

# **Guidelines for the Establishment, Operation and Evaluation of Research Institutes and Centers**

## **Policy Statement and Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to faculty and administrators on the process for creating a new research institute or center (RIC) and how new and existing RICs will be evaluated. The framework for expanded guidelines is grounded in institutional strategic planning. The [ODU 2014-2019 Strategic Plan](#) mandated a reexamination of policies and procedures governing institutional support for, and viability of, all existing RICs including how they are established and systematically evaluated.

Typically, an RIC is multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary and thus engages in activities that span more than a single academic department or college. The actual operation of an RIC shall enhance the level of externally funded research activity, reputation or prestige in some area of importance to the University (see the current [ODU Strategic Plan](#) as well as the [Research Strategic Plan](#)). RICs may also form to take advantage of emerging opportunities unforeseen by the last strategic planning process. Generally,



review by the President, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Research and appropriate dean(s). The President's decision will be final on the reporting line.

Elevating an RIC to Enterprise status requires an application to the Office of Research outlining 1) the interdisciplinary and cross-college complement, 2) resource model and sustainability plan, 3) strategic importance to the University and 4) documented recommendation from all stakeholders (e.g., departments, colleges) to assign their indirect cost share from RIC sponsored research to the new entity. Given their strategic importance to the University and cross-college collaboration, Enterprise RICs report directly to the Vice President for Research.

## **Evaluation of Research Institutes & Centers**

### *New Institutes and Centers*

Evaluation of new RICs shall occur after three years and be led by the Office of Research in collaboration with the Faculty Research Advisory Committee. Criteria for evaluation include a viable business plan, strategic value to the University, documented institutional commitment, and an external funding record and/or continued funding opportunities.

Periodic evaluations of research centers or institutes that have instructional, outreach, and other missions in addition to research will be conducted in concert with the relevant departments, colleges, and Academic Affairs so that the evaluation is holistic rather than just focused on the research mission. Criteria for evaluations of those "hybrid" centers or institutes will be agreed upon among the units directing the evaluation process.

### *Existing Institutes and Centers*

An initial triage shall be done by the Office of Research in collaboration with the department and/or college to identify currently active and inactive RICs. Active RICs shall be assigned to an ongoing five-year evaluation schedule once the initial evaluation is complete. Criteria for evaluation will be identical to the three-year review for new RICs. External evaluations may be solicited in conjunction with internal review by the Faculty Research Advisory Committee and the Vice President for Research.

The Faculty Research Advisory Committee will establish an evaluation schedule and framework that will be communicated to all center directors and stakeholders. Authority for sunsetting RICs that are inactive rests with the Vice President for Research and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs in consultation with the department(s),

Revised September 27, 2016