

Task Force on the Management of Centres

Final Report

April 2, 2007

Executive Summary

The 2003 revision to the Policy on Centres identified the need “to establish the appropriate mechanisms to give assurance of relevance and continued viability in a changing environment, and to acknowledge the high demands for accountability and transparency”. A Task Force on the Management of Centres was created with a mandate to investigate this matter and to report with recommendations on the management and assessment of Centres.

Centres and the Deans/VPs to whom Centres report were consulted via surveys prepared by the Task Force. Centre Directors were given the opportunity to meet with the Task Force to discuss its findings and recommendations.

The members of the Task Force were impressed and somewhat overwhelmed by the extremely wide range in size, scope and diversity of purpose of the 70⁺ Centres on our campus. Given the legal status of Types C and D Centres, the Task Force focused its attention on Types A and B Centres. The current typology of Centres, based on reporting lines, seems inadequate and the Task Force suggests an additional, functional, categorization scheme.

Many Directors reported a disconnection between their Centres and the larger units in which they are embedded. That disconnection was confirmed in some cases by Deans and VPs who were unsure of their authorities and responsibilities. The consequences of this disconnection include a sense among some Directors that the activities and accomplishments of the Centres they manage are unrecognized, unvalued and unrewarded.

Some Centre Directors believe that they report to the wrong authority and this is confirmed by the Deans to whom they report. The outcome for the Centres is that there is no real ‘champion’ and Directors feel that they are short-changed in the competition for resources.

There was consensus among Directors that annual reports including financial statements and budget projections, and regular reviews are necessary and appropriate. These reporting and review requirements were seen to be valuable for a variety of reasons including accountability and transparency but also as a means to advertise, communicate and even boast about accomplishments. They also provide Centres with opportunities to request additional resources.

By means of 23 recommendations the Task Force provides its best advice and guidance about these matters. In creating these recommendations the members of the Task Force attempted to maintain the flexibility that currently exists with respect to Centres but clarifying responsibilities and creating requirements that will move us along the path towards greater accountability and transparency.

BACKGROUND

In 2003, University Council recommended and the Board of Governors approved a revised Policy on Centres. The preamble to the Policy reads as follows:

The University of Saskatchewan encourages the establishment of Centres to enhance the academic interests of the University and its faculty in the pursuit of research, teaching, scholarly and artistic work, and to meet the needs of the community at large.

Centres are intended to strengthen, coordinate or facilitate scholarly purposes or activities not readily undertaken within the University's departmental and unit structures, and are intended to offer new areas of activity consistent with the University's strategic direction and priorities. The University values the strengths and many contributions of existing Centres, and seeks to ensure their ongoing success. To this end and in keeping with good governance, the University has a responsibility to establish the appropriate mechanisms to give assurance of relevance and continued viability in a changing environment, and to acknowledge the high demands for accountability and transparency. The existing policy on Centres, developed in 1997, has been revised and updated, to facilitate the creation of Centres, protect their integrity, and improve essential communication within the University, required with Integrated Planning and for full accountability. These objectives and terms are fully consistent with the establishment and management of similar entities at other universities in Canada and the United States.

The University recognizes creation of Centres as indicative of the vitality, creativity and inventiveness of the academic community, and supports such enterprise to the fullest extent possible. For the purposes of orderly functioning this policy sets out definitions and principles for the creation, monitoring and review of Centres. Companion Guidelines to assist in streamlining the processes involved will be developed to support and assist all University of Saskatchewan Centres.

Centres at the University of Saskatchewan comprise a wide variety of organizations which vary enormously in size and scope, budgets and management structures. This diversity is both a strength (the dimensions of the Centre can be designed to fit the needs of a particular group) and a challenge (to decisions about resource allocations and appropriate governance and review processes, for example). Responding to the challenge and as a first-step towards the development of the Companion Guidelines referred to above, the Task Force on the Management of Centres was established on May 1, 2006 by the Office of the Vice-President Research under the auspices of the Task Force on Changing Structures. The Task Force was charged with the responsibility to develop a series of recommendations relating to the management and assessment of Centres “with a view to ensuring that these entities are best positioned to fulfill their mission to enhance the academic interests and goals of the university” (University Task Force on the Management of Centres).

Task Force Mandate

The Task Force was asked to:

- Develop guidelines for the assessment of Centres and to propose a mechanism to support such assessments; and
- Develop guidelines for the effective management of Centres including, but not limited to governance structures, financial viability and resource support

In particular, the Task Force was asked to consider the following:

1. Approaches to the evaluation of Centre activity and performance which are sensitive to Centres' mandates and the priorities of the University. Consideration will be given to:
 - Developing a suite of indicators and/or evaluation template that may be used (in part or in its entirety) to evaluate Centre activities. Any such suite of indicators will address the breadth in size, scope and mandate of University Centres.
 - Expectations around the frequency of Centre review and responsible parties.
 - Mechanisms and authority for extending Centre mandates or dissolving units.
2. The relationship of Centres to the University including opportunities and barriers which impact on Centre activities. Consideration will be given to:
 - Understanding the role of University faculty in Centres and examining mechanisms to recognize, encourage and credit faculty participation in Centres.
 - Centre access to infrastructure, programs and resources at the department, college and university-level.
 - Mechanisms to engage Centres in college and university planning and decision-making exercises including consideration of an expanded mandate and membership of the Centres' Forum.
 - Role of Centres in enhancing the University's reputation in teaching, research or outreach.
3. Principals and expectations related to the financial support of Centres including:
 - Responsibility of Centres to generate revenue from government, community and/or industry partners, and programs and policies to support such activities;
 - Potential, criteria and mechanism for the University to provide (some) core-support or incubation of Centres';
 - Opportunities for sharing resources for Centres with complementary mandates.
 - Impact of variable and core support on Centre activities, University expectations of Centres, etc.;
 - Resource implications of Centre development (or evolution) to larger-scale entities including understanding differing resource needs, possible thresholds or criteria for resource allocations, etc.
4. Governance structures of Centres including:
 - Reporting lines;
 - University representation on and authority of Centre boards, and the relationship of such boards to the University proper;
 - Financial accountability.
5. Mechanisms to support management and review of Centres. Consideration will be given to:
 - Understanding the various reporting structures for Centres; current reporting mechanisms; and policy and audit reporting and review requirements;
 - Support for review and management processes.

ACTIVITIES OF THE TASK FORCE

The Chair of the Task Force met with a number of bodies to discuss processes to accomplish the mandate of the Committee. Included in these consultations were: The Task Force on Changing Structures; the Centres Subcommittee of the Planning Committee of Council, the Research, Scholarly and Artistic Work Committee of Council, the Associate Deans Research Forum, and the Centres Forum reporting to the Vice President Research. Vice President Franklin and Dean Wishart subsequently invited the Directors¹ of all Centres to attend a meeting to discuss these same items; approximately fifty people attended the meeting.

At its inaugural meeting, the Task Force considered its mandate and ways to obtain the data necessary to respond to the issues identified in the elaboration of the mandate. The Task Force decided to create two surveys, one for Centre Directors and a second for the VP's and Deans' to which Centres report. Five Subcommittees (corresponding to the five numbered items described under the Task Force Mandate above) were formed to identify questions and items to be included in the surveys.

A term research assistant position was advertised and recruited to assist with the creation of a web-based survey and a preliminary data summary.

Notices of the survey and requests to complete them were sent to all Directors and to each VP/Dean who had one or more Centres reporting to them. VP's/Deans were asked to complete a survey for every Centre they were responsible for (recognizing that, in many instances, the responses to particular questions would be identical from one survey to another).

The Research Assistant prepared data files which included the (multiple) responses for each question for both surveys and provided a written summary of the responses to each question.

The data files and the Research Assistant's summaries were provided to the Subcommittees. Each Subcommittee was charged with reviewing the responses to those survey questions pertaining to its section of the mandate and to write its own summary and tentative set of recommendations.

The Task Force then reconvened as a whole to consider the entire set of responses to both surveys and the summaries/recommendations of the Subcommittees. Based on the discussions of the entire Task Force a DRAFT Final Report was then prepared for presentation to and obtain feedback from the Centres in order to create a Final Report.

FINDINGS

To determine the Centres to which the survey would be distributed, a request was made to the University Secretary's Office to provide a list of Centres. Such a list is maintained at <http://www.usask.ca/calendar/faculty&staff/ucdi/>.

Although all Centre Directors received an invitation to complete the survey subsequent discussions with Corporate Administration led the Task Force to exclude Type C and D Centres from consideration in this report. These Centres are defined as incorporated and legally distinct from the University. Type C Centres have academic/research implications for the University,

¹ This report uses the term Director to refer to the academic leader of a Centre.

while Type D Centres are not engaged in the University's academic affairs. Type C Centres include CLS Inc., Prairie Swine Centre Inc., Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre Inc. and Prairie Diagnostic Services Inc. As incorporated entities, these Centres are distinctly separate from the University and follow the rules legislated under their act of incorporation (ie/ Non-Profit Corporation Act of Saskatchewan, Business Corporations Act of Saskatchewan), and fall outside the direct scope of authority of regular University policies and practices. In recognition of the value of a review of Type C Centre activity and performance, it is recommended that a process be established by the Vice-President Finance and Resources which accomplishes the objectives of an evaluation of their activity and performance, but also recognizes their unique governance structure. Type D Centres, which are not engaged in academic affairs, are accountable to the Board of Governors of the University through the Vice-President (Finance & Resources) and have their own guidelines.

TERMINOLOGY

Centres come in a variety of types and sizes. There is an equally large variety of names including, of course, Centres but also Institutes, Units, Programs, Groups, Divisions, Networks, and Initiatives. Nomenclature does not seem as problematic as the extreme variety—one Dean stated that “This Centre is so different from the research Centres that your group is thinking about that rolling it into the same review process would be absurd.”

In discussing the responses to the Survey, members of the Task Force had considerable difficulty in drawing any conclusions that cut across all types of Centres, or even within particular Centre types as defined by the current Policy on Centres. This is because of the very wide variety of mandates that exist in the current complement of Centres. Some Centres exist to give research synergies visibility within the University and on the National and International stage and perhaps provide a means by which resources may be shared. Some exist to provide core functions to the University (e.g. Animal Resources Centre, Gwenna Moss Teaching and Learning Centre). Others exist because they provide a mechanism for essential outreach and service to the community, thereby contributing to the University's sense of place.

A Centre's relationship to the University, and hence the way it is administered and the level of evaluation that would be necessary, might be more appropriately determined by its essential function than by its place in the University's administrative structure (i.e. type A, B, C or D). A Centre's function is central to the question of why the Centre exists from the University's point of view and informs us of the questions that need to be asked to determine the Centre's effectiveness. Re-classifying Centres according to function will allow the governance and assessment of those Centres to be better determined.

The responses of Directors of university Centres to question 3 (What is the vision/purpose/goal of your Centre?) revealed that a Centre can be placed in one of 4 categories:

- Research and Dissemination Centres
- Academic Programming and Experience Centres
- Health Service Provision Centres
- University Resource Centres

Centre Directors were contacted and asked to identify the functional category of their Centre; a preliminary classification is provided in Appendix 5. The University of Saskatchewan is

encouraged to reconsider the typology of Centres to employ a more meaningful functional categorization.

A concern expressed by several Deans and by some Resource Centres was the reporting line through a particular College when the activities of the Centre are university-wide. Examples include the Museum of Antiquities, the Kenderdine Gallery, and the Division of Biomedical Engineering. This makes it difficult for these Centres to apply for additional resources (in direct competition with units more central to the mission of the College), and for the Dean to incorporate the Centre's plans and initiatives into the College's Integrated Plan.

Recommendation:

1. The reporting authority for Centres needs to be reviewed to ensure that Centres are not disadvantaged in consideration of resources and that their activities and plans can be properly reflected in Integrated Planning documents and university promotional materials.

Evaluation of Centre Activity and Performance

The Task Force considers that monitoring and evaluation of Centre activity and performance needs to occur at two levels. On an annual basis, the Dean or VP to which a Centre reports needs to exercise oversight, minimally at a budgetary level and preferably including the activities and accomplishments of the Centre. This matter is dealt with under the heading Relationship of Centres to the University (pp. 8-9). The remainder of this section deals with a more intensive review of cumulative Centre activity and performance over a longer time-scale.

The members of the Task Force are aware of the possibility of the establishment of an Assessment Office which would operate under the authority of the Provost. The size and mandate of such an office was unclear, but it was agreed that an Assessment Office would have a role to play in the reviews of Centres. Presumably the Dean or VP responsible for a Centre would work with the Assessment Office in establishing the details of the review (see Recommendation 3).

The survey for Centre Directors contained a number of questions about evaluations of Centres and, as expected, the responses were somewhat variable. Newer Centres have not been reviewed and those which have been reviewed had reviews in the last five-ten years, often in the context of a larger review of the unit to which they report. In most cases, Centres which had undergone reviews found the process to be helpful, if only because they were required to examine their goals and objectives and to determine whether their activities and achievements were appropriate given the stated goals and objectives.

While Directors almost unanimously agreed that Centres should be reviewed, there were several concerns identified that need to be addressed. First and foremost is the need for a clear rationale for review—reviews yes, but to what purpose or end? Several Directors wondered whether this was a basis on which to argue for more resources while others were concerned that the purpose might be to disestablish Centres. A number of the larger Centres have ongoing reviews of various sorts and Directors are genuinely concerned about duplication of efforts and judgments. Directors of more recently established Centres were concerned about premature review.

Recommendation:

2. A clear rationale for reviewing Centres must be established. The rationale should include:

- The means to provide the Centre and the University with information which will assist in improving the quality of research and outreach activities and infrastructure of Centres;
- The means to guide decisions with respect to the allocation of resources to Centres; and
- The means to assess a Centre with respect to the achievement of its goals and objectives and to determine whether the goals and objectives need to be revised or the Centre restructured or dissolved.

Concerning the type of review, while a majority of the Centre Directors favoured an on-site review, the smaller the Centre the more Directors were in favour of paper-based reviews involving internal and/or local (community) reviewers. The Survey for Deans/VPs to which Centres report also contained several questions about reviews. The responses to these questions were, if anything, more variable than those provided by Centre Directors, perhaps due to the confusion that the former have with respect to their responsibility for and authority over Centres. This is a matter which requires clarification. Deans/VPs were also concerned about the costs of site reviews and many indicated that, unless funds were provided from central administration, their choice would be the lower-cost paper-based review.

Recommendation:

3. A statement in the Policy on Centres needs to be made about the responsibilities and authorities of Deans/VPs to which Centres report. A clear delineation of the reporting authority's responsibilities should also be included in the documentation approving the establishment of a Centre. The list of responsibilities should include:
 - Recommending the establishment/dissolution of the Centre;
 - Approving the annual budget;
 - Operational and financial monitoring including receiving and, following discussions with the Director, approving the annual report;
 - Establishment of a regular review process (see recommendation 4, below).

If Centres are to be reviewed however, it was clearly understood that the Deans/VPs would be involved, indeed, "in charge" of the review process. Many responses were of the nature that the Dean/VP should direct and establish the review committee and its terms of reference and determine the scope of the review.

On the matter of the type of review, it would appear that Deans/VPs, like the Directors would base the determination on the purpose of the review and the size and scope of the Centre. Consequently, whether a paper-based or on-site review is necessary and whether internal and/or external reviewers should be employed is to be determined by the type and size of Centre and the purpose to which the review would be put.

Recommendations:

Type A Centres:

4. The Dean to which a Centre reports should be the individual who is responsible for the review. It is expected that in fulfilling these responsibilities the Dean will consult with the Centre members and Director, and with the Department Head where the Centre significantly impacts, or resides primarily within, a Department. The Dean's responsibilities include:
 - Determining the cycle of review (see 6, below);

- Determining the size and scope of the review process (including whether the review will be paper-based or involve an on-site visit by a review team; where a Centre is automatically reviewed by some external agency, the Dean to whom it reports should have the right and responsibility to exempt it from an additional review as appropriate). Where a review is to be primarily paper-based, Dean should consider making available an opportunity for the reviewers to consult with the Centre members via video- or tele-conference;
- Establishing the terms of reference for the review committee and determining its membership (whether internal [U. of S.] or external reviewers, or both);
- Receiving the review report, providing an opportunity for the Centre to respond, evaluating the review and response, and forwarding the review and response with recommendations to the Planning Committee of Council for its information and further action if necessary or appropriate.

Type B Centres:

5. As each of these types of Centres receive university resources and have broad impacts often extending into the local, provincial or national communities, a rigorous review process should be put in place. It is strongly recommended that the process involve an on-site visit by a review team consisting of at least 2 external reviewers. The VP to which a Centre reports should be the individual who is responsible for the review and it is expected that in fulfilling these responsibilities the VP will consult extensively with the Centre Director and members. The VPs responsibilities should include:
 - Determining the cycle of review (see 5, below);
 - Determining the size and scope of the review process (including whether the review will be paper-based or involve an on-site visit by a review team; where a Centre is automatically reviewed by some external agency, the VP to whom it reports should have the right and responsibility to exempt it from an additional review as appropriate). Where a review is to be primarily paper-based, the VP should consider making available an opportunity for the reviewers to consult with the Centre members via video- or tele-conference;
 - Establishing the terms of reference for the review committee and, in consultation with the Director and members, determining its composition;
 - Receiving the review report, providing an opportunity for the Centre to respond, evaluating the review and response, and forwarding the review and response with recommendations to the Planning Committee of Council for its information and further action if necessary or appropriate.

There was general agreement that reviews should be conducted on a cyclical basis with a minimum of five and a maximum of ten years intervening between reviews.

Recommendation:

6. Reviews of Centres should be on a cycle of review consonant with the University's Integrated Planning Cycle. Unless special circumstances prevail, reviews should be a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 years apart. Reviews should be staged, like the SPR process, so that the entire process is manageable and not too much effort and stress is placed on any single unit.

Almost all Directors reported that the Centres have capacity to prepare a 'self-study' but most were concerned about the costs of such preparation and Directors of smaller Centres in particular

identified the need of administrative help. As one means to simply the self-study, the Task Force considered that the Annual Reports should be compiled and submitted as part of the self-study.

Directors generally agreed that evaluations of Centres should involve a comparison of the stated goals and objectives of the Centre with outcome measures such as publications or knowledge transfer in other ways, or increased grant support from external agencies.

Recommendation:

7. The Centre Director/CEO, in consultation with the members of the Centre, should be charged with creating a self-study document which would include a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the Centre and documentation pertaining to the achievements of the Centre with respect to said goals and objectives. Included, wherever and whenever possible should be surveys of the ‘clients/benefactors’ of the Centre regarding their interactions and satisfactions with the Centre and suggestions for improvement.

On the matter of which organization should pay for the review, VPs and Deans generally considered that the best arrangement would be a sharing of costs between Central Administration and the organization to which a Centre reported. It was acknowledged by several respondents that a paper-based review, which should be cheaper to institute, should be employed where possible and would definitely be the review of choice if no central funding was available.

Recommendation:

8. Resources to support reviews of centres should be dependent on the type and size of centre that is reviewed. The costs of reviewing Centres which report to a Dean should be borne by the College to which they report. Funding for reviews should be provided from central sources for those Centres which report to a Vice-President.

Centre Directors expressed some frustration with processes and demands which are costly in time and effort and which produce no response or an untimely response from the authority which demands reports and insists on reviews. Deans and Vice-Presidents to whom Centres report have a responsibility to provide timely feedback and to keep a Centre “in the loop” in discussions leading to recommendations about the outcomes of the review.

Relationship of Centres to the University

There is some concern among Centre Directors that insufficient attention is paid to Centres and that faculty who create or become involved in Centres are not sufficiently recognized for their contributions to Centres activities. This may well be due to the widespread practice of academic units at both department and college levels to value published works at the expense of other types of work and accomplishments. A second issue might be that, in some instances a faculty member’s involvement in a Centre is not considered an assigned duty. Finally, a Centre may not be considered integral to the goals and objectives of the larger unit (College or University); consequently, faculty who become involved in the Centre may sometimes be considered to be expending efforts on unvalued activities.

The Task Force takes it as a given that Centres make valuable contributions to the University. Indeed, there is much evidence to support that assumption in the completed surveys. Research Centres are frequently established because the typical structures of the university are not filling a need, be that need for support for interdisciplinarity, community involvement and participation,

or knowledge translation/commercialization. A goodly number of graduate students operate within, or with the assistance of, Centres. It is in the interest of the University therefore to encourage its faculty to become involved in Centres which are considered integral to the University mission.

Recommendations:

9. Academic units and College Review Committees should be reminded and encouraged to value and reward all types of activities that are considered to be of value to the University. One opportunity to value these activities is to celebrate significant Centre accomplishments in College and University promotional materials. Centre Directors should provide to the Dean or VP to whom they report copies of press releases, notifications of grants received, and other significant accomplishments.
10. Colleges need to recognize, and Deans should ensure, that participation and accomplishment within a Centre is considered in recommendations and decisions about tenure, promotion and special salary increases.
11. VPs to whom Centres report should work with Centre Directors to routinely provide input to Heads and Deans about the activities and accomplishments of Centres and particularly about the activities and accomplishments of Centre Directors.

Many Centres, particularly Research Centres, sit outside the traditional structure of the institution (department-college-university) and consequently have no regular access to infrastructure. Most of these Centres reported inadequate infrastructure, particularly shortages of administrative help and of space, resulting in a general feeling that Centres are not able to live up to their potential--that so much more could be accomplished given adequate support. In an early DRAFT Report, the TaskForce recommended that Centres only be established if adequate infrastructure existed or was promised. This recommendation was supported by several Deans. By contrast, many members of the Centres Forum were concerned about a possible stifling effect of that recommendation on Centre creation and development, and the next recommendation was modified to reflect that concern.

Recommendations:

12. From the perspective of the Centre, its members, and the university, it is highly desirable that an adequate infrastructure and operating/research budget be in place when a new Centre is approved. Where it is uncertain that the proponents of a proposed Centre have secured adequate resources and yet it is decided to create the Centre, a specified and relatively early date for the first review should be established.
13. Space Planning should be charged with reviewing the entitlements of currently existing Research Centres and, where possible, providing adequate space.
14. VPs and Deans to which Centres report should, in reviewing the annual report and budget of the Centre, discuss the needs of the Centre with the Director.

Centre Directors were evenly divided in their (positive and negative) responses to Survey Questions 7 (“**Are the goals of the Centre mentioned anywhere within University of Saskatchewan Integrated Plan documents?**”) and 8 (“**Does the current reporting structure for your Centre promote linkages between the Centre and University planning initiatives?**”). Thus, some Centres evidently feel connected and involved with the University while others, even some of our larger Centres, consider themselves on the periphery and not much connected. In order to take best advantage of the opportunities created by Centres and faculty initiatives, VPs and Deans need to seek opportunities to better integrate Centres with the operations of the University.

Recommendation:

15. Centres, like Departments and administrative units, should receive invitations to participate fully in University planning and budgeting exercises.
16. Centre Directors should be invited to College meetings and be given the opportunity to annually address the meeting and present a report.
17. A University-wide forum of Centres should be created, chaired by the VP Research, to meet at least once per term to discuss matters of mutual interest.

Financial Relationships between Centres and the University

It is generally understood that the University must provide adequate resources for the type of Centres we have identified as University Resource Centres and for some of the Academic Programming and Experience Centres. For the remaining types of Centres however, the necessity, feasibility or desirability of university-level support is unclear. In general, the expectation should be that Centres obtain some or all of their operating funds from external sources whereas the university would provide basic infrastructure support (office space, light, heat, etc.). This is not to suggest that there are some Research and Outreach Centres, Health Service Provision Centres, and Policy Research Development and Dissemination Centres which might be considered crucial to the mission of the University or a college and which therefore would receive operating funds.

Reporting authorities, particularly at the College level, do not seem to be much involved in the financial management of many Centres and the members of the Task Force conclude that this must change. The Dean or VP to whom a Centre reports is responsible for the financial operations of the Centre including deficits.

Responses from the Centres indicate that they understand the relationship with their reporting structure but many do not have the resources to provide annual financial statements. Would Centres be more successful if they had additional administrative support, at least in their early stages? If the University sees Centres as a strategic element in prosecuting its Integrated Plan, these Centres will require additional administrative support.

Twenty-four of forty-one responses by Deans/VPs indicated that some sort of financial statement is provided by Type A Centres; five of twelve respondents receive some sort of report from type B Centres. While Deans or VP's have direct responsibility for type A and B Centres, it appears that more than half of the A and B Centres do not provide financial statements. Of concern to at least some of these Centres is their ability to provide such reports; one type B Centre Director reported that funding sources are so disparate and the UNIFI reporting system so inadequate that a full-time staff member is required to manage the accounts and to prepare reports. This is obviously beyond the capabilities of most Centres and there must be recognition that where the reporting requirement is extensive administrative support, preferably operating budget support, may need to be provided to the Centre.

Recommendation:

18. Centres should be required to provide annual financial reports for each year of the review period. For larger Centres, the reports should include a Statement of Revenue and Expenditures with the current year's actual results, a comparison to the budget for the current year and a comparison to the actual results for the previous year. If the Centre has significant long-term tangible capital assets, a description and, where possible, cost and age of these assets should be provided. The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures and

a list of long-term tangible capital assets (where relevant) are the minimum expectations. Centres should be encouraged to prepare additional information, such as variance analysis, for their own use as well as to serve the review process. Such Centres should ensure that they have the administrative support required to track revenue and expenditures and generate reports. Centres with little financial activity should have a reporting requirement restricted to a Statement of Revenue and Expenditures which display current year's actual results and a comparison to the actual results for the previous year.

Deans/VPs report that they review the financial reports made by Centres and occasionally discuss the report with the Director (presumably in the case of a deficit). The financial report is distributed to appropriate committees and filed. It appears that this information is not part of the College or University planning cycle.

Recommendation:

19. If Centres form a part of the College structure they should be included in growth and development planning.

Only sixteen out of forty-three responses from Deans/VPs to whom Type A Centres indicated that these Direct Reports felt responsible for financial oversight. Several of the sixteen who acknowledged responsibility delegated this to an analyst. However, the terms of reference for these Centres clearly indicates that the Deans/VPs bear financial responsibility and it would thus appear that there is a large gap in management practice and potential risk of varying seriousness to the University.

Recommendation:

20. The Dean/VP to which a Centre reports should develop a protocol for actively managing the financial matters of the Centre. A description of the protocol should be included with any application for the establishment of a new Centre.

Governance Structure of Centres

Given the variation in size, scope and function of Centres, it will not be surprising to learn that the 'governance' arrangements apparently range from little or no formal structure (typical of small, 'A' type Centres) to a legally constituted Board of Directors that has responsibility for:

- legal and primary oversight
- setting strategic directions
- assessment of management performance
- financial control
- managing risk
- reporting and communicating with stakeholders.

Concerning 'A' type Centres, governance arrangements appear to have been haphazardly established; some have a management structure, many do not; some provide an annual report to the Dean, some do not; some Directors meet or consult regularly with the Dean while others never have. There is a great deal of uncertainty amongst Deans about the level of responsibility they have for and the authority they have over Centres that report to them. Typical Dean's responses to the question "What is the role, if any, of the Dean in the Governance Structure of the Centre?" were "No role", "Not applicable", and "There is basically no interaction between the Director of this Centre and the Dean's Office". Finally, Deans had quite divergent views on

whether they should serve on Advisory Boards of these types of Centres; it is the view of the Task Force that this practice should be permitted and perhaps even encouraged but not required.

Recommendation:

21. Type A Centres should be required to establish clear governance arrangements. The Dean to whom each Centre reports should be involved in the discussions of these arrangements. The discussions should consider whether a Management/Advisory Board is necessary or appropriate and whether the Dean will serve (ex officio) on the Board. The arrangements would normally include at least one annual meeting between the Dean, the Centre Director, and the Board if it exists.

Dean's responses to the question "What is the Dean's authority with respect to Centres?" included "None specified", "Not applicable", and "I am not sure what the extent of the authority of the Dean is."

Recommendation:

22. The role, responsibility, and authority of the Dean to whom a Centre reports must be clearly identified in all proposals to establish a new Centre (see Recommendation 2) and in all existing Centres where it is unclear. Some aspects of the role would include leadership and encouragement and, where the Dean deems it necessary, appropriate, and the opportunity exists, lobbying and fund-raising on behalf of the Centre; the Dean's authority would include the recommendation (to Council) to establish or dissolve a Centre, approval/dismissal (following consultation with the members of the Centre) of an individual to the position of Director, and assignment of space and other resources under the control of the Dean. The responsibilities of the Dean would include such matters as oversight over the financial operations of the Centre, ensuring that the Centre is aware of and follows University policies and practices, and the review of the Centre.

Type B Centres all seem to have well-defined and functioning governance structures. However, the Task Force is uncertain whether the role, responsibility and authority of the VP to whom a Centre reports is clearly defined.

Recommendation:

23. The role, responsibility, and authority of the VP to whom a Centre reports must be clearly identified in all proposals to establish a new Centre and in all existing Centres where it is unclear. Some aspects of the role would include leadership and encouragement and, where the VP deems it necessary, appropriate and the opportunity exists, lobbying and fund-raising on behalf of the Centre; the VP's authority would include the recommendation (to Council) to establish or dissolve a Centre, approval/dismissal (following consultation with the members of the Centre) of an individual to the position of Director, and assignment of space and other resources under the control of the VP as approved by the President's Executive Committee and/or the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning. The responsibilities of the VP would include such matters as oversight over the financial operations of the Centre, ensuring that the Centre is aware of and follows University policies and practices, and the review of the Centre.

Within the context of the Dean's or VP's responsibility for the appointment of the Director and the recommendation for dissolving a Centre, Directors are rightfully concerned about the succession of leadership and maintaining active membership in a Centre. Many Centres are 'fragile' in that they depend on the active involvement of small numbers of individuals; the loss of a prominent member of a Centre may mean its demise if (s)he is not replaced. Centres play

little or sometimes no role in the selection of new faculty who replace those who leave the University. It is possible for Deans (ironically, less so for VPs) to create opportunities for Centres to have input or provide advice to Search Committees through the formation of Search Subcommittees (this practice already is in place in the College of Medicine). At the very least Centres should have an opportunity to point out to a Search Committee the impact on Centre/University activity of the loss of a specific type of expertise.

CONCLUSION

At the University of Saskatchewan there is much that we have got ‘right’ about Centres. There is a good deal of flexibility in the establishment of Centres and the arrangements under which they operate. Then again, there are pieces missing that would be expected of any modern organization including among other things clear roles and responsibilities for those involved, accountabilities, assessments, appropriate recognitions, and clear communications.

This report responds to the directives identified in the mandate of the Task Force with a series of recommendations that the members of the Task Force believe will be helpful in dealing with the “missing pieces” referred to above. We leave it to others to accept or reject our recommendations and to implement those that are considered useful.

Respectfully submitted:

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APPENDIX A

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The reporting authority for Centres needs to be reviewed to ensure that Centres are not disadvantaged in consideration of resources and that their activities and plans can be properly reflected in Integrated Planning documents and university promotional materials.
2. A clear rationale for reviewing Centres must be established. The rationale should include:
 - The means to provide the Centre and the University with information which will assist in improving the quality of research and outreach activities and infrastructure of Centres;
 - The means to guide decisions with respect to the allocation of resources to Centres; and
 - The means to assess a Centre with respect to the achievement of its goals and objectives and to determine whether the goals and objectives need to be revised or the Centre restructured or dissolved.
3. A statement in the Policy on Centres needs to be made about the responsibilities and authorities of Deans/VPs to which Centres report. A clear delineation of the reporting authority's responsibilities should also be included in the documentation approving the establishment of a Centre. The list of responsibilities should include:
 - Recommending the establishment/dissolution of the Centre;
 - Approving the annual budget;
 - Operational and financial monitoring including receiving and, following discussions with the Director, approving the annual report;
 - Establishment of a regular review process (see recommendation 4, below).
4. The Dean to which a Centre reports should be the individual who is responsible for the review. It is expected that in fulfilling these responsibilities the Dean will consult with the Centre members and Director, and with the Department Head where the Centre significantly impacts, or resides primarily within, a Department. The Dean's responsibilities include:
 - Determining the cycle of review (see 6, below);
 - Determining the size and scope of the review process (including whether the review will be paper-based or involve an on-site visit by a review team; where a Centre is automatically reviewed by some external agency, the Dean to whom it reports should have the right and responsibility to exempt it from an additional review as appropriate). Where a review is to be primarily paper-based, the Dean should consider making available an opportunity for the reviewers to consult with the Centre members via video- or tele-conference;
 - Establishing the terms of reference for the review committee and determining its membership (whether internal [U. of S.] or external reviewers, or both);
 - Receiving the review report, providing an opportunity for the Centre to respond, evaluating the review and response, and forwarding the review and response with recommendations to the Planning Committee of Council for its information and further action if necessary or appropriate.
5. As each of these types of Centres receive university resources and have broad impacts often extending into the local, provincial or national communities, a rigorous review

process should be put in place. It is strongly recommended that the process involve an on-site visit by a review team consisting of at least 2 external reviewers. The VP to which a Centre reports should be the individual who is responsible for the review and it is expected that in fulfilling these responsibilities the VP will consult extensively with the Centre Director and members. The VPs responsibilities should include:

- Determining the cycle of review (see 5, below);
 - Determining the size and scope of the review process (including whether the review will be paper-based or involve an on-site visit by a review team; where a Centre is automatically reviewed by some external agency, the VP to whom it reports should have the right and responsibility to exempt it from an additional review as appropriate). Where a review is to be primarily paper-based, the VP should consider making available an opportunity for the reviewers to consult with the Centre members via video- or tele-conference;
 - Establishing the terms of reference for the review committee and, in consultation with the Director and members, determining its composition;
 - Receiving the review report, providing an opportunity for the Centre to respond, evaluating the review and response, and forwarding the review and response with recommendations to the Planning Committee of Council for its information and further action if necessary or appropriate.
6. Reviews of Centres should be on a cycle of review consonant with the University's Integrated Planning Cycle. Unless special circumstances prevail, reviews should be a minimum of 5 and a maximum of 10 years apart. Reviews should be staged, like the SPR process, so that the entire process is manageable and not too much effort and stress is placed on any single unit.
 7. The Centre Director/CEO, in consultation with the members of the Centre, should be charged with creating a self-study document which would include a clear statement of the goals and objectives of the Centre and documentation pertaining to the achievements of the Centre with respect to said goals and objectives. Included, wherever and whenever possible should be surveys of the 'clients/benefactors' of the Centre regarding their interactions and satisfactions with the Centre and suggestions for improvement.
 8. Resources to support reviews of centres should be dependent on the type and size of centre that is reviewed. The costs of reviewing Centres which report to a Dean should be borne by the College to which they report. Funding for reviews should be provided from central sources for those Centres which report to a Vice-President.
 9. Academic units and College Review Committees should be reminded and encouraged to value and reward all types of activities that are considered to be of value to the University. One opportunity to value these activities is to celebrate significant Centre accomplishments in College and University promotional materials. Centre Directors should provide to the Dean or VP to whom they report copies of press releases, notifications of grants received, and other significant accomplishments.
 10. Colleges need to recognize, and Deans should ensure, that participation and accomplishment within a Centre is considered in recommendations and decisions about tenure, promotion and special salary increases.
 11. VPs to whom Centres report should work with Centre Directors to routinely provide input to Heads and Deans about the activities and accomplishments of Centres and particularly about the activities and accomplishments of Centre Directors.
 12. From the perspective of the Centre, its members, and the university, it is highly desirable that an adequate infrastructure and operating/research budget be in place when a new

Centre is approved. Where it is uncertain that the proponents of a proposed Centre have secured adequate resources and yet it is decided to create the Centre, a specified and relatively early date for the first review should be established.

13. Space Planning should be charged with reviewing the entitlements of currently existing Research Centres and, where possible, providing adequate space.
14. VPs and Deans to which Centres report should, in reviewing the annual report and budget of the Centre, discuss the needs of the Centre with the Director.
15. Centres, like Departments and administrative units, should receive invitations to participate fully in University planning and budgeting exercises.
16. Centre Directors should be invited to College meetings and be given the opportunity to annually address the meeting and present a report.
17. A University-wide forum of Centres should be created, chaired by the VP Research, to meet at least once per term to discuss matters of mutual interest.
18. Centres should be required to provide annual financial reports for each year of the review period. For larger Centres, the reports should include a Statement of Revenue and Expenditures with the current year's actual results, a comparison to the budget for the current year and a comparison to the actual results for the previous year. If the Centre has significant long-term tangible capital assets, a description and, where possible, cost and age of these assets should be provided. The Statement of Revenue and Expenditures and a list of long-term tangible capital assets (where relevant) are the minimum expectations. Centres should be encouraged to prepare additional information, such as variance analysis, for their own use as well as to serve the review process. Such Centres should ensure that they have the administrative support required to track revenue and expenditures and generate reports. Centres with little financial activity should have a reporting requirement restricted to a Statement of Revenue and Expenditures which display current year's actual results and a comparison to the actual results for the previous year.
19. If Centres form a part of the College structure they should be included in growth and development planning.
20. The Dean/VP to which a Centre reports should develop a protocol for actively managing the financial matters of the Centre. A description of the protocol should be included with any application for the establishment of a new Centre.
21. Type A Centres should be required to establish clear governance arrangements. The Dean to whom each Centre reports should be involved in the discussions of these arrangements. The discussions should consider whether a Management/Advisory Board is necessary or appropriate and whether the Dean will serve (*ex officio*) on the Board. The arrangements would normally include at least one annual meeting between the Dean, the Centre Director, and the Board if it exists.
22. The role, responsibility, and authority of the Dean to whom a Centre reports must be clearly identified in all proposals to establish a new Centre (see Recommendation 2) and in all existing Centres where it is unclear. Some aspects of the role would include leadership and encouragement and, where the Dean deems it necessary, appropriate and the opportunity exists, lobbying and fund-raising on behalf of the Centre; the Dean's authority would include the recommendation (to Council) to establish or dissolve a Centre, approval/dismissal (following consultation with the members of the Centre) of an individual to the position of Director, and assignment of space and other resources under the control of the Dean. The responsibilities of the Dean would include such matters as

oversight over the financial operations of the Centre, ensuring that the Centre is aware of and follows University policies and practices, and the review of the Centre.

23. The role, responsibility, and authority of the VP to whom a Centre reports must be clearly identified in all proposals to establish a new Centre and in all existing Centres where it is unclear. Some aspects of the role would include leadership and encouragement and, where the VP deems it necessary, appropriate and the opportunity exists, lobbying and fund-raising on behalf of the Centre; the VP's authority would include the recommendation (to Council) to establish or dissolve a Centre, approval/dismissal (following consultation with the members of the Centre) of an individual to the position of Director, and assignment of space and other resources under the control of the VP as approved by the President's Executive Committee and/or the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning. The responsibilities of the VP would include such matters as oversight over the financial operations of the Centre, ensuring that the Centre is aware of and follows University policies and practices, and the review of the Centre.

APPENDIX B

Directors Survey Questions

Governance

3. What is the vision/purpose/goals of your centre?
4. How were the vision/purpose/goals of the centre created?
5. Who has approved the vision?
6. Have the purpose and goals of your centre been updated and if so, when and how?
7. Are the goals of the centre mentioned anywhere within University of Saskatchewan Integrated Plan documents?
8. Does the current reporting structure for your Centre promote linkages between the Centre and University planning initiatives?
9. Do you have documentation about the governance structure of your centre?
10. Who, if anyone, monitors the governance of the centre?
11. How do you communicate this governance structure to centre members?
12. Does your Centre have an Advisory Board or Board of Directors (AB/BoD)? If not, is an AB or BoD needed?
13. What is the purpose of the AB or BoD?
14. Do they know your centre's mandate, objectives, operations and bylaws (if incorporated)?
15. Do they annually review the strategic plan and monitor execution of the strategy and achievement of objectives?
16. Are there Terms of Reference for AB or BoD members?
17. What is the process for choosing members of the AB or BoD?
18. Is the AB or BoD completely independent from the members of the Centre?
19. What are the qualifications of your AB/BoD?
20. How often do they meet and how is the agenda set?
21. Are minutes recorded and stored and who has access to the minutes of AB or BoD meetings?
22. Does the agenda include a review of financial results?
23. Does the agenda include a review of human resources?
24. Does the agenda include a review of legal and regulatory issues?
25. Who does the Director of the Centre report to?
26. How often does the Director report?
27. Who is responsible for the evaluation of the Director?
28. When was the last evaluation of the Director?
29. What is the academic position of the Director?
30. Are there Terms of Reference for the Director?
31. Are there Terms of Reference for other centre members?
32. What are the responsibilities of centre members?
33. Who is the main point of contact with external agencies?
34. Are there Deans, VP's, or designates in your formal governance structure?
35. Are they invited to meetings, and do they usually attend?
36. Does the Centre have representation on the governing bodies of units (Departments/Colleges) on campus?

37. How often do the centre members have formal meetings and how is the agenda set for these meetings?
38. Are minutes recorded and stored and who has access to the minutes of these meetings?
39. What administrative support does the Centre have?
40. Is the administrative support sufficient? If not, what is needed?
41. Does the centre follow University guidelines for hiring, harassment, etc.?
42. Does the centre submit an annual report of activities? If so, to whom, and does the centre receive feedback?
43. Are centre activities reported to members? If so, how is this done and how often?
44. If there is a change in the strategic direction of the centre, then who do you notify?
45. When was the last time the centre was reviewed, and by whom?
46. What was the outcome of this review, and was it useful?

Centre Financial Policy

47. Does your Centre have a financial 'policy' specifying how financing will be obtained and spent, who has authority to authorize expenditures, etc.?
48. Identify the Centre's major sources of revenue, placing each in priority context.
49. Does your Centre aim toward some measure of financial self-sufficiency:
 - at the operational level?
 - for growth/expansion?
 - for human resources?
50. Describe your Centre's budget development process. Include your formula for determining incremental cost increases?
51. Are there separate budgets for maintenance and growth?
52. What, if any, University resources are integral to operating within your budget? (Identify direct and indirect contributions. For example: dedicated rent free laboratory space is a direct contribution, accounts management for a national grant is an indirect contribution)
53. What (administrative, maintenance, infrastructure, etc) services should the University provide?
54. Describe the centre's financial administration. Include any areas of perceived deficiency (bookkeeping, signing authorities etc).
55. Describe the centre's annual financial review/audit procedures.
56. Is the financial status of the Centre regularly reviewed? By whom?
57. To whom is the centre financially accountable?
58. Does the Centre receive feedback after reporting its financial status?
59. Is your Centre adequately funded? What is the Universities role in ensuring it is and continues to be?
60. How does the cost of 'administration' of the Centre compare to the cost of the personnel and members of the Centre? Is this adequate and appropriate for responsible management?

Relationship of Centres to the University

61. What is it about the operation of your centre or research group within the university umbrella that provides benefits to both parties? i.e. why could this not be accomplished under the more traditional university college/department structure?
62. What are the resulting benefits of this association to the university?
63. What are the resulting benefits to your centre or group?
64. Are there specific aspects of the University of Saskatchewan operational or administrative environment that are particularly beneficial to your centre or research group in achieving its mandate?
65. Are there particular aspects of the University of Saskatchewan operational or administrative environment that limit the activities or scope of your centre or research group, or otherwise impair your achievement of success?
66. In an ideal world, what would be the University-Centre relationship?

Reviews of Centres

67. Is the Centre still active? Is it a candidate for dissolution prior to a review?
68. Is there any reason why your Centre should not be reviewed?
69. Given the size and scope of your Centre's activities, should the review be a 'paper-based review' or should one or more reviewers visit your centre and conduct interviews? What other review arrangement can you suggest that would be most appropriate for your Centre?
70. If an on-site review is deemed appropriate for your Centre, would you recommend internal reviewers or should at least one be from outside the University of Saskatchewan?
71. Are you and/or the members of the Centre able to create a self-study document? If not, why not?
72. What information do you need from the university to support the review?
73. What resources does your Centre need to support the review process?
74. How will the Reviewers know if the Centre goals and objectives have been or are being met?
75. How often, in your opinion, should your Centre be reviewed?

APPENDIX C

DEANS/VPs SURVEY

Centre Governance

4. What is the role, if any, of the Dean/VP in the governance structure of the Centre?
Are you invited to regular/annual meetings of the AB/BoD, or of the Centre?
5. Do you receive an annual report of activities, and what do you do with it?
6. What is the Dean's/VP's authority with respect to Centres? How is this implemented?
7. Should the Dean/VP serve on the Board/Advisory Committee overseeing the activities and policies of the Centre?
8. Are there any Centres currently reporting to your office which, in your view, should report to some other authority? Which authority?
9. Should there be one body/committee responsible for oversight of Centres (particularly with respect to policy and/or reviews of Centres)?

Centre Financial Policy

10. Do you receive an annual financial report from this Centre?
11. If so, what do you do with it?
12. Do you perceive yourself to be the administrator responsible for oversight of the financial matters of the Centre?
13. How would a deficit be managed?

Relationship of Centre with the University

14. What value is added to your unit through the activities of this Centre?
15. Is this Centre central or peripheral to the operations of your unit?
16. Was this Centre identified/mentioned in your unit's plan submitted for the first planning cycle?
17. What mechanism or process exists for the members of the Centre to participate in your unit's upcoming planning exercises?

Centre Review Process

18. What, in your view, should be the role of the Dean/AVP in the Review?
19. Should this be a paper-based review or should one or more reviewers actually visit the Centre and conduct interviews?
20. If an on-site review is deemed necessary for this Centre, are internal reviewers sufficient or should at least one reviewer from outside the University of Saskatchewan be appointed?
21. Who should pay the costs of the review? Does it make a difference to your answer depending on the type of Centre under review?
22. If the Dean's Office or AVP's Office is required to pay the costs or part of the costs of the Review, are there any restrictions you would like to see imposed on the nature or extensiveness of the review?

APPENDIX D

TEMPLATE FOR CENTRES ANNUAL REPORTS

[TITLE OF CENTRE] ANNUAL REPORT

Centre's Mission Statement:

Goals and Objectives of Centre:

As briefly as possible describe how the Centre has worked to reach its goals and objectives during the last year:

Describe any significant changes that have occurred since the last annual report (for example, changes in membership or governance) and how they have impacted the Centre's activities:

What significant accomplishments can be attributed to the Centre since the last annual report? What is the "value added" by the Centre over and above that which would have occurred had the Centre not existed?

Describe any activities/interactions with the larger community beyond the campus of the University of Saskatchewan:

Provide a list of students (undergraduate, graduate), Postdoctoral Fellows, and Visiting Scholars who worked within the Centre during the last year:

Provide an annual financial report. For larger Centres with significant financial support the reports should include a Statement of Revenue and Expenditures with the current year's actual results, a comparison to the budget for the current year and a comparison to the actual results for the previous year. If the Centre has significant long-term tangible capital assets, a description and, where possible, age and replacement cost of these assets should be provided. Centres with little financial activity should have a reporting requirement restricted to a Statement of Revenue and Expenditures which display current year's actual results and a comparison to the actual results for the previous year. Please comment on expenditures showing how they support the objectives of the Centre.