

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS
NUMBERED POLICY MEMORANDA

POLICY MEMORANDUM 79-I.2-28

Issued: January 1, 1979
Editorial Amendments: October 29, 1998
Editorial Amendments: September 1, 2000

POLICY ON CENTERS

The role of Centers in the University is to develop research activities in support of the educational program. However, not all research activities require a Center to facilitate their development or sustenance. In general, Centers should be established only where organized collective activities are involved, as opposed to a collection of individual research activities that are not inter-dependent. They should have a mission orientation as opposed to disciplinary orientation. They should have a promise of growth as measured by outside funding. They should be integrated with the academic programs and in demonstrable ways must provide direct benefits to the academic programs.

Centers should be initiated only when there is a good prospect that the above requirements will be fulfilled. The formation of a Center is an administrative act, and hence it can only occur when University Administration is convinced that it is desirable in terms of the above requirements. The initiative for the formation of a Center will, in general, be within a School, and any proposal to establish a Center should be submitted through the School and the Graduate Dean to the Executive Vice President and Provost.

It is appropriate that initial funding be provided for a new Center, based upon the expectation that it can develop, secure outside funding, and assist the educational activities of the University. The matter of continuing funding should be decided in terms of the success of the Center in assisting the University in the pursuit of its educational objectives. The continuance or termination of Centers is a closely related question, and it should be decided on the same basis.

Funding needs of a Center are two-fold: Administrative and Research. The existence of a funding formula that essentially returns to the University for administrative purposes a fraction of the total research volume implies that this appropriation is to provide for all the administrative services required to support sponsored research on campus. It is generally accepted that this appropriation is inadequate to cover that part of total administrative costs properly attributable to sponsor research activities on campus. Thus, no funds from this appropriation have been allocated to Centers. Instead, some of the Organized Research appropriation has been and is allocated to Centers to provide for the necessary research administration functions within the Centers.

Sponsored research benefits the University and its educational programs in many ways in addition to the research accomplishments and the research opportunities provided for graduate students. The volume of sponsored research affects several categories of appropriation to the University by the State, either directly or indirectly. Research accomplishments practically dominate the reputation of a university. Research participation by faculty largely sets the intellectual tone of the faculty. Opportunities for students to participate in front-line research is of paramount importance for a high quality graduate program. Although research activities on campus are not wholly dependent upon the existence of Centers, Centers that enhance the volume and quality of research on campus obviously contribute to the educational objectives of the University and the regard in which it is held nationally and internationally.

It is desirable to provide incentives to Centers to maximize their contributions to the University. The most direct advantage to the University of Center activities is the support of graduate students. Thus, it is appropriate that some part of the Organized Research funds be allocated to Centers in proportion to their support of graduate students with grant or contract funds. Such allocation should be small enough not to penalize other parts of the University for the existence of Centers, but large enough to encourage Centers to move in directions that enhance the achievement of University goals.