

CAS Policies on Laboratories, Centers, and Institutes

The WMU Board of Trustees approved the following definitions at its meeting, 9/18/98:
Center: A unit formed for purposes of linkage and visibility, focused on a theme, issue or set of skills. A Center will frequently be interdisciplinary in nature. A Center does not offer degree programs but may, on rare occasions, offer a course or courses.

Institute: A unit similar in nature to a Center, as defined above, but which is degree-granting. Typically an Institute will be interdisciplinary. Course work for a degree offered through an Institute may include some offered by the Institute itself but will be primarily comprised of courses in various disciplines/departments already in existence.

School: A single-discipline unit, which has identification in the public mind beyond that of a department. Schools may have significant subdivisions such that students will apply for admission and take degrees through the subdivision rather than through the central unit as a whole.

Introduction: Professional collaboration among faculty and staff both within the college and outside is to be encouraged. Therefore, a means for establishing and recognizing interdisciplinary or collaborative units is needed. Furthermore, it is necessary to ensure that representation of college facilities in literature and on web pages is current and accurate.

Rationale: Policies for initiation and continuation of centers or other collaborative units will ensure that marketing, publicity, and building signage of our facilities will be consistent and accurate.

Goal: To have College and University publications and external publications accurately reflect approved entities. To reduce the number of centers and institutes that are no longer functioning or have limited faculty involvement and funding.

Policies and Procedures:

Laboratories:

1. A laboratory is defined as a designated space along with associated equipment dedicated to a specified disciplinary area.
2. Laboratories may be used for either instruction or research or for both.
3. Designation of a laboratory with a name descriptive of laboratory activities (e.g. Cardiovascular Research Laboratory) may be recommended by a department to the Dean.
4. A designated laboratory may be identified in publicity (printed materials or web-pages) as part of departmental or college facilities.
5. Laboratory names honoring major sponsors (e.g. the J.Q. Jones Laboratory for Systems Analysis) must be approved by appropriate executive officials, including the Dean of the College, and the University Development Office.
6. A current list of college and departmental laboratories shall be maintained by the Dean's Office.

Research Groups:

1. Research Groups are collaborations of faculty/staff/students for pursuit of common interests.
2. Research Groups may be formed on a transient, informal basis for the purpose of identifying common interests.
3. Research Groups wishing to be identified in college publicity (printed and in departmental or faculty web-pages) may seek formal recognition by means of written request to the dean.

Centers:

Centers are characterized by most of the following:

1. Collaboration of two or more WMU faculty, as evidenced by joint publications and grants, or by individual efforts within the same disciplinary area.
2. Names are defined by specific subject area (e.g. Center for Human Performance).
3. Defined space and equipment.
4. Source of designated funding, either dedicated WMU operating funds, or special gifts, grants, or sponsored projects.
5. Continuing record of scholarly publications and presentations related to the subject area of the Center.
6. Separate fund/cost center.
7. Administrative structure including policies on how to manage resources, staff, and add or remove affiliated faculty/staff.

Initiation of a Center within CAS is done by application to the College Strategic Planning Committee and the dean. The dean may charter new Centers within the College. While several of the above criteria may not be met when a Center is first established, there should be evidence of appropriate expertise and a reasonable potential for successful development.

The designation as a “Center of Excellence” and the naming of Centers in honor of major donors represents Centers that are established with significant funding and the expectation of a continuing program of scholarly activities. Such designations must be approved by the dean and by the University Development Office.

Continuation of a Center is by means of bi-annual review by the Strategic Planning Committee, which will make a recommendation to the dean. Existing Centers which do not meet the above criteria may be granted a one-year extension during which to demonstrate substantial compliance.

Only those Centers approved through the above policies may be included in college publicity and on departmental and faculty web pages. The Dean’s Office will maintain the list of currently approved Centers.

Institutes:

According to the policy adopted by the WMU Board of Trustees, Institutes are defined as being “degree granting.” Groups that want to start an institute will make proposals to the dean. The proposal should include sources of funding, programs that will be delivered by the institute and department and faculty that wish to join the institute. Upon approval the dean will make recommendations to the Provost and the Board of Trustees. Institutes will be reviews every 5 years.