

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE  
ON RESEARCH CENTRES AND INSTITUTES

GUIDELINES FOR THE CREATION AND ADMINISTRATION  
OF RESEARCH CENTRES AND INSTITUTES

Submitted to  
Dr. J. Gordin Kaplan  
Vice-President (Research)  
August 1985

## GUIDELINES FOR THE CREATION AND ADMINISTRATION

### OF RESEARCH CENTRES AND INSTITUTES

Over the years the University of Alberta has supported the creation of a large number of research centres and institutes in order to advance high quality research and graduate instruction in certain areas. The administrative arrangements governing these centres and institutes are variable: some are administered by a Department; some are administered by a Faculty; and some (a smaller number) are administered by the Office of the Vice-President (Research).

The present University policy on research centres and institutes is generally satisfactory. However, when problems arise they often tend to be of an administrative or financial nature. The administrative and financial aspects of these problems are somewhat interconnected in that some administrators perceive a financial advantage in being attached to a "higher" administrative level. The problem situations appear to reside in:

1. ambiguity about the location of the unit within the decision-making structures of the University;
2. an apparent inappropriateness of placement of the unit for the activities which are undertaken; and/or
3. pressure of financial constraint.

The purpose of this report is to offer some guidelines for the location and funding of research centres and institutes which could be used in reviews of the present arrangements governing such units or in decisions about future administrative arrangements. Further, the report will

provide guidelines for the creation and management of centres and institutes.

### Location of Centres or Institutes

A general principle for defining the most appropriate administrative arrangement for centres or institutes may be stated as follows:

ONLY THOSE UNITS WHICH CAN NOT APPROPRIATELY BE ADMINISTERED AT THE DEPARTMENTAL OR FACULTY LEVEL BECOME THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT (RESEARCH); AND ONLY THOSE WHICH DO NOT FIT WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF A DEPARTMENT BECOME THE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY OF A DEAN.

It is important to ensure that every centre or institute within the University is accountable to a University officer, e.g., Department Chairman, Dean, or Vice-President (Research), as may be appropriate.

The criteria which may guide the choice of an administrative home for centres or institutes are listed below under the subheadings "Departments", "Faculties", and "Vice-President (Research)".

#### I. Departments

- 1.0 A Department is the most appropriate unit to administer a centre or institute when the institute's personnel and research activities are generally restricted to that Department and corresponding research field(s).

Other subsidiary criteria for placing a research centre or



institute under the authority of a Department Chairman include the following:

- 1.1 If a centre director is likely to be recruited primarily from that Department.
- 1.2 If the research reports and scholarly publications by centre staff and affiliates are generally restricted the discipline or subdisciplines of that Department.
- 1.3 If the graduate students involved in the centre are drawn primarily from that Department.
- 1.4 If external funding for the centre is likely to be enhanced by the centre's affiliation with that Department.

## II. Faculties

- 2.0 A Faculty is the most appropriate unit to administer a research centre or institute when personnel and activities generally cut across two or more Departments within the same Faculty and when the Departments involved can not effectively administer the centre by means of an interdepartmental committee.

While the above guideline is of primary importance, other subsidiary criteria for placing a centre or institute under the authority of a Faculty may be offered:

- 2.1 If the centre director is likely to be recruited from more than one of the Departments involved.
- 2.2 If the mandate and needs of the centre can best be met by a Faculty-level administrative arrangement.
- 2.3 If the graduate students involved in the centre are drawn mainly from the participating Departments.
- 2.4 If the Dean is structuring a novel group designed to respond to new research directions or challenges which are of Faculty-wide import.

### III. Vice-President (Research)

- 3.0 The Office of the Vice-President (Research) is the most appropriate unit to administer a research centre or institute when the centre's personnel and activities generally cut across two or more Faculties and when the Faculties involved can not effectively administer the centre by means of an inter-Faculty committee.

Again, while the above guideline is of primary importance, other subsidiary guidelines may be offered:

- 3.1 If candidates for the post of centre director are likely to come from more than one of the participating Faculties.
- 3.2 If the mandate and needs of the centre can best be met by a centrally-based administrative arrangement.
- 3.3 If the graduate students involved in the centre are drawn mainly from the different Faculties involved.
- 3.4 If the Vice-President (Research) is structuring a novel group designed to undertake new research thrusts which are of University-wide support.

#### Selection of Administrators of Centres

With respect to centres or institutes administered by Departments, the selection and appointment of a centre director is the responsibility of a Department Chairman. The actual selection could be conducted by one of the following methods:

1. the Chairman consults as appropriate and then makes the appointment;
2. the Chairman establishes an ad hoc selection committee to assist him/her in the selection of a director.

With respect to Faculty-based centres, the selection and appointment of a director is the responsibility of the Dean. The



actual selection could be made by a Dean after appropriate consultation or on recommendation of a special selection committee established by the Dean.

The selection and appointment of directors for most of the centres/institutes under the Vice-President (Research) are governed by G.F.C. policy. According to the G.F.C. policy manual, the selection and review procedures used for Department Chairmen shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the selection of administrators of research centres and institute under the Vice-President (Research). "One of the changes which would apply in these cases is that appointment/termination, etc. would be decided by the President rather than by the Board."

With respect to units under the Vice-President (Research) which are not covered by G.F.C. policy, the Vice-President (Research) would, in the matter of director selection and appointment, have the same responsibilities as those assigned to Department Chairmen and Deans.

In all cases, the appointment of administrators of research centres and institutes shall be for a specific term not to exceed five (5) years, with the possibility of reappointment at the end of the term. Hence, all such administrators must have cross-appointments to regular academic units.

This section does not apply to centres or institutes governed by a special contractual arrangement between the Board and external funding agencies, in which the matter of selection and appointment of centre directors is discussed in the contract.

#### The Role of a Director and of Advisory Committees

The director of a centre or institute is the chief executive officer of that unit. Directors will exercise general

supervision over the operation of the unit; specific responsibilities will vary with the size of the unit and with the complexity of its policies and operations. In terms of accountability, administrators of centres or institutes report to a Department Chairman, Dean, or the Vice-President (Research), as the case may be.

Experience has shown that advisory or policy committees can, through appropriate memberships, enhance the performance of centres or institutes and facilitate a degree of inter-Faculty and inter-Departmental involvement and cooperation. Such committees and related terms of reference may be established by a Department Chairman, Dean, or the Vice-President (Research), as appropriate.

#### Establishment of Centres and Institutes

The authority to approve the establishment of centres and institutes resides in the General Faculties Council. According to the G.F.C. policy manual, proposals for centres and institutes are to be transmitted from the Academic Development Committee to the Planning and Priorities Committee, and to G.F.C. through the Executive Committee.

It is relevant to note that G.F.C. delegated to the Vice-President (Academic) authority to approve centres or institutes where proposals:

1. have Faculty/Departmental sponsorship;
2. involve no request for additional funds or space;
3. appear (after appropriate consultation) not to raise jurisdictional questions or larger issues of University-wide import.

Proposals for centres or institutes are normally supported



by Departmental and Faculty Councils prior to transmittal to the Office of the Vice-President (Academic).

Additional information concerning the establishment of centres or institutes may be obtained from the Secretary to the Academic Development Committee, Office of the Vice-President (Academic).

VB  
check  
this  
✓

### Funding

The University supports research centres and institutes through its operating budget. Funding for these units is channelled through Departments, Faculties, or through the Office of the Vice-President (Research). The level of funding provided varies widely from centre to centre, ranging from "low" (or nil in a few cases) to relatively "high". These differences are a product of past initiatives and historical patterns.

Administrators and affiliates of research centres sometimes expect a higher level of funding from within the University than is realistic at a time when the University is experiencing severe financial limitations. The competition for whatever "additional" funds a given Department, Faculty, or the University may have at its disposal is very keen and centres are well advised to assess their prospects for more funding from internal sources in a realistic fashion.

Some, but not all, centres or institutes have been successful in attracting external funding usually in the form of research grants or contracts but also in the form of donations. Again, there are wide differences among centres/institutes in the degree to which external funding is pursued.



In the present circumstances, the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and that of Research Services are prepared to provide centres or institutes with assistance in identifying potential sources of external funding. The University encourages the development of centres and institutes with external funding, and any administrative arrangement devised for such units should be compatible with this goal.

#### Concluding Remarks

It should be noted that interdisciplinary research is a common feature of the research effort in the academy today. However, this quality alone provides an insufficient justification for administering research centres/institutes outside the normal Departmental organization. Within the University at the present time, there are centres or institutes whose research programmes are clearly interdisciplinary in nature and are appropriately administered at the Departmental level. Other centres appear to be inappropriately placed in the administrative structure.

The guidelines developed in this report may be used by the Vice-President (Research) and Deans to:

1. Initiate reviews of those centres/institutes which appear to be inappropriately placed in the administrative hierarchy;
2. Respond to centres/institutes which are seeking new administrative arrangements; and
3. Place new centres/institutes under the most appropriate administrative authority.

As a result of the PACCR review, the Archives is exhorted to undertake new initiatives involving solicitation of private papers of University faculty, documentation of areas of University leadership, oral histories designed to document aspects of University life or the role of the University in the larger community, and acquisition of manuscripts to support continuing research programmes within the University.

Clearly, the Archives is a service unit which serves, among other things, the University's research function. The Archives department and its Advisory Committee are in the process of evaluating the feasibility and desirability of new initiatives in the context of a future action plan.

E. INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH UNITS (IRU's)

(Coordinator: Dr. Baha Abu-Laban)

In mid-1981, the Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies was disbanded and responsibility for the IRU's was transferred to this Office. At that time, the Division of East European Studies, in consultation with this Office, chose to amalgamate with the Department of Slavic Studies, Faculty of Arts. A year later, in May 1982, Community Development was discontinued. The six remaining IRU's administered by this Office are: (1) Boreal Institute for Northern Studies; (2) Centre for the Advanced Study in Theoretical Psychology; (3) Centre for the Study of Mental Retardation; (4) Devonian Botanic Garden; (5) Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies; and (6) Water Resources Centre. Each of these units will be discussed in turn, but before doing so I will make a few general observations about them.

The IRU's are involved in a wide range of teaching and research activities. Ongoing activities include basic research in the relevant subject (i.e. discovery of new knowledge), applied research, and service both to the University and the larger community.



None of the IRU's offer degree programs but many IRU staff hold joint appointments in teaching departments. As well as addressing community needs, the IRU's annually offer special programmes relevant to the University's teaching/research function. Specifically, the IRU's publish newsletters, bibliographies, journal articles and books; they organize workshops and conferences; they organize lecture tours for their own staff to address lay and professional audiences; they bring in visiting speakers from outside; and they organize seminars and non-credit courses which are open to members of the University community and to the public at large. Within this broad range of concerns, the emphasis may vary from one unit to another, depending on its mandate and area of specialization.

1. Boreal Institute for Northern Studies  
(Acting Director: Dr. A.S.A. Mohsen)

The Boreal Institute for Northern Studies, established in 1960 as a multi-disciplinary/interdisciplinary organization, is an integral part of the University of Alberta. Its principal function is the promotion and support of scientific research in northern Canada, with particular emphasis on northern Alberta, the Yukon Territory, and the western portion of the Northwest Territories. This aspect of its activities includes the financial support of short-term research by annually awarding research grants to individual scholars. Longer term and more comprehensive research programmes are also developed and operated by the Institute (e.g., major ongoing projects include "Epidemiology and Control of Viral Hepatitis in Northern Canada" and phase II of the "NWT Perinatal and Infant Mortality and Morbidity Study -- both of which are funded by the Donner Foundation).

Other major Boreal Institute projects include its book/monograph publication programme and the Boreal Circle (an informal group which meets periodically to discuss matters related to the North).



Since its inception, the Boreal Institute has developed a specialized library which serves as a research facility for university scholars and members of the academic staff engaged in northern research. This same library includes among its users international scholars, government departments, business organizations, and the community at large as well as residents of Canada's North. It is reputed to be one of the best multi-disciplinary libraries on the North, not only in Canada but in the world. Its holdings include monographs, periodicals and newspapers, microforms (fiche and film), audio-visual materials, pamphlets and maps, and newspaper clippings. Continuing library projects include the Yukon Bibliography Updates.

For quite some time now, the work of the Institute has been handicapped because of the unfortunate illness of its Director, Mr. R. Jamieson. I have been able to make arrangements that have relieved him of the onerous responsibility of directing the Institute, but that leave him free to continue the projects that he has initiated. We are grateful to Mr. Jamieson for the many years of truly devoted service that he has given to the administration of the Institute. We acknowledge his great interest in and knowledge of the North and its peoples and we propose to continue to profit from his enthusiasm and experience.

This office arranged for the appointment of Dr. A.S.A. Mohsen as Associate Director of the Boreal Institute effective July 1, 1983, on a part-time basis (.67 FTE), to assist in the coordination of the Institute's academic and research programmes. This appointment was made possible by the discontinuation of the Community Development Programme. The balance of Dr. Mohsen's time (.33 FTE) is spent in teaching in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. As a result of this appointment, the Boreal Institute has been able to undertake some new initiatives; Dr. Mohsen has been named Acting Director effective November 1, 1984.

The Boreal Institute is undergoing a PACCR review. As a result of this activity and of advice received from the Boreal Institute Advisory Board, there is now a strong drive, with support from this office, to undertake new research initiatives and to make the Boreal Institute a world class unit. No other university is better situated than the University of Alberta to become the leading centre of northern research and we intend to make it such.

2. Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies  
(Director: Dr. M.R. Lupul)

The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies was established in 1976 to serve the needs of scholars in Ukrainian and Ukrainian Canadian studies in Canada. The Institute offers graduate scholarships and fellowships (including travel bursaries) and administers a research grants programme to academics and other qualified scholars. Further, the Institute has a vigorous publication programme in the selected areas of specialization and jointly with the Shevchenko Scientific Society in Europe, the Institute is preparing a multi-volume, English-language, alphabetical "Encyclopedia of Ukraine" under the editorial direction of Professor Volodymyr Kubijovyc, Sarcelles, France.

As well as being concerned with the development of Ukrainian Studies in Canadian universities and with research and publication, the Institute serves as a resource centre for English-Ukrainian bilingual education and Ukrainian-language education in Alberta and elsewhere. In addition, the Institute sponsors conferences, visiting professors and guest speakers. The record shows that the Institute, under Dr. Lupul's leadership, has been successful in attracting external funding for some of its research endeavours.

The Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies is a highly productive unit which is recognized nationally and internationally.



3. Centre for Advanced Study in Theoretical Psychology  
(Acting Director: Dr. L.P. Mos)

The Centre for Advanced Study in Theoretical Psychology was established in 1967 as an advanced research and teaching institute. The Centre is devoted to the clarification of conceptual problems in psychology and investigation of the field's theoretical-philosophical presuppositions. As such, the Centre provides an opportunity for interdisciplinary study.

Principal activities of the Centre include research and education pertaining to themes of interest, regular seminars, a programme of meetings with visiting scholars and occasional international conferences, in addition to staff research projects and graduate studies. In 1983 the Centre initiated publication of the first volume of the Annals of Theoretical Psychology (edited by J.R. Royce and L.P. Mos) and it was projected that a new volume would be published annually thereafter.

A few years ago, the Centre's eminent founder and long-time Director, Dr. J.R. Royce, suffered a severe stroke from which he has unfortunately not fully recovered. Since then, the work of the Centre has inevitably suffered. Even though Dr. Royce is due to retire in 1986, it was deemed advisable to remedy the situation prior to his retirement. As a result, in the spring of 1983, a Vice-Presidential Committee with broad terms of reference was struck to review the activities of the Centre and to make recommendations about any and all aspects of its operation. The committee recommended, among other things, that Dr. Royce be relieved of his administrative responsibilities. Dr. Royce accepted this recommendation and Dr. L.P. Mos was appointed Acting Director effective January 1, 1984. Further, a Theoretical Psychology Centre Advisory Committee was established to assist the Centre in long-term planning and in the selection of a new Director. A search for a new Director will soon be underway.



4. Centre for the Study of Mental Retardation  
(Director: Dr. J.P. Das)

The Centre for the Study of Mental Retardation is an advanced research/teaching Centre whose principal activities include basic and applied research in the area of intellectual dysfunctions; demonstration of projects and the development of mood remediation programmes for children with intellectual and behavioural problems; clinical service; teaching of courses and organization of workshops and lectures for the public; and publications (including a quarterly magazine, Mental Retardation Bulletin).

The Centre is a very productive unit within the constraints of its rather modest budget. To his credit, however, the Centre Director, Dr. J.P. Das, has been successful in attracting external funding for several research projects. The Centre's scholarly publications, extensive by any standard, and clinical function have placed Dr. Das well in the international community of scholars and enhanced the visibility of the Centre, both locally and worldwide.

5. Devonian Botanic Garden  
(Director: Mr. P.N.D. Seymour)

The Devonian Botanic Garden is a research/service unit with a strong extension function. The Botanic Garden's principal objectives are to establish a collection of cultivated plants hardy in the Edmonton region, both for University teaching and public education; increase the range of plants and ornamentals grown in the Edmonton region; establish a complete collection of indigenous plants of Alberta; and construct special gardens of plants (e.g., Native Garden, Japanese Garden) to enable Albertans to appreciate some facets of cultural diversity in the province. The Devonian Botanic Garden has an ongoing research programme in re-vegetation with prairie plants; ground-cover plants and plants for sandy soils; breeding and selection of hardy roses; and propagation of herbaceous perennials.

In addition to providing an aesthetic setting for public enjoyment and for education, the Devonian Botanic Garden provides demonstrations of horticultural practices and conducts tours for the public at large and for public school children. Thousands of visitors go through the Garden annually.

The Botanic Garden is fortunate to have a large group of volunteers, "Friends of the Garden" and the "Botanic Garden Club", who have given considerable support to the Garden's research and community service programmes, not only morally but also materially through fund-raising efforts. This has served to strengthen the bond between the University and the larger community.

It is noteworthy that the Devonian Botanic Garden takes part in the International Seed Exchange Programme with some 400 worldwide institutions and botanic gardens. The Botanic Garden's position in the international community will be strengthened further as a result of a new function, viz responsibility for the University Mold Herbarium and Culture Collection which is being transferred to it from the Department of Medical Microbiology.

#### 6. Water Resources Centre

(Director: Dr. D. Chanasyk)

The Water Resources Centre attempts to bring together University staff interested in water resources research and management problems. The Centre has no base budget and receives no funding from the University. Its activities appear to be dependent more on the research achievements of its individual members than on collaborative group work. Research funding is secured through individual, project-specific research grant applications to external agencies, both provincial and federal.



The Centre's Director of long-standing, Dr. A.H. Laycock (Department of Geography), a recognized authority in water resources research, resigned in the spring of 1984 in order to take a year-long study leave. He was succeeded by Dr. D. Chanasyk as Director and Dr. E.R. Reinelt as Associate Director.

Efforts are being made to encourage the Centre to embark on new kinds or levels of collaborative research in this important area.

#### VIII. OTHER RESEARCH CENTRES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

##### A. Radiation Research Centre (Director: Dr. Gordon Freeman)

The Radiation Research Centre has responsibility for the interdepartmental development of facilities for sources of radiation and for the cooperative development of radiation research. Presently the Centre contains a 2MeV Van de Graaff generator and a 350 kV accelerator. Although the principal users are the Director, Dr. Gordon Freeman, Department of Chemistry, and Dr. Eric Pinnington, Department of Physics, the Centre's research programme has attracted other campus colleagues from other departments. Dr. Freeman's research is concerned with the nature of the interaction of electrons with materials and Dr. Pinnington's with the behaviour of excited states of elemental ions.

The Centre is a highly productive unit and there is a strong drive among the Centre staff not only to maintain but also to expand their research programme. We are presently studying a possible change in the reporting structure of this Centre.