
LAMAR UNIVERSITY
MANUAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SECTION: Academic Affairs

MAPP 02.05.07

AREA: Academic Governance and Administration

Centers and Institutes

I. POLICY

- A. Lamar University establishes centers and institutes to support and facilitate research, teaching, and/or service when the University determines that there is a clear need for a formal structure to assist faculty, staff, and students in carrying out programs consistent with the University's mission.

II. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- A. This policy establishes the process through which Lamar University establishes new centers and institutes, administers and evaluates existing centers and institutes, and closes centers and institutes that have completed their mission or become defunct.
- B. This policy falls under the authority of all applicable federal, State, and Texas State University System (TSUS) laws, rules, and regulations, including, but not limited to, the *TSUS Rules & Regulations*; Texas Education Code, Title 3, Higher Education; and Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Education.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. Broadly defined, **centers** and **institutes** are units created to provide a focal point within Lamar University for research, educational, and/or service programs. These structures allow faculty, staff, and students from the same or different disciplines to work on projects clustered around a shared theme. Centers and institutes may be identified with one or more disciplines. Support for centers and institutes may come from State appropriations, outside foundations, government agencies, companies, private donors, or a combination of financial sources. Lamar has established the following working definitions of **center** and **institute**. These definitions are not prescriptive but offer guidance for naming centers and institutes and understanding their mission and place within the University:
1. **Center.** A center is a single- or multi-disciplinary unit that focuses on a dedicated research, educational, and/or service activity, engaging participants from one or more academic departments or units. A center must have active involvement* by faculty and have a logical connection with the research, educational, and/or service efforts of the University. Centers

are typically smaller in scope than institutes and, depending on their focus, may be grouped under a larger institute.

2. **Institute.** An institute is a multi-disciplinary unit that integrates shared research, educational, and/or service activities under a united mission. Bringing together participants from multiple academic departments, colleges, or units, an institute must have active involvement* by faculty and have a logical connection with the research, educational, and/or service efforts of the University. Typically broader in scope than a center, an institute may house within it one or more centers.

***Note.** Definitions of “active involvement” will vary depending on a center or institute’s mission, purpose, goals, and objectives. If there is disagreement as to whether a center or institute demonstrates “active involvement,” the University Research Council will investigate and determine whether the entity is active or inactive. The Research Council’s determination may be appealed to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (“Provost”). The Provost’s determination shall be final.

3. **Signature Center.** Lamar University's Signature Centers are funded by the State of Texas to conduct research, education, and outreach activities that better prepare industry and communities for 21st-century challenges and opportunities. As of this policy’s approval date, Lamar has three (3) Signature Centers: the Center for Resiliency (CFR), Center for Advances in Port Management (CAPM), and Center for Midstream Management and Science (CMMS).

IV. ESTABLISHING A CENTER OR INSTITUTE

A. A center or institute may be established in the following ways:

1. The President of Lamar University may establish a center or institute at the University. The President will typically establish a center or institute in response to an invitation or directive from the State or the TSUS or the acquisition of substantial funding from an external grant, sponsored project, or donor.
2. Lamar University faculty and staff may submit a proposal for a center or institute through their respective reporting lines to the Provost. The proposal must include the following information:
 - explanation of the purpose and need for the center or institute and how the proposed center or institute advances the University's mission;
 - written endorsements of the proposal by Chairs, Directors, Deans, and others in the proposal authors’ reporting lines;
 - goals and objectives of the center or institute and a brief plan of work for the first academic year; the proposal’s authors should explain why the University’s existing structure is not adequate to meeting the center or institute’s goals and objectives;

- description of the support that relevant faculty/staff, administrators, and potential external partners or constituents would bring to the center or institute;
 - administrative structure of the center or institute, including reporting lines and potential staffing considerations;
 - proposed budget for three academic years that lists the financial support required or already secured for the center or institute and the sources of this support; and
 - space or facility needs and a plan to meet needs that cannot be met with current University resources.
- B. The Provost will review proposals by faculty and staff for new centers or institutes and approve proposals that are in line with the University's mission and demonstrate a significant chance of success. The Provost will then forward approved proposals to the President. The President will make the final decision to establish or not establish a center or institute.
- C. In keeping with the *TSUS Rules and Regulations*, Chapter III, Paragraph I, the President will submit a proposed center or institute to the TSUS Board of Regents for approval.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS

- A. After a center or institute has been approved, the President will appoint a Director for the center or institute. The President may consult, as needed, with the Provost, Associate Provost for Academic and Research Administration ("Associate Provost"), Chief Financial Officer (CFO), appropriate Deans, Human Resources, and other faculty and staff regarding the selection of a Director.
- B. Faculty and staff attached to a center or institute may be drawn from existing Lamar employees or hired through the University's normal hiring process. Faculty and staff attached to a center or institute may be full-time or may hold joint, half-time, or similar appointments with a center or institute. Faculty may receive release time from teaching to focus on work with a center or institute.
- C. Directors of centers and institutes with broad missions that cross college and disciplinary boundaries will report to the Associate Provost, who will report on center or institute activities to the Provost.
- D. Directors of centers and institutes whose mission or focus falls within a single college will report to the Dean of that college. In turn, the Dean will report to the Associate Provost, who will report on center or institute activities to the Provost.
- E. Centers or institutes with a research component will submit all proposals for external funding through the usual University channels, for approval of budgets and certification of mandated State and federal compliance regulations. Signature approval will follow the University's normal approval process.

- F. Lamar's Office of Research and Sponsored Program Administration (ORSPA) will be responsible for maintaining an accurate electronic listing of all approved centers and institutes at the University and ensuring that all active centers and institutes are listed on the University's website.

VI. EVALUATING A CENTER OR INSTITUTE

- A. The Directors of centers and institutes with broad, multidisciplinary missions will submit an annual report (not to exceed 10 pages) of the previous academic year's activities by November 1 to the Associate Provost. Directors of centers and institutes located within a college will submit their annual reports (not to exceed 10 pages) by November 1 to the appropriate Dean, who will in turn submit these reports to the Associate Provost.
- B. A center or institute's annual report will cover both technical and financial aspects of the previous academic year and should include information about current and anticipated staffing levels and operational budget, any needed or anticipated changes to space or facilities requirements, outstanding accomplishments, and amount of external funding, including endowment funding, obtained and/or anticipated by the entity.
- C. The Associate Provost will forward an executive summary of the annual reports to the Provost by November 30. A critical component of this summary will be the Associate Provost's recommendation to the Provost as to whether a center or institute should remain open or be reviewed for closure. When reviewing the Associate Provost's summary, the Provost may request any center or institute's annual report for further review.
- D. After reviewing the Associate Provost's executive summary and any requested annual reports, the Provost will inform the Associate Provost of his/her recommendations regarding the centers and institutes. These recommendations are not restricted to closure but may include suggestions for improvement and further development of a center or institute.
- E. The Associate Provost will convey the Provost's recommendations as well as his/her own recommendations to the center and institute Directors.

VII. CHANGING THE NAME OF A CENTER OR INSTITUTE

- A. As a center or institute's mission and purpose evolve, the Director or an appropriate administrator (i.e., Provost, Associate Provost, Dean) may decide that a change in a center or institute's name should be made to reflect the new focus.
- B. To change the name of a center or institute, a Director must first determine if the funding source allows a name change:
 1. **Center or Institute Funded by the State or TSUS.** If a center or institute's funding comes from the State or the TSUS, the Director must review the statute, rule, or regulation that established and funds the center or institute. (Note. Directors may request assistance from ORSPA to locate the relevant statutes, rules, or regulations.)

- a. If the statute, rule, or regulation allows a name change or does not prohibit a name change, the Director may submit a request to change the name.
 - b. If the statute, rule, or regulation mandates a center or institute's name or prohibits a change, the name cannot be changed unless the statute, rule, or regulation is modified or an exception, if permissible, is given by the appropriate State or TSUS authorities. (Note. Directors may request assistance with this step from the TSUS Office of General Counsel.)
2. **Center or Institute Funded by a Grant, Sponsored Project, or Donor.** If a center or institute's funding comes from an external grant, sponsored project, or donor, the Director must contact the sponsor or donor to determine if a name change is permitted.
 3. **Center or Institute with Multiple Funding Sources.** If a center or institute receives funding from multiple sources, the Director must follow the most stringent of the requirements to change the name.
- C. If the funding source allows a name change, the Director may submit a request as follows:
1. The Director prepares a brief written proposal that lists the proposed name and the rationale for the change.
 2. The Director routes the proposal through the appropriate approval channels: Dean (if college-based center/institute), Associate Provost, and Provost.
 3. If approved, the Provost submits the name change request to the President.
 4. The President reviews the proposal and makes a final decision on the name change.
 5. The President or designee submits the name change to the TSUS Board of Regents for approval.

Note. The process in this section changes a center or institute's name at the University and TSUS levels. It is possible that the State or an external sponsor or donor requires additional steps to change a center or institute's name. If so, the Director must follow that guidance in addition to the guidance in this section.

VIII. CLOSING A CENTER OR INSTITUTE

- A. If, after a period of two academic years, an annual report has not been received from a center or institute or the center or institute's budget is at zero, the Provost will consider the entity to be defunct and will recommend closure to the President.
- B. The Provost may recommend closure of a center or institute at any time. Once the Provost determines that closure may be warranted, he/she may meet with the Associate Provost, the Director of the center or institute, and any other key stakeholders (e.g., Deans, Chairs) selected by the Provost. At this meeting, the Provost and attendees may discuss topics that include, but are not limited to, the following:
 1. whether issues related to the center or institute can be resolved so that the entity can continue operating;

- 2. whether the center or institute can be modified so that it may continue operating (note: significant modifications to a center or institute may require that the Director or other appropriate University official submit a new proposal to establish a center or institute);
 - 3. how the center or institute can terminate operations and close in the most efficient way possible.
- C. After consulting with the Associate Provost, the center or institute Director, and other key stakeholders, the Provost will make a final recommendation to close the entity, modify it, or continue operations in its present form.
- D. The Provost will forward his/her recommendation to the President, who will make the final decision to close the center or institute, modify it, or continue operations. The President’s decision is final.
- E. Centers or institutes designated for closure will follow the University’s normal procedures for closing a unit of the University.

IX. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

Review Schedule: Every three years on or before the date the policy was last revised and/or approved.

Responsible Party: Academic Policy Advisory Council (APAC)

X. APPROVAL

Dr. Brett Welch	03/16/2026
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Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs	Date

Dr. Jaime R. Taylor	03/18/2026
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Lamar University President	Date

POLICY LOG

Revision Number	Date	Description of Changes
1	09/16/2025	Policy draft completed & sent to APAC.
	09/16/2025-10/30/2025	Reviews by constituency groups completed.
	11/10/2025-12/09/2025	Review by campus community completed.
	03/18/2026	Policy approved by President.
	04/15/2026	Added Section VII. Changing the Name of a Center or Institute.