

# Campus Centers and Institutes Toolkit

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## Introduction

This toolkit was developed by the ad hoc working group on SJSU Campus Centers and Institutes (CCIs) with the purpose of providing best practices and disseminating lessons learned.

## What Is a CCI

CCIs are organizations within colleges or a division that have their own leadership and governance that sit alongside traditional hierarchies. CCIs aim to address a themed research, educational, and/or service area of inquiry by bringing together faculty from across different units to elevate their joint expertise.

## Why Start a CCI

CCIs provide an official umbrella entity within the CSU and SJSU to which a specific area of research has an official home, governance structure and (some) administrative supports. CCIs both provide a structure for coordinated fundraising for projects and credibility to extramural funders, collaborators and the public, and can be very effective to help you leverage and grow resources and standing within the CCI's research area.

# CCI Phases: Planning to Closure

## 1. Starting a New CCI

### a. Considerations

A new CCI is a major commitment of the sponsoring faculty and the administration within their units. Prior to seeking to establish a CCI, there should be thorough conversations that assess the need and sustainability of the CCI. Proposers should have conversations with their department chair, dean, other sponsoring unit leadership, potential membership, and the AVPR, at a minimum, before drafting a proposal.

### b. Development Advice

Proposing a CCI should provide the time needed to thoughtfully consider all aspects of the proposed CCI. It is recommended that this process include strategic planning within the proposed unit, across the campus, and (if relevant) with external stakeholders to identify an actionable mission and vision rooted in the purpose and theme of the CCI.

### c. Define Purpose

Define the CCI purpose in relation to the mission of the proposing unit and that of SJSU. CCIs need to complement efforts of the campus to fulfill the greater mission of research, education, and/or service. A CCI can address any or all of these three elements of the university mission.

### d. Differentiate Activity

Differentiate the CCI from normal department and faculty activity: A CCI provides a platform to advance SJSU toward mission priorities beyond what a faculty member, department, or college does within their normal operations. It cannot duplicate the efforts of a department or unit. When proposing a CCI, ask this question in relation to research, education, and/or service: What does this proposal do to advance SJSU's mission beyond what is already being done in normal operations?

### e. Theme

A strong CCI has a focused organizing theme and a specific mission. This focus may expand with success, but CCIs should start small with a core, dedicated group of faculty devoted to working within said theme.

f. Center vs. Institute

Per the SJSU policy S22-1 section 3, a center is within one college, while an institute spans multiple colleges. A center may grow into an institute, but this need not be a goal to propose a valuable center. (Note that CCIs formed prior to S22-1 may not follow these naming conventions; do not base your naming decision on these examples).

g. Metrics of Success

In coordination with the sponsoring dean(s) and the AVPR, proposed CCIs should craft priorities, plans to meet said priorities, and metrics to measure success. These metrics should be both realistic and ambitious. Metrics should include aspects of fiscal sustainability (e.g., extramural funding targets over time) in addition to meeting priorities in support of the CCI's mission (e.g., specific research products or outcomes).

h. Questions to Answer Prior to Starting

See appendix A for a series of questions to answer prior to starting a new CCI.

i. Checklist and Forms

A checklist and the forms required to propose a CCI can be found here:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/research/about/cci/proposal-new.php>

## 2. Fiscal and Administrative Models/Structures

a. What Successful CCIs Have In Common

There is not one way to run a CCI and a variety of models work. However, what successful CCIs have in common is a consistent theme that works toward addressing a need at the college and/or university level that would otherwise be unmet.

b. Budget Models

Budget models need to be realistic and discussed with the college dean for their approval. Fiscal support for CCIs generally can come from four different sources:

i. College Support (e.g. Cost Share)

As noted above, traditionally college support sunsets after the probationary period of a CCI, but in some instances there may be continued support from an academic unit. In other words, most CCIs should strive to be self-sustaining in terms of financials, but there are instances where it is in the best interests of the academic unit to provide the services of the CCI and the dean can waive the need to be

self-sustaining. If this is the case for a CCI, this needs to be documented and certified in their business plan.

ii. Philanthropic Support

Working with a college Director of Development (DOD), CCIs can be a pillar of a college philanthropic plan. This type of support generally supports students, research, or service activities, as opposed to administrative costs. However, some CCIs have been able to raise money for endowments that also cover general operating support.

iii. Extramural Grants/Contracts

Working with the Research Foundation, many CCIs raise money to support their research, education, and service endeavors. Given the nature of grants, this work is generally supplemental to the overall operations of a CCI, supporting specific projects proposed by CCI members in support of the overall theme. Like philanthropic support, administrative costs are generally not covered by this type of funding, but can be in certain circumstances.

iv. Membership Model

Working with Advancement, some CCIs employ a corporate or individual membership model. For the former, the corporate sponsors receive benefits such as access to CCI students/faculty/products. For the latter, individual members receive benefits, such as access to CCI material. One creative way to manage internal membership is to require external grants from center members to pay back a portion of the PI share of indirects to the CCI's indirect account

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TBDIghHnMvBYWKtzKfH1M5MeArNDvOotjNJlhDrBrqw/edit>).

c. Administrative Models

It is vital that a CCI have a solid administrative model that identifies how directors and leadership are selected and what the rights of the members are. These models vary based on the complexity of the CCI, but at the very least should include an organizational chart and reporting structure, duty outline, and meeting schedule. CCI leadership are responsible for all reporting and the plans for tracking metrics should be laid out prior to the launch of the CCI.

d. Membership

It is important to keep the membership of the CCI engaged. As such, successful CCIs demonstrate the importance of the CCI to its members through a variety of ways, including:

- i. Regular Meetings  
Monthly research meetings that spotlight the various members in a rotation.
- ii. Manuscript Preparation  
Writing circles, editing support, joint-authorship, and other such supports are often a way to demonstrate value to membership.
- iii. Grant Preparation  
Supporting grants with a library of member grants, boilerplate information for CCI supports, editing, and co-investigator support are all vital supports a CCI offers its members.

### 3. Launching a CCI (Probationary Period)

The first three years of a CCI are considered their probationary period. During this period, CCIs traditionally have fiscal support (e.g. cost-share) from sponsoring college(s) to help with the launch. This support generally lasts three years and is tapered from year one to year three.

#### a. Fiscal Support

A CCI traditionally needs fiscal support from their sponsoring college(s). This support is not a requirement for launching a CCI; however, it demonstrates the college(s)' commitment to the CCI and its goals and allows time for the maturation of the proposed business plan. Types of support include:

- i. Course releases for CCI leadership.
- ii. Administrative assistant support.
- iii. Support for student assistants and/or fellows.
- iv. Space.
- v. Equipment.

#### b. Launch Plan

A careful launch plan is vital to the sustainability of the proposed CCI. Said plan should factor in the tapering of cost-share support and should include substantial time devoted to securing extramural funding in alignment with the CCI's proposed business plan.

#### c. Publicity

Successful CCIs are active in promotion, have a well-curated website, events with the goal of engaging target communities, and a well-formed communication plan. Work with Marketing and Communication as soon as the CCI is moving toward approval to secure logos, websites, and other marketing collateral.

d. Approval Timing

It should be noted that securing approval of a CCI takes considerable time, generally 4-9 months, due to the different levels of approval required. With this in mind, proposers should not wait for official approval to begin implementation of their external funding requests or meeting with future CCI members.

#### 4. Reporting

a. Annual Report

An annual report to the AVPR is due every September 30th. Criteria for reporting, including budget templates can be found here:

<https://www.sjsu.edu/research/about/cci/reporting-requirements/index.php>.

b. Seven-Year Report

A seven-year report is due to the responsible academic dean, who will review and submit the report to the Graduate Studies and Research (GS&R) Committee of the Academic Senate for further review. The aspects of the seven-year report are the same as the annual report but are inclusive to the entire time period.

#### 5. Closure/Sunsetting

CCIs are evaluated annually by the sponsoring dean and the AVPR. Additionally, every seven years there is a more in-depth evaluation conducted by the Curriculum and Research committee of the faculty senate. These reviews provide an opportunity to sunset CCIs.

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Questions prior to proposing a new CCI

When proposing a CCI, all of the following questions should be answered with a yes.

1. Does the proposed CCI strategically align with SJSU and the proposing college(s)?
2. Does the proposed CCI meet a need not already serviced by other entities, including other CCIs, within SJSU?
3. Does the proposed CCI mission/theme have a high enough concentration of expertise at SJSU to provide leadership and fulfill the aims of the proposed CCI?
4. Is the proposed CCI's business plan reasonable and realistic?
5. Is it reasonable to expect that the proposed CCI's will be fiscally solvent after the probationary period through external support (e.g. philanthropy or sponsored programs)?
6. Does the proposed CCI position SJSU in a vital or emerging field of inquiry?
7. Does the governance model of the proposed CCI encourage interdisciplinary participation?
8. Does the proposed CCI have adequate, committed internal support for the probationary period?
9. Does the proposed CCI have support from the leadership of the home college?