

Establishment and Review of Centers/Institutes at Nazareth University:
Policy and Process
October 2021

I. **Introduction:**

Nazareth University recognizes that the ability to make significant contributions to the teaching, research and outreach mission may be facilitated by interdisciplinary approaches that enable and encourage collaborative contributions from different disciplines. In such cases, the University supports centers and institutes. Centers and institutes, both academic and non-academic, will generally have an external face that enhances the University and builds connections to external partners and institutions that benefit Nazareth and its students. That benefit may come in a variety of areas, such as external recognition, impact in the community, and/or experiential opportunities. Proposals for centers/institutes that do not have a strong external face will not ordinarily be considered.

The University recognizes that academic centers/institutes require a commitment of resources (including faculty, staff, operating budget, and space). Therefore, this document was created to outline the criteria for the establishment of centers/institutes, an understanding of the expectations as regards to outcomes, and the need for annual reports and periodic reviews.*

II. **Definition of a Center/Institute:**

- a. **A Center** is a unit that ordinarily has a focused mission and a clearly defined objective. There may be both academic and cultural/identity centers. Academic centers advance the mission of teaching and research and may involve a group of faculty/staff from a single school/University or from different schools/colleges. Academic centers ordinarily include focus on scholarship and creative activity and/or academic support. Cultural and identity centers ordinarily provide support for specific communities and both educate the campus community and provide means of celebrating topics such as identity, art, and global diversity. These descriptions are not exclusive or exhaustive, and an academic center may serve cultural or identity functions, while a cultural /identity center may engage in academic work. All centers should include public engagement and engagement with communities external to Nazareth.
- b. **An Institute** is a unit that ordinarily is larger, has a broader mission and a more complex interdisciplinary focus than a center. It is expected that most institutes would involve faculty from multiple departments and schools/colleges. Unlike centers, the primary mission of institutes is an academic one. Institutes are expected to have an external face and include connection with external communities, by developing external partnerships that benefit the program of study at Nazareth, providing both faculty and students with opportunities to work, research and undertake projects with businesses, educational institutions, and other constituencies, and connect the work done at Nazareth to contemporary social issues.

III. Criteria for Establishing a New Center/Institute:

- The establishment of a new center/institute requires careful deliberation that includes an evaluation and justification of need and the potential for making a meaningful contribution. The following issues are relevant to these deliberations during the planning process:
- The center/institute advances the mission of teaching, research, outreach, and partnership and should not duplicate activities already being performed elsewhere at the University
- The center/institute serves an important external facing function to advance and publicize the work of the University, attract others to collaborate in the work, benefit the community, and/or provide experiential opportunities
- The activities of the center/institute should ordinarily involve individuals from more than one discipline and/or advance interprofessional work
- The center director must be a full-time member of faculty or staff. The institute director would ordinarily be a full-time faculty member.
- The center/institute would ordinarily have at least four affiliated faculty/staff members (including the director).
- Centers/institutes will have an external face with relationship to communities external to Nazareth.
- Cultural and identity centers will ordinarily identify a specific community of focus

IV. The proposal for establishing a new academic center/institute should provide information regarding the following (using the template at the end of this document):

- **Name of Center/Institute:** This name should describe as best as possible the unique function(s) of the center/institute, and should not overlap or be similar to the name of an existing unit.
- **Center/Institute director:** The name and contact information of the faculty/staff member who will provide leadership to the center/institute, and a brief description of their qualifications.
- **Mission:** The mission statement should clearly describe the purpose for establishing this center/institute. Explain how this mission is unique and distinct from that of other entities or offices within the University. Explain how this mission connects to the strategic direction of the institution.
- **Goals:** What does the center/institute expect to accomplish?
- The outcomes should be clear and their impact should be measurable. Clearly justify how the center/institute will advance its mission and enhance scholarship or cultural and community connections and thereby contribute to the reputation of the institution.
- External stakeholders and/or partners and the ways in which they will be engaged in the work of the center/institute
- **Budget:** Provide details of the amount and source of funds required for the operation of the center/institute. Are all the necessary funds available? If the funds are not already available, explain and justify the source of additional funds that will be required to operate the proposed center/institute. Clearly delineate the resources that will be necessary for the sustainability of the center/institute, and the plans for obtaining them.

Please indicate if student workers or a GA would be necessary. Please indicate, if the director is a faculty member, what if any reassigned time is required.

- Space: What are the space needs of the center/institute? Is this space available? If not, what are the plans for identifying appropriate space?
- Organizational chart: Provide an organizational chart. As a part of this, confirm that all impacted units (departments and/or schools/colleges) are familiar with the plans for establishing the center/institute and supportive of the proposal. Letters of support from these units are the appropriate means of conveying this information.
- Participating faculty/staff: Provide a list of all faculty/staff who have confirmed their interest and commitment to actively participate in the activities of the center/institute. For each individual identify their rank or title, departmental and school affiliation, and expected contribution to the center/institute.

V. Process for Establishing a New Center/Institute

- Individuals interested in establishing a new center/institute should consult with the Director of the Office of Research, Scholarship, and Innovation (ORSI) to discuss their ideas and the goals and purpose of their intended center.
- After the initial consultation, a completed proposal using this template.....should be developed and submitted to ORSI.
- The director of ORSI will ensure that all parts of the proposal are complete and then forward to the Cabinet for consideration and approval.
- Proposals will be considered in January and June.

VI. Process for Determining if an Existing Center/Institute Should Continue

- Center director, in collaboration with the direct supervisor, should complete the proposal template. In academic areas the proposal should also be submitted to the dean for approval/endorsement.
- Submit to appropriate vice president/provost for approval/endorsement
- Submit to ORSI
- ORSI assesses proposal for completion and submits to Cabinet
- If the proposal is approved, the Center director should develop a timeframe for establishment of the Center, with input from Mar/Comm, Institutional Advancement, and other applicable areas on campus.

VII. Reporting Expectations

Once established, each center/institute will submit an Annual Report (not to exceed 10 pages) that documents projects, accomplishments and productivity, including funding obtained during the year, projects undertaken, work with external partners, and any changes in the membership of participating faculty/staff. The report is to be submitted to ORSI, with a copy provided to the appropriate dean or vice president and a copy provided to the Provost.

*The term “Center” when used to denote a geographic location, such as the Golisano Academic Center, or Golisano Training Center, is not subject to this policy. In future, however, we do urge avoiding the term center in such instances.