

OVPR GUIDELINES ON CATEGORY III RESEARCH CENTERS AND INSTITUTES (RCIs)

This document is intended to provide a clear, logical process for the establishment of new RCIs at the University of New Mexico (UNM). It builds on the information provided in Faculty Policy A91 and supplemental document A91#1.

I. Overview

Category III RCIs have significant operations outside of the bounds of a single college or school and report to either the VPR or the Provost. The Faculty Senate Research Policy Committee (RPC) is the relevant faculty committee that provides recommendations regarding creation or termination of these Centers to the OVPR/Provost and oversees the external review process.

Category III RCIs may fulfill a variety of functions that extend and elevate UNM's research mission, especially in efforts that connect colleges, campuses, and external partners. As such, Category III RCIs should be the focal point for the entire university in their area of excellence. Although we aim for consistency in the processes for creation and evaluation of RCIs, we recognize that RCIs must be evaluated on criteria relevant to their proposed function(s) and scope. The following subcategories describe the general mission/focus of various category III RCIs.

IIIA: Basic and Applied Research Centers: Centers with missions focused primarily on basic or applied research, scholarship, and/or creative works and the integration of the University's research and education missions. These Centers offer centralized equipment (e.g., service centers, available to a wide spectrum of users), facilities, expertise, or other resources to promote advanced and transdisciplinary research. Category IIIA RCIs should be created to highlight and advance national or international leadership in a field of research and scholarship. Expected impacts include generation of external partnerships and funding, research innovations, graduate education and training, undergraduate research opportunities, and outreach to the local, state, national and global community.

IIIB: Contract-focused Research Centers: Centers with missions and impacts largely defined by the terms of contracts with external entities, such as state agencies, private companies, and foundations whose work aligns with and supports UNM's core missions. These RCIs generally do not have their own research agendas, but rather work primarily to advance the agendas of the entities with which they contract.

IIIC: Public-focused Research Centers: Centers with missions focused primarily on public impact, including economic development and public policy. These RCIs generate public policy research, analysis, and activity, to explore issues important to our community, state, nation, and the world. Their outputs can include publications, reports, blogposts, and journals.

IIID: Research Support Centers: Centers with missions focused on providing services, infrastructure, tools, and expertise that foster research productivity and excellence across campus. Generally, these resources are too expensive or specialized for individual

investigators to cost-effectively provide and sustain themselves. These RCIs complement and/or enhance interdisciplinary activities across all missions of the university.

Although no firm limits are set on the number of RCIs that can exist at any given time, creating and supporting new Category III RCIs requires significant investment by the institution (see Section II.5.d and Section VI). In addition, successful Category III RCIs are long-term investments and as such, are expected to persist beyond the careers of the individuals who create it. As such, care is taken to prevent proliferation of RCIs in a manner that is not in alignment with UNM's strategic priorities.

II. Proposals

Proposals for creation of new RCIs should be discussed with the OVPR to determine the suitability of the proposed activities for development as an RCI and the alignment with strategic priorities of the OVPR/Provost and University, as well as the needs for OVPR support. A brief pre-proposal or "white paper" should be submitted that provides the general concept and focus of the proposed RCI, a brief description of the "track record" of success, and an estimate of potential revenue for the proposed RCI. The VPR/Provost will provide feedback on whether such a proposal should be more fully developed. Final proposals are evaluated by the RPC, which will provide feedback and make a recommendation to the OVPR and Provost. The VPR and Provost will make a final determination regarding the creation of the RCI.

The full proposal must include:

- 1) Statement of Purpose. Describe the purpose of the RCI succinctly.
- 2) Mission and goals. Identify the type of RCI proposed (IIIA-D), the broad mission of the RCI, and how this mission aligns with UNM's fundamental missions of education, research, and service, including community engagement and external partnerships. Enumerate approximately 3-5 goals that outline the anticipated activities of the RCI, including a commitment to UNM's mission and linking the mission to the unique nature of UNM (examples include: UNM's place-based history; characteristics and needs of UNM's student body; UNM's role within the state of New Mexico; etc.). Note that these goals will form the basis for periodic review.
- 3) Rationale. Explain why the goals of the proposed RCI cannot be effectively accomplished within existing UNM structures, and why a Category III designation is most appropriate.
 - a) Identify key reasons for establishment of the RCI, such as contract or grant opportunities, leveraging of external partnerships (Note: the existence of an external partnership is not, in and of itself, sufficient justification for a Category III RCI), previous track record (e.g., Grand Challenges success; development/expansion of Category I or II RCI) etc., including the anticipated benefits from creation of the RCI. [Note: The existence of cross-college connections, external partnerships, or submission/award of a major proposal for a "center" grant are not, in and of themselves, sufficient justifications for a Category III RCI. The proposal must explain why the Category III Center will enhance research capacity or impact or create new efficiencies.]

- b) Identify any similar research units at UNM and describe the relationship of the proposed RCI to these others. In what ways will these units overlap, collaborate, or coalesce, and what contributions can be anticipated that are not made by the existing units?
 - c) Provide evidence of broad support for creation of the center across colleges/schools that helps justify why the Category III designation should be assigned to the RCI (i.e., what buy-in does the proposing group have -both conceptually and numbers of participating faculty - and what are the perceived benefits for them?).
- 4) Principal Investigators/Faculty Engagement. Identify the proposed director, who could be appointed initially on an interim basis, prior to launching a search for a permanent director. [Note that all Category III center directors are appointed by the VPR and/or Provost and serve at the discretion of the VPR/Provost.] Provide a table of core faculty investigators involved with the RCI, along with their rank, their academic home units (department & school/college), their anticipated level of involvement (see Section II.5.b below), and email addresses. Attention to inclusion of a diverse group of researchers with representation from multiple disciplines, ranks, backgrounds and experiences is likely to provide a robust basis for success of the RCI. Provide CVs as an appendix.
- 5) Governance Structure. Provide information that addresses the following elements of the proposed governance structure:
- a) **Constituency**. Identify the number of faculty and staff FTE assigned to the RCI initially and include any projection for growth over 5 years. If a phased scale up is envisioned, describe those phases within the 5-year plan. Although there is no set minimum of faculty needed to initiate a new program, a proposal for a new Category III RCI needs to be able to demonstrate interdisciplinarity, so the expectation is that there would be multiple faculty in multiple departments/colleges/schools.
 - b) **Internal Governance**. Describe how researchers become members of the RCI and the expectations for affiliated faculty in terms of commitments and participation. Include any consideration of tiered affiliation by researchers (e.g., different levels of affiliation with accompanying differences in expectations and rights/responsibilities and % FTE funded by the center). Provide an outline of internal governance structure, as well as how members will be included in the RCI governance. In alignment with the shared governance ideals of UNM, this should include some type of advisory committee (representative or of the whole, depending on the number of participating faculty), with guidance as to how the internal group is selected. One approach would be to provide a set of preliminary (or proposed) bylaws addressing frequency of meeting, types of questions/issues to be addressed; voting rights, etc. Tying the bylaws to any possible tiered membership would also be desirable. A fully developed set of bylaws as well as a management plan for day-to-day operations will be created during the probationary period (see Section IV).
 - c) **External Advisory Board**. All category III RCIs must have an active external advisory board, which meets annually, at minimum, with appropriate members of the RCI. Identify members of the proposed external advisory board, briefly explaining the appropriateness of these selections in terms of their expertise and relevant experience. During the probationary period, the external advisory board will be solidified through a process that will include providing detailed information on board members' qualifications

- (e.g., CVs). At a minimum, the external advisory board will be expected to (1) participate in periodic reviews of the RCI; (2) serve as a sounding board to provide feedback and input on new opportunities and strategic directions for the RCI, including potential future directions for specific scholarly endeavors; (3) interact with students/postdocs participating in the RCI; and (4) participate as appropriate in RCI events and activities (e.g., outreach events, celebrations, career fairs, etc.).
- d) **RCI Director.** Explain the qualifications, including prior experience with large research efforts, required for the RCI director and enumerate the proposed duties and responsibilities for the director, including scope of authority on decision making. (NOTE: The OVPR and/or Provost ultimately set expectations and job descriptions for the RCI directors that report to them. As such, this section should focus on duties and expectations that might be unique to the RCI.) Note that category III RCI directors may not hold another substantive administrative position (e.g., Department Chair, Associate Dean).
- 6) Proposed Research Development Activities. Describe planned activities to assist RCI faculty members' development of RCI-based funded research projects (i.e., proposal development, pilot research projects, etc.) as well as other research-related activities planned for the RCI. Include specific plans for targeting internal and external collaborative opportunities that will be enhanced and/or enabled by the RCI.
- 7) Educational Mission. Explain how the RCI will support undergraduate, graduate, and postgraduate training, including how many trainees will be supported by the RCI and how these efforts connect with existing or proposed new educational programs. Also include any proposed outreach efforts with external educational partners (e.g., K-12, museums, community programs focused on educational activities).
- 8) Funding Model. Provide an outline of the proposed funding model for the RCI, including the following components:
- Outline startup needs/costs and a projected budget over 5 years for both a probationary period (see Section IV below) and full implementation. Identify **available** sources of funding, facilities, and other resources, including: (a) external grant support; (b) external funding secured through contracts with non-federal sponsors; (c) OVPR support in alignment with the OVPR standardized formula for research support to Category III centers (i.e., F&A return); (d) other internal or external support. Provide documentation of any existing relevant internal budget agreements. Commitments from each source should be delineated over time as finite (one-time) or recurring (i.e., multi-year commitments, I&G, etc.).
 - Identify sources of continuing (anticipated) external support. What funding sources will be targeted, and in what amounts and in what timeframe? How does creation of the Center impact funding prospects?
 - Provide a table showing RCI total expenditure and revenue goals for the first 5 years. Describe any financial and membership goals directly related to enhancing research expenditures. Provide metrics as appropriate.

- 9) External Partners. Describe any existing or anticipated partnerships with external partners. How will the RCI interface with other research institutions, local communities, policy/government, and business partners? What contributions could be anticipated from those entities to the RCI? Will the external partners interface with faculty from multiple UNM units within the RCI? Researchers from an external partner who wish to seek formal affiliation can do so through the RCI (once established) using UNM's existing processes for affiliation.
- 10) Sustainability. Explain whether proposed activities have a defined life cycle and how investigators will work to promote long-term sustainability of the RCI, if applicable. What are the conditions that would lead to sunsetting the RCI?

III. Evaluation Criteria

1. **[Rationale]** Is there a strong justification for creation of a Category III RCI? The proposed RCI should not replicate existing resources on campus, and should present strong rationale for why its creation will enhance capacities of the research program and investigators beyond existing structures or those possible at the Category I or II level. Will it engage, encompass, or subsume other Category I/II centers? Does it have a strong record of success as well as potential for future success?
2. **[Mission and goals, Research Development & Educational Mission]** Does the proposed RCI have a clear and compelling mission, and does this align with the University's strategic priorities? Are the goals clear and achievable? Are there clear plans for research development of RCI members? Will creation of the RCI improve the quantity and/or quality of education and training resources available for UNM students?
3. **[Principal Investigators, Governance Structure]** Is there sufficient interest and support for development of the RCI across campus units to warrant its creation (see II.3.c)? Do the proposed interim director and RCI investigators have the expertise and necessary interdisciplinarity to address the planned research and education program goals? Does the plan include suitable administrative support and identification of appropriate administrative structures? Are the proposed leadership team and faculty affiliates consistent with UNM's commitment to diversity and inclusion? Is the internal co-governance structure adequate to ensure faculty buy-in, appropriate input into decision making and future leadership development? What challenges could exist in creation of a management plan for day-to-day operations? Is the composition of the external advisory board sufficient to provide strong strategic guidance and independent evaluation?
4. **[Funding Model]** Does the proposal include a well-developed funding model and is it satisfactory to meet the expected needs of the RCI? Are there internal budget agreements (see II.8.a above) in place and/or is there a plan to address those agreements over time? Are OVPR resources budgeted in such a way to generate return on investment? Is the long-term funding plan realistic and are contingencies addressed?
5. **[Sustainability]** Does the proposal include a plan for sustainability of the center (funding, personnel, leadership development and succession, and research productivity) consistent with its projected life cycle? Although some RCIs may be contract-specific, most should include plans for sustainability or growth beyond the current

grant(s)/contract(s). Does the proposal sufficiently address any potential recurring (and/or long-term) funding streams?

IV. Charter and Probationary Period

Upon positive recommendation by the Faculty Senate RPC, and approval by the VPR/Provost, the RCI will enter a probationary period of at least one year. If the center proposal is not recommended/approved, the applicant will receive feedback and may be encouraged to resubmit the proposal. A probationary period for a new RCI may be initiated or extended by the VPR/Provost when the Faculty Senate is not in session, but would need to be reviewed/approved by the Faculty Senate RPC within 6 months of the subsequent session.

Within 6 months of creation, each RCI will develop a charter and a strategic plan, integrating feedback received during the application and review process. The charter will describe the mission, proposed activities, governance (including bylaws, day-to-day management/operations plan, and detailed expectations for the external advisory board), and administrative support structure, as well as the expectations of RCI members and method for member selection. The RCI strategic plan should largely describe the means of addressing the mission of the unit, including outreach and communication to the broader campus community and beyond. It will specify explicit goals and metrics regarding the types of planned activities to support members' external research funding and management, amount of research funds to be generated, goals for usage of any revenues garnered by the RCI, and alignment with the UNM and OVPR strategic plans. These metrics will be used to evaluate RCI success in subsequent reviews.

In addition to development of a charter and strategic plan, the probationary period will also be used to ensure a strong foundation for the new RCI. First, the interim director will meet regularly with the VPR and/or members of the OVPR team to (a) provide updates on the activities and progress of the RCI; (b) provide a venue for discussion of obstacles and potential mechanisms to address the obstacles including access to research development services; and (c) receive feedback and direction on the operations and mission of the RCI. Second, under most circumstances, a competitive search for a permanent director (normally a 5-year term; other term lengths may be utilized) of the RCI will be launched during the probationary period. The VPR/Provost will appoint and charge the search committee for the permanent director and determine the parameters of the search. Third, the interim director will work with the OVPR/Provost on space needs for the RCI.

The charter and strategic plan shall be approved by the Interim director and the VPR (in consultation with the Provost). Once approved, they must be posted on the RCI's website. Failure to complete these tasks during the probationary period could result in withholding of OVPR/Provost resources for subsequent years. As needed, additional time may be added to the probationary period, assuming adequate progress toward center goals is being made.

There will be a formal review by the OVPR/Provost of the RCI's progress and performance during the probationary period to determine if the RCI should progress beyond the probationary period. This review may include the external advisory board and results will be reported to the Faculty Senate RPC for additional feedback and recommendations. Failure to demonstrate adequate progress, as determined by the VPR/Provost and the Faculty Senate RPC, during the probationary period could result in termination of the RCI.

V. Annual Reporting

RCI Directors, in collaboration with their staff and advisory board, must submit an annual report to the OVPR/Provost in the fall semester of each academic year. The OVPR will provide a template to standardize the format of the annual reports and provide annual due dates. These reports will minimally review the goals of the RCI and report progress on those goals, the annual budget, and the scholarly/creative works/research impacts, as well as identify weaknesses, challenges and needs. Annual reviews will be posted on the OVPR website, presented to the OVPR's Research Council, and are subject to review and inquiry by the RPC.

VI. Periodic Review

In addition to annual reviews, a comprehensive review with external assessment of the RCI and its director will be conducted every 5 years. For new RCIs, a more extensive annual review by the OVPR/Provost may be performed in the third year beyond the probationary period. Following this 3rd year review, subsequent reviews will be performed every 5 years. If significant issues are identified during any review, a follow-up assessment may be performed after 2 years.

Although the process is evaluative, the goal is to promote the long-term success of each RCI and proactively address needs and challenges that arise during the RCI life cycle. [Note: If the RCI is directly engaged in the University's Academic Program Review (i.e., the RCI supports or provides an academic program) within one year of the scheduled periodic review, the APR process and documents could be provided as the periodic review for the RCI, updated to include any changes since the APR].

- (1) The director will prepare an updated version of the charter/strategic plan identifying any revisions to the mission and goals, personnel, and funding model. Additionally, for each goal, the director will enumerate the activities and accomplishments of the RCI since the last review. The information included will: (1) describe the scholarly/creative works and research accomplishments of the faculty; (2) explain how these accomplishments support the quality of the unit and the key metrics that are used to measure achievement in this area (peer-reviewed publications, juried exhibitions, proposals submitted/funded, books published, etc.); and (3) identify areas of strength for the unit as well as areas of growth. The Director's report should be completed in December and submitted to the external advisory board, the RPC, and the VPR.
- (2) The external advisory board will complete a written assessment of strengths and weaknesses based on the criteria below. Evaluations should consider the report provided by the RCI Director but also ideally involve a "360-degree" process involving RCI faculty, staff, and students, as well as any constituencies of the RCI, particularly if the RCI is involved in teaching or providing services beyond the UNM community. If needed, the OVPR may be able to assist in the collection of these data. The report should detail how these entities were involved in the evaluation. The assessment should be submitted by February to the VPR/Provost. The assessment will include:

- a. *Impact*: What is the RCI's impact inside and outside of the University, using measures that are appropriate to the mission and goals of the center (scholarship/grants, generation of technology, public policy, community engagement, etc.), including those identified during the probationary period?
- b. *Return on Investment (ROI)*: In what ways does the RCI provide value added over the contributions of individual faculty? How does the value compare to the support the RCI receives from the OVPR/Academic Affairs? What adjustments should be made that would enhance the ROI? [Note: Although ROI goes beyond financial returns, assessment of internal dollars invested and returns gained on those dollars in terms of external funding should be included if available.]
- c. *Sustainability*: Are there challenges that affect the viability of the RCI for the near future? For example, has there been a loss of personnel or funding streams? Are facilities adequate? Are there redundancies with other RCIs? Is there a need to address diversity or inclusion issues?
- d. *Director/Governance*: What support has been provided to the director to enable the RCI's success? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current leadership and governance structure and how have they impacted the ability of the RCI to effectively make progress toward goals and achieve its mission? Provide concrete examples.
- e. *Needs*: Does the RCI have needs that are not adequately met by existing research policies, infrastructure, or administration?

[Note: Given the potential workload involved with a periodic review for the external advisory board, the RCI may submit a request to the OVPR/Provost for an ad hoc modification of the process and/or financial assistance to complete the review.]

- (3) The Faculty Senate RPC will review the revised charter/proposal and the assessment of the external advisory board and provide a brief report with their recommendation(s) to the OVPR and Provost. The report should evaluate the RCI benefit to the University and provide specific recommendations for the RCI, designating each as *critical*, *major*, or *minor*. A critical recommendation reflects a concern that might affect future termination/renewal of the RCI and requires immediate action by the RCI leadership. If any *critical* recommendations are identified, the RCI will undergo another external review in 2 years. If any *major* recommendations are identified, the RCI will be asked to provide explicit written responses in the following year's annual report. Major recommendations that are not resolved by the time of next periodic review may be elevated to critical issues. Additional recommendations will be provided to the VPR and Provost by the VPR's executive committee and the Provost's leadership team.
- (4) The OVPR and Provost will meet with the RCI leadership to discuss the recommendations and identify any actions necessary.

Termination

Proposals to terminate Category III RCIs must be based on critical concerns or recommendations made following an annual or periodic review of the RCI. Documentation of the concerns and justification for termination must be presented to the RCI governance, with an

opportunity to respond in writing. Proposals to terminate and RCI, along with any rebuttal from the RCI will be reviewed by the Faculty Senate RPC, who will provide a recommendation/response. Such proposals may be initiated by the external advisory board, the RCI director, and/or the VPR/Provost. Recommendations from the RPC about whether to terminate an RCI will be sent to the VPR and the Provost for final decision [Note: The final decision on a termination proposal arising from the VPR would be reviewed by the Provost and vice versa.]. Termination of an RCI will be considered only after exploration of alternatives to revive or reinvent the RCI.

*This document is subject to periodic review and updating by the OVPR in conjunction with RPC feedback.