 Public Health	Policy: Establishing Organized Research Units
	Approved by: Kimberly Horn, Associate Dean of Research
	Date: December 9, 2013

I. OVERVIEW AND DEFINITIONS

The George Washington University (GW) Office of the Vice President of Research (OVPR) conveys the following position on Organized Research Units (ORUs).


“Our policy of chartering and re-chartering scholarly centers and institutes facilitates the strengthening of research and scholarly activity capabilities throughout the university. Becoming a chartered center or institute reflects a university seal of approval and results in the inclusion in listings of scholarly units. Further, chartered centers/institutes are eligible to apply for intramural funding from the Centers and Institutes Facilitating Fund.” Refer to <http://research.gwu.edu/centers-institutes>.

1. Purpose. The *purpose* of this document is to provide consistent guidelines for establishing, reviewing, monitoring, and sun setting SPHHS ORUs, specifically Centers, Institutes, and Programs. The GW SPPHS is committed to creating and maintaining ORUs that meet the highest standards of research and practice, are actively engaged in multi disciplinary scholarship as described in the SPHHS and the University’s strategic plan, and convey GW’s image of innovation.

2. Definitions. The SPHHS adopts GW’s definitions of ORUs with minor additions tailored to the School’s mission and research priorities:

An **Institute** is typically larger in scope and membership than a Center. Institutes are actively engaged in the *conduct of integrative multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary scholarship*, including research and/or educational activities, and should involve *faculty from multiple SPHHS departments and at least two GW colleges or schools*. An Institute may contain one or more Centers within its administrative structure (although this is not a requirement). A SPHHS Institute is led by a Director with a *faculty appointment in the SPHHS*. While Institute Directors/Pis report to a Department Chair, they have an indirect reporting relationship to the SPHHS Associate Dean of Research and, depending on the scope of work and terms of agreement for the Institute, the OVPR or his/her designee for matters relevant to their Institutes. See Figure 1. To be formally recognized by GW, SPHHS-led Institutes must first meet the SPHHS parameters described above and then be chartered officially as required by GW (see: <http://research.gwu.edu/centers-institutes>). SPHHS does not permit non-chartered Institutes. See section II for details about the chartering process.

A **Center** is a *school-wide unit* engaged in a specific research and/or educational activity. At a minimum, SPHHS Centers should include participants from *at least two SPHHS Departments*. Centers are encouraged to include at least one School/Department beyond the SPHHS, but this is not required. A Center is led by a Director with a *faculty appointment in the SPHHS*. While Center Directors report to a Department Chair, they have an indirect reporting relationship to the SPHHS Associate Dean of Research for matters relevant to their Centers. See Figure 1. To be formally recognized by GW, SPHHS Centers must first meet SPHHS requirements above and then be chartered officially by the GW OVPR, via an application process (see:

 Public Health	Policy: Establishing Organized Research Units
	Approved by: Kimberly Horn, Associate Dean of Research
	Date: December 9, 2013

<http://research.gwu.edu/centers-institutes>). Non-chartered center-like activities are not allowed to carry the title of “Center”. A decision not to charter a Center must be strongly justified and should be mutually determined through discussions among the Director, the Department Chair, the Associate Dean of Research, and potentially the Dean. See section II for details about the chartering process.

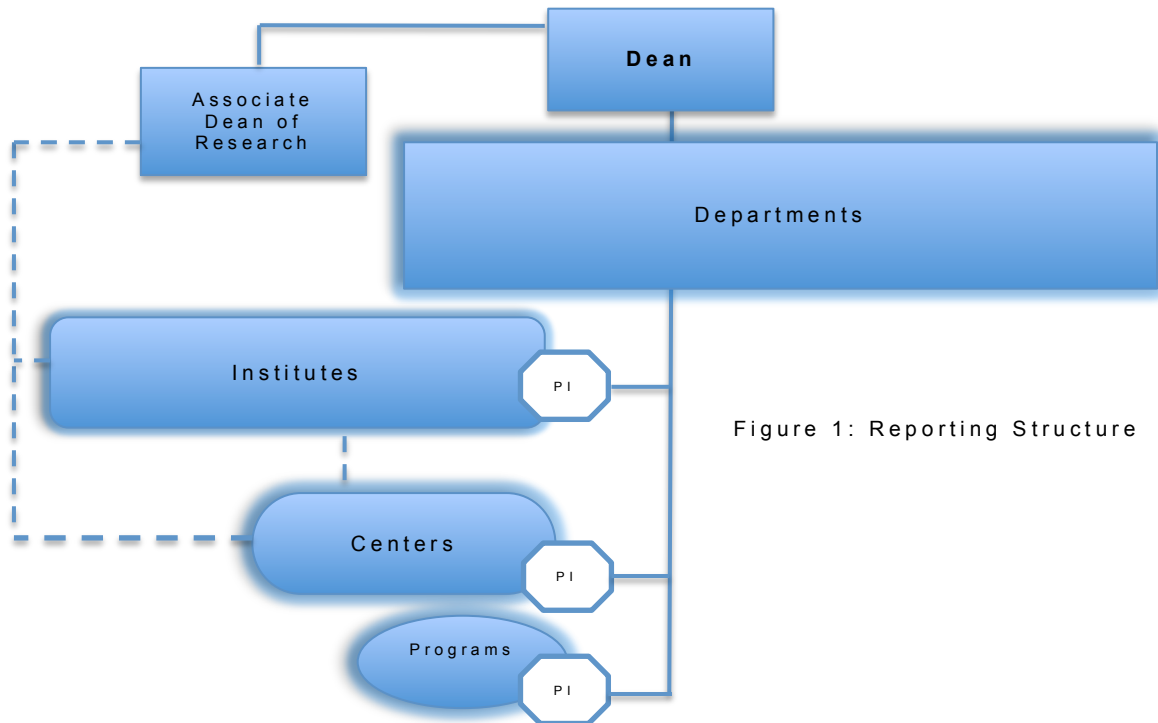



Figure 1: Reporting Structure

An SPHHS **Program** is more narrowly focused than a Center or Institute, and typically includes active interdisciplinary research and/or other academic activities focused within a single department. Programs are usually a small group of faculty or staff with common research or other scholarly interests (e.g., training, policy analysis, and evaluation) that is already funded or is seeking funding. Programs have resource implications for the SPHHS and the Departments. **Formal Request:** A request for the establishment of a program should include, in writing: (a) Name of the program and expected duration (begin and end dates), not to exceed two years; (b) Name of the faculty member serving as Program Leader; (c) Program Purpose; (d) Relevance and value-added to the SPHHS, Department, and/or GW strategic plan; and (e) Budget information/funding sources. Such requests should be submitted to the relevant Department Chair for approval and subsequently transmitted to the Associate Dean of Research by the Chair. The transmittal from Department Chairs should state the date and duration of approval. Programs are not officially chartered by OVPR. Programs may evolve into Centers over time. Upon end date, if subsequent approvals are not submitted by the Chair to the Dean’s Office, the Program will be considered terminated. **Cores** are not reflected in Figure 1 as placement may vary.

 Public Health	Policy: Establishing Organized Research Units
	Approved by: Kimberly Horn, Associate Dean of Research
	Date: December 9, 2013


3. Faculty Engagement. Programs, Centers and Institutes are populated by faculty. Like all faculty activities, ORU activities are subject to negotiation between faculty members and their own Department Chairs. At the same time, faculty members participate in Programs, Centers and Institutes solely at the discretion of the Program/Center/Institute Director and the Director is responsible for determining the effort that is required from any given faculty member. It is the responsibility of Program, Center and Institute Leaders to clearly communicate both to faculty members and to their respective Department Chairs information relevant to financial support for effort for individual faculty members who are members of Centers. Faculty members engaged in ORUs directly report to Department Chairs and have indirect reporting relationships to Program, Center and Institute Directors. Therefore, it is expected that Program, Center, and Institute Directors will serve in a consultative role to Department Chairs, as requested, providing feedback relevant to faculty annual reviews (e.g., goal setting, mentoring, and other faculty development needs versus weighing judgment). In the unlikely event that disputes arise over these and other issues: (1) for Programs, disputes will be resolved by the relevant Department Chair and (2) for Centers and Institutes, disputes will be resolved by the Associate Dean of Research.

4. ORU Review. Following the release of this policy, *all* existing chartered and non-chartered ORUs will be reviewed by the SPHHS Associate Dean of Research with Directors (and possibly Chairs) to determine plans for continuation, chartering, or sun setting of Centers that no longer are actively engaged in research or other scholarly activities. ORUs should have in place on-going evaluation plans. Progress reports or equivalent evaluation documents on Centers and Institutes will be required to support charter applications or renewals to OVPR. As gleaned from progress reports or other documentation, the Associate Dean of Research will review annually existing ORUs to assess their progress and status, and level of activity. Of note, the OVPR charter applications required the approval and signatures of the Associate Dean of Research; Programs, Centers and Institutes that are inactive or not meeting stated goals and objectives would not be approved by SPHHS to put forth a charter application. See Part II, 3, below regarding termination procedures.

II. CHARTERING


1. Application Process. Before completing the GW charter application, those wishing to establish a new Center or Institute are encouraged to discuss plans and intentions with their Department Chairs and the Associate Dean of Research—ultimately; the signatures of the Dean and the Chair are required on the charter application. Per OVPR, faculty seeking to establish a new ORU should follow the procedures as outlined on the OVPR website: <http://research.gwu.edu/centers-institutes>.

2. Benefits of Chartering. The chartering process is intended to foster the success and productivity of ORUs. Several benefits include:

	Public Health	Policy: Establishing Organized Research Units
		Approved by: Kimberly Horn, Associate Dean of Research
		Date: December 9, 2013

- Provides the opportunity for GW SPHHS faculty to develop and lead complex multidisciplinary efforts that bring together the expertise of several faculty members across departmental and/or school silos.
- Increases opportunities for funding in areas relevant to GW and SPHHS strategic plans.
- Reduces the potential time and energy consumed in ad hoc negotiations between faculty, Center Directors, Department Chairs, and Deans.
- Increases opportunities to for Directors to have a voice in reinvestment planning (e.g., through IDC returns).
- Ensures uniform, standardized evaluation to monitor and assess the ORU success and continued value of GW investments (against other possible, competing investments).
- Provides eligibility for GW internal funding mechanism limited to only GW chartered Centers and Institutes.
- Assures a higher level of visibility and credibility across GW and the general public.
- Demonstrates institutional commitment, which, in turn, may provide a competitive edge for external funding.
- Assures membership on the SPHHS Council of Directors.

3. Denial or termination of charter. Ultimately, we want all Institutes and Centers to receive a charter. Charter applications are reviewed by the SPPHS to (1) assure that they meet departmental and SPHHS criteria, (2) that the proposed Center or Institute is ready for chartering, (3) that the proposed Center or Institute is adequately supported and makes appropriate use of GW resources and (4) that the proposed activity is in alignment with Department, School and/or GW strategic plans. If approved and signed off by the Dean’s Office, Charter applications are forwarded to OVPR for review. Charter applications are approved, renewed, or denied through the University Research Advisory Committee, per OVPR guidelines. In the event that a new or existing Center or Institute is denied a charter, the Associate Dean of Research will work closely with Chairs, Directors, and OVPR to plan alternative strategies or to address concerns for reapplication. In the unlikely event a Center or Institute with existing or new external funding (e.g., as a federal P or U grant) is denied charter, the denial of GW charter has no bearing on the continuation of that grant, or the ORU. Again, under these unlikely circumstances, the Associate Dean of Research will work closely with Chairs, Directors, and OVPR to plan alternative strategies or to address concerns for reapplication. If an ORU is no longer chartered and no longer has external funding, and there are no clear plans forward, the Dean’s Office may terminate the ORU. Special circumstances may dictate the need to either review or close a Center or Institute outside of the chartering process. In this case, the SPPHS Dean will seek approval for ad-hoc review from the OVPR Vice President for

	Policy: Establishing Organized Research Units
	Approved by: Kimberly Horn, Associate Dean of Research
	Date: December 9, 2013

Research. *Any concerns or decisions on from the Dean’s Office related to the termination of an ORU will be communicated to the Director/PI in writing and copied to the Chair.*

III. GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIES

1. Internal funding opportunities. OVPR offers internal funding through the Center and Institute Facilitating Fund (CIFF) grants, only available to chartered entities. Details on how to apply for those funds can be found on the OVPR website; see <http://research.gwu.edu/centers-institutes-facilitating-fund>. On the other hand, some Centers and Institutes have funding that is for the purpose of funding pilot projects in specific areas. The Associate Dean of Research is available to advise Center and Institute Directors with the administration of such grants programs.

2. Reinvestment strategies. If Centers and Institutes have clear goals and evaluation shows reasonable progress toward those goals, the SPHHS Dean’s Office will work closely with Directors to secure internal and external funding. Directors are encouraged to discuss long-term plans and funding opportunities with the Associate Dean of Research. Foundations or other development sources may also be considered. *PIs/Directors interested in private foundation funding should carefully plan their approach strategies with the SPHHS Development Office to maximize the likelihood of success and to avoid duplicative approaches to funders*—this contact should happen before approaching the potential funder. Because funding models will vary across ORUs, specific investment strategies will need to be discussed among Deans, Chairs, and Directors.

IV. GOVERNANCE

The **reporting structure** of ORUs affiliated with the SPHHS is shown in Figure 1. Each Center and Institute will have its own internal organizational and governance structure consistent with the terms of agreement of the funding sources. Importantly, changes in SPHHS Center or Institute Directors or other key leadership, by-laws, or other critical governing procedures should be discussed and approved by the Associate Dean of Research and the Dean. When Centers or Institutes are externally funded, these changes should be discussed and approved in advance of official notification to the funder.

A **SPHHS Council of ORU Directors** will serve as a forum for Center and Institute Directors to share successful strategies and practices, facilitate solutions to common problems. The Associate Dean of Research will serve as Chair of the Council. Meetings will be held at regular intervals as determined by Council members, but not less than three times per year. The Associate Dean of Research or the Dean may also appoint leaders of large research enterprises (e.g., Program Projects) to serve on the Council as needed or as appropriate.