University.

A Research Centre or Institute at the University is based on the following principle: that it must be beneficial to the University community as a whole, most notably in its capacity to:

- form creative partnerships within the University;
- form creative partnerships external to the University;
- attract supplementary funding in support of their research program;
- complement the University's Strategic Research Plan;
- and contribute to the research, education, Mission and Strategic Plan of the University.

A Research Centres or Institute relies on a number of experts (the University faculty and/or staff) with the capacity to develop and deliver a set of interrelated projects within a specific area of scholarly research. Only where there are demonstrable advantages to be gained and where there is sufficient intensity of research effort should such an entity be proposed.

A Research Centre or Institute is encouraged to:

- seek internal and/or external funding;
- undertake research and scholarship, including the publication of results in scholarly peer-reviewed journals, monographs or other reports (including proprietary research and documents for public use);
- organize conferences and workshops as per **Appendix 1**, point **2a**.

Approaches for external financial support should not precede the submission of a preliminary proposal.

The overall administration of this policy is the responsibility of the Vice-President Academic and Research and any questions concerning the interpretation of this policy are to be directed to the Vice-President Academic and Research.

2. The Establishment of a Research Centre or Institute

2.1 Initial Request

An initial request to establish a Research Centre or Institute at the University must come from the University faculty and is to be reviewed by the Vice-President Academic and Research. The Vice-

President Academic and Research will then consult the Assistant Vice-President Research, who will provide information and advice to the applicants on how to proceed with a preliminary proposal.

2.2 Preliminary Proposal

In drafting the preliminary proposal, the applicants should provide sufficient detail about the merits and framework of the Research Centre or Institute to allow the The Vice-President Academic and Research and the Senate Research Committee to properly consider it. **Appendix 1** provides guidance to as to the content of the preliminary proposal. The level of detail submitted at this stage may be less than required for the final proposal. Consultation shall take place with other members of the University who would be directly affected by the creation of the proposed Research Centre or Institute. Faculty will be informed about the preliminary proposal and will have an opportunity to comment on the proposal. The Senate Research Committee may ask for elaboration, suggest modifications to the proposal and may then recommend either that the applicants proceed with their application or withdrawal of the proposal.

2.3 Full Proposal

The full proposal prepared for consideration by the Senate Research Committee should be a revised and extended version of the preliminary proposal plus any additional documentation as deemed necessary. Material arising out of discussions with the Senate Research Committee should be incorporated into the proposal.

2.4 Structure and Governance

2.4.1 Director

A Research Centre or Institute will have an appointed Director, who shall serve on a term basis but who may be subject to renewal. The appointment shall be approved by the Vice-President Academic and Research.

The appointment or renewal shall be communicated directly to the Director and the relevant Dean(s) and shall be normally for a three (3) year term, subject to renewal.

2.4.2 Membership

Membership in a Research Centre or Institute is open to faculty members with a research interest in the activities and focal research areas of the Research Centre or Institute. A minimum of three (3) University faculty members, including the Director, is required in order to establish and maintain the existence of a Research Centre or Institute. In addition, researchers external to the University and/or community may be invited to join the Research Centre or Institute.

2.5 Senate Approval

The full proposal will be submitted to the Senate Research Committee. Once the Senate Research Committee has reviewed the proposal, it will forward the proposal with its comments for approval to the Vice - President Academic and Research via the Assistant Vice-President Research. The Full Proposal shall be forwarded to Senate for final approval.

2.6 Implementation

A Research Centre or Institute must follow all established policies and procedures of the University, including, but not limited to, hiring, financial reporting and accounting, health and safety, research agreements, MOU's or MOA's, and research integrity.

3. Liaison, Reporting and Review Procedures for a Research Centre or Institute

3.1 Liaison

It shall be the responsibility of the Director of a Research Centre or Institute to maintain effective liaison with the University administration through the Vice-President Academic and Research in order to:

- facilitate the exchange of information;
- establish that the activities of the Research Centre or Institute are based on effective planning and on accountability to the University, as well as to their internal and external stakeholders;
- ensure that the activities of the Centre shall operate in a manner consistent with university policy.

In addition to keeping the Vice-President Academic and Research informed of its activities, operations, and financial status, copies of the annual reports and strategic plan required shall also be provided to the relevant Dean.

3.2 Reporting Procedures

By October 1 of each year, the Director of a Research Centre or Institute shall submit an annual report to the Vice-President Academic and Research. The report will follow the Senate Research Committee's prescribed format (see **Appendix 2**), and will contain information on the activities of the past year and a plan of operation for the forthcoming year. The Director will present the report to Senate at the June meeting.

Normally reporting procedures shall be via the Research Centre or Institute's annual report, which shall be two weeks prior to the June Senate meeting. Any issues which could materially affect the functioning of the Research Centre or Institute, however, must be reported as soon as possible.

3.3 Review Procedures

3.3.1 Newly Established Research Centre or Institute

At the end of the initial three (3) years, the operations of a Research Centre or Institute shall be reviewed by the Senate Research Committee. Within the first quarter of the fourth (4th) year of operation of a Research Centre or Institute, the Director will submit to the Vice-President Academic and Research a Review of the Research Centre or Institute following the format prescribed in **Appendix 3** of this policy.

The Senate Research Committee will undertake its examination of a Research Centre or Institute normally within six (6) weeks of receipt of the Review, may make suggestions to the Research Centre or Institute and will recommend to the Vice - President (Academic and Research) one of the following:

- i) that a Research Centre or Institute be authorized to continue or
- ii) that a Research Centre or Institute be assigned a probationary status for a period of one (1) year during which they must address issues and/or concerns identified by the Senate Research Committee, and
 - a. respond to the Senate Research Committee within sixty (60) calendar days upon notice of the probationary status with a plan on how to address issues and/or concerns, and
 - b. report to the Senate Research Committee by the end of the probationary period on how the issue and/or concerns have been addressed, or
 - c. that the Centre be phased out of existence over a period defined by the Senate Research Committee, according to the terms outlined in section 5 – Termination of Research Centres or Institute.

3.3.2 Established Research Centre or Institute

Post initial review, Research Centres or Institutes will be reviewed every five (5) years. As of the acceptance date of this policy, an existing or established Research Centre or Institute has three (3) years to conform to this policy before undergoing an initial review.

3.3.3 Early Reviews

Should the need arise, the Senate Research Committee may recommend to Senate the review of a Research Centre or Institute at any time. The Assistant Vice-President Research, in consultation with the Senate Research Committee and the Research Centre or Institute under review, may recommend to the Vice-President Academic and Research that up to two (2) faculty members external to the Centre be appointed as review consultants, if required. The final decision to appoint external faculty rests with the Vice- President Academic and Research.

4. Request for Modifications

As a Research Centre or Institute's experience grows, modes of operation, goals or objectives may need to be modified. Any substantive changes to a Research Centre or Institutes' objectives, scope or budget must be submitted to the Vice President Academic and Research, and then to the Senate Research Committee before being submitted to Senate for consideration for approval.

5. Termination of Research Centres or Institute

5.1 Termination Procedure

The Vice-President Academic and Research may recommend to Senate that a Research Centre or Institute be terminated.

The Vice-President Academic and Research may recommend termination of a Research Centre or Institute whenever:

1. there is clear evidence from the Review that the Research Centre or Institute and/or Director is not fulfilling its stated mandate objectives or is not in compliance with University policies and is unlikely to be able to do so in the near future;
2. there is no clear evidence that the Research Centre or Institute has plans for future activities;
3. the number of faculty has fallen below three (3) for a period of at least six (6) months and there is no evidence that this number will increase to three (3) or more in the foreseeable future.
4. a Research Centre or Institute is without a Director for a period of six (6) months.

If, after completing its review, the Senate via the Vice-President (Academic and Research) supports the recommendation to terminate, that decision will immediately be communicated to the Research Centre or Institute.

4.2 Appeals

Once the decision to terminate a Research Centre or Institute is communicated to the Director, a Research Centre or Institute has thirty (30) days to either accept the decision of the Vice-President Academic and Research or to agree to place a Research Centre or Institute on a six (6) month probationary period during which time all concerns must be addressed. All appeals will be dealt with solely by the office of the Vice-President Academic and Research.

4.3 Self-Termination

At any point, the members of a Research Centre or Institute may elect to terminate the Centre or Institute. This decision must be communicated to the Vice-President Academic and Research within four (4) weeks of the decision to terminate.

APPENDIX 1: Guidelines for Proposal to Establish a Research Centre or Institute at the University

The term “Research Centre or Institute” may only be used at the University if this procedure is followed.

Proposals are submitted to the Vice President (Academic and Research) and are expected to include, identify or address the following:

1. Name:

The name of the Research Centre or Institute;

2. Purpose: This section should clearly identify the need, value and benefits of the Research Centre or Institute.

3. Context: This section should identify

- a) that the mission, goals, and objectives must serve the Mission Statement and Strategic Plan(s) of the University
- b) a relationship to existing departments and other Research Centres or other Institutes and entities;
- c) a potential impact (positive or negative) on existing departments and other Research Centres or Institutes, and a plan to ameliorate any negative impact identified;
- d) benefits to the University, faculty, students and other stakeholders.
- e) any proposed external affiliations
- f) any legal liability to the University

2. Functions and Programs: This section should describe the activities to be undertaken, which must include:

- a) research programs, education, events and activities including: activities and involvements; public lectures; visiting scholars; workshops; special seminars; conferences; peer-reviewed journals; website design and bibliographies, links, and networking opportunities;
- b) a three-year plan

A Research Centre or Institute is responsible for obtaining sufficient revenue from grants, contracts, contract overhead, or other means to offset its direct costs of operation. A Research Centre or Institute shall operate within its established budget.

3. Governance and Organization: This section should identify the Director who will manage a Research Centre or Institute, how decisions will be made, and who will be accountable for funding and will include:

- a) membership; and
- b) potential community involvement or external partners.

4. **Budget** (statement of projected budget for at least three (3) years) which may include:

- a) expenses: full time, part time, contract, research and/or student assistants;
- b) community liaison;
- c) facilities including space and infrastructure requirements;
- d) in-kind support;
- e) start-up funding;
- f) research technical support (if required); and
- g) communications support;
- h) administrative support;
- i) equipment and supplies;
- j) travel;
- k) program and activity costs;
- l) expected internal and external funding; and

5. **Life expectancy of the Centre.**

APPENDIX 2: Guidelines for the Preparation of a Research Centre or Institute Annual Report to the University

Annual Reports should address the following:

1. mandate and goals of a Research Centre or Institute;
2. governance structure
3. members and/or affiliates;
4. previous year's objectives and achievements towards the mandate and goals;
5. work undertaken in the past year, highlighting research, education and teaching initiatives, community outreach, publications;
6. involvement of faculty, students, staff, affiliated researchers and community members;
7. objectives and initiatives planned for the coming year; and
8. financial reports including sources of funding, expenses itemized for salaries and contracts, administrative expenses, research expenses, advertising and communication expenses, and other.
9. Any changes to the relationship to existing departments and other Research Centres or Institutes and entities; a potential impact on existing departments and other Research Centres or Institutes; any proposed external affiliations; any legal liability to the University

APPENDIX 3: Guidelines for the Preparation of a Research Centre or Institute Review The review of a Research Centre or Institute should include the following:

1. a brief history of the establishment and of the evolution of a Research Centre or Institute and the purpose for which it was established; this section should include a statement on the ways in which a Research Centre or Institute serves the University, its students and faculty, and the broader community;

2. a clear articulation of the goals and objectives, as well as an analysis of the extent to which these goals and objectives are being met;
3. any significant changes to the purpose or operations of the Centre or Institute since inception or last report
4. a full description of the activities of a Research Centre or Institute;
5. information on special strengths, and unique aspects or successes of a Research Centre or Institute;
6. information on a Research Centre or Institute's governance and identification of issues, challenges, and/or concerns;
7. listing of all faculty members associated with a Research Centre or Institute;
8. listing of external grants or contracts which have contributed to a Research Centre or Institute;
9. description of support (technical, secretarial, other), and comments on adequacy of support;
10. description of physical facilities, supplies and budget, with comments on adequacy;
11. description of principal library resources available to support the work of a Research Centre or Institute;
12. a statement regarding the future plans of the Centre or Institute, including implications on resources and supports; and
13. any other information a Research Centre or Institute considers useful and relevant

APPENDIX 4: University Responsibilities to a Research Centres or Institute

The University will provide, when deemed appropriate by the Vice - President (Academic and Research) the following:

1. in-kind contributions to the project (see STU the University's Guidelines for In-Kind Contributions);
2. space (physical or virtual);
3. website creation and website technical support from the Office of Communications and Public Relations;
4. public relations media coverage from the Office of Communications and Public Relations;

5. Research Ethics Board review of any research projects involving human subjects being conducted by the Centre; and
6. Office of Research Services and Financial Services assistance with management of funds.

APPENDIX 5: External Research Institutes

NB: Any external Research Institute shall form an MOA with the University covering financial plans, contributions and budgets, governance, staffing, reporting, termination, and legal responsibilities.

Guidelines for proposals to establish a relationship between the University and External Research Institute shall include:

1. the process by which the External Research Institute will conform to all relevant policies and procedures of the University
2. the overall rationale for granting affiliation to the External Research Institute by the University, detailing the expected contribution of the External Research Institute to the mission, policies and activities of the University;
3. the degree to which the University is expected to participate in or contribute to the operation of the External Research Institute and an argument for proportionality of this participation or contribution in terms of the contribution of the External Research Institute to the mandate of the University;
4. a statement as to how the proposed External Research Institute will affect existing departments or Centres and/or Institutes within the University, both positively and negatively, and a plan to ameliorate any negative impacts identified;
5. expected period of affiliation with the University and a proposed review period; and if fixed term relationship, an exit strategy so as to minimize disruption to the University's activities;
6. plans for faculty affiliation with the External Research Institute;
7. a plan for the hiring of professional and technical employees by the External Research Institute, as these employees shall not be considered employees of the University;
8. a consideration of joint or honoree appointments provided that such appointments are for a limited term and fall within the University's collective agreements.
9. the possibility of appointments or secondments of University faculty and employees to an External Research Institute where such arrangements would be of mutual benefit. These arrangements are subject to approval of the appointee's department, Chair, Dean, FAUST, the relevant Department, Vice –President (Academic and Research);

10. detailed expected plans for funding including the financing of an External Research Institute normally being based on a combination of core funding, grants, or contracts from community, business, or government sources;
11. plans for training of undergraduate and graduate students/undergraduate and graduate student funding;
12. the research requirements/goals for the implementation of the External Research Institute;
13. an explanation of governance structure/organization and the liaison point, staffing, liability, termination and reporting.