

**Guidelines for School of Public Health Centers**  
**Policy and Management Procedures**  
Reviewed and Revised 7/1/15

These “Policy and Management Procedures” were originally developed in 1998 and have been reviewed and revised periodically.

**Background**

UAB lists 89 active BOT-approved centers. Four of these centers are within the UAB School of Public Health. Two are endowed centers: the **Sparkman Center for Global Health (SCGH)** and the **Lister Hill Center for Health Policy (LHC)**. The **Deep South Center for Occupational Health and Safety (DSCOHS)** is funded by a NIOSH grant. The **Center for the Study of Community Health (CSCH)** is a CDC-funded Prevention Research Center.

Although these guidelines are intended to cover all School of Public Health Centers, they are especially applicable to the two endowed centers which are principally funded by intramural resources. The other two centers (CSCH and DSCOHS) are subject to the stipulations in the grant proposal and the rules and regulations of the granting agency providing the funding.

**Identification and Function of School of Public Health Centers**

Each Center should have a mission statement to explain what the Center is about, to stipulate its goals, and to indicate the overall direction of Center projects and activities. Based on the mission statement, objectives and goals should be identified and reviewed periodically depending on resources, opportunities and circumstances. The mission statement is essential and will be used in the evaluation of the appropriateness of the work done and as a reference to guide the administration of the Center and the Dean in funding decisions. Mission statements of Centers can be modified, but the process should involve considerable consultation, discussion, endorsement of the External Advisory Committee (see below) and ultimate approval by the Dean. If a major modification of the mission statement is recommended, it will be important to obtain, besides the approval of the Dean, the endorsement of appropriate university administrators and to publicize the change so that all of the School of Public Health faculty are aware of the change in focus of the center.

All of the Centers are based in the School of Public Health and not in a department. The School can also have involvement with University-wide Interdisciplinary Research Centers, such as the Center for the Study of Community Health, where two or more schools agree on having their faculty work in a collaborative manner according to the guidelines from the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development. It is possible for a Center to have special affiliation with a department whose faculty have primary interests corresponding to the major emphases of the Center. However, this should be a functional relationship and not an administrative one. The Center Director should make every effort possible to include faculty and students from throughout the School, assuming they fulfill the requirements for the program. Directors should be careful not to use funding from the Centers to support what should be a departmental responsibility.

All programs and projects of the Center should be in keeping with the mission statement for the center and the funding available. Each Center should provide to the Dean and the External Advisory Committee a list of programs and specific projects indicating the funding amount and source (including direct and in-kind), faculty personnel involved in the projects and their departmental or school affiliation. In addition, the Dean and the two advisory committees should receive annually a report of the activities of the previous year and the plans for the coming year. This annual report should be accompanied by the recommendations and suggestions of the two advisory committees for the Centers. It would be advisable to make the annual reports of the Center Directors available to the faculty by posting the documents and submitting copies to the Chair of the Faculty Assembly.

All programs and projects to be carried out by the Centers should have a specific and detailed budget which normally would include personnel expenses, supplies and materials, travel and any other spending essential to the implementation of the Center activity. The Director should present an annual budget for the various programs of the Center to the External Advisory Committee to provide them with the opportunity to evaluate its adequacy. This annual budget, with the description of the program and the comments of the External Advisory Committee, should be provided to the Dean at least one month before the end of the fiscal year for review and final approval.

It is recognized that opportunities may arise during the year to implement a major new project, requiring a substantial amount of funds. Such projects that have not been contemplated in the annual plan should be in keeping with the goals of the Center and important to the effectiveness of the overall program. To maintain the flexibility of the Center in responding to new opportunities, the Internal Advisory Committee (see below) should be called upon to review such projects and advise the Director on their value and suitability. The description of any new project, the budget, and the committee's comments would be submitted to the Dean for approval as an addendum to the annual budget of the Center.

### **Management of Centers**

The Dean of the School of Public Health has the responsibility to appoint/terminate Directors of endowed Centers and the other Centers supported by the School. Recruitment and appointment of a Center Director should involve the efforts of a search committee. It is recommended that the Faculty Affairs Committee review any faculty appointment as it does other faculty appointments. The performance and accomplishments of Center Directors should be reviewed at least every five years. The position of the Center Director is an administrative position.

The Director's faculty appointment resides in a specific department in the School where he or she is subject to the rules and regulations governing UAB faculty. Directors of Centers may also be appointed as chairs of departments provided that procedures and supervision are in place to insure appropriate allocation of funds to activities pertaining to each administrative position.

Center funds should only be used to implement approved Center programs that are budgeted for and in keeping with the mission of the Center. Directors should be sensitive to potential conflict of interest in having both administrative positions and document all financial and administrative decisions as Center Director and department chair. Center funds, like grant funds, should be used to support expenditures for

specific approved projects and are different from departmental funds which also include academic activities. The Director is expected to function like all other UAB faculty with respect to their teaching, research and service activities. The Director may seek extramural funding to conduct research, training or service activities in keeping with the mission of the Center and/or with his/her particular professional interests. Center funding should not be used to support the particular research interests of the Director, unless those interests are consistent with the mission of the Center and approved through the normal process.

Centers do not provide tenure-track appointments; these are reserved for primary appointments in the departments within the School. Centers may provide ad-hoc titles such as “Scholars” or “Senior Scientists” to describe faculty affiliation with the Center. These faculty members will have an academic appointment with a faculty rank in a specific department within the School of Public Health or other schools. To avoid long-term, recurring faculty salary expenditures, the Center Director could recruit faculty for the Center for varying periods of time, but typically at a graded or prorated level (i.e. 75, 50, 25% over a three-year period) where funds from other sources would take the place of Center salary support. Depending on circumstances and based on plans approved through the appropriate channels, this funding arrangement may vary. Staff would not be subject to these regulations and would be treated as any other staff appointments in the School. In all cases, hiring plans, salaries and source of funding should be discussed annually and agreed upon by the Director and the Dean.

The Director of the Center may appoint consultants and faculty to short-term assignments that do not constitute recurring expenses for the Center. Persons in these appointments would provide special expertise to an ongoing approved program of the Center or in the review of new projects. Center consultants should be paid from Center budgets.

External support is important to (1) expand the funding base of a Center, and (2) provide financial support for the particular research interests of the Center’s faculty. When extramural funds are involved, the distribution of indirect costs should be predetermined in such a way that the Center and the participating department or School receive an appropriate share of indirect costs. The Dean should be informed about cost-sharing arrangements and must approve and sign the application in the customary way.

When a Center decides to contribute funds to be used as salary for a faculty member engaged in a budgeted Center project in agreement with the Center’s mission, this arrangement should have been previously approved by the appropriate departmental chair and endorsed by the Dean.

When grants or other extramural funding are received and made available to replace school/state funds being used by the Center, the available funds could be shared with 50% being reassigned to the School and the balance placed in a quasi-endowment account for the Center. An arrangement like this between the Center Director and the Dean would insure equitable benefits to all parties concerned and avoid creating disincentives to such grant-seeking efforts on the part of the faculty.

Center faculty with the input and advice of the Internal and External Advisory Committees should solicit, review and develop annually specific programs/projects that are in keeping with the mission of the Center. As a School-wide resource, the process should be open to all faculty and students in the School, provided they fulfill the requirements stipulated for the program. Budgets for these projects should be developed by the Director, evaluated by the External Advisory Committee, and endorsed by the Dean.

## **Advisory Committees**

### External Advisory Committee (EAC)

A Center should have an External Advisory Committee (EAC) that provides an overview and deals with the Center's mission, proposed programs, budget and long-range planning. The committee should have no more than five members (three suggested by the Dean and two by the Director) who would meet at least annually to review accomplishments and budgets, suggest programs, discuss plans for the coming year, and participate in long-range strategic planning. Members could be national or international professionals, UAB faculty or any other expert in the disciplines encompassed by the Center. Because of their unbiased familiarity with the Center's programs, members of the EAC could also be spokespersons for the Center in their national or international projection. Minutes of the annual meeting should be kept, and recommendations and suggestions given to the Director and the Dean. Three-year staggered terms that could be extended for one additional term are recommended for the members of this committee.

### Internal Advisory Committee (IAC)

In order to facilitate the implementation of the Center's programs, an Internal Advisory Committee (IAC) is recommended. The IAC should be comprised of not more than five from the UAB faculty, state agencies or community representatives where the work is being done. This advisory working group is a technical/professional committee that not only would contribute its special expertise and knowledge in the development of approved center projects and evaluation of new projects, but could also facilitate the conduct and implementation of the work to be done in the university, the community, the state or internationally. The IAC should meet as frequently as necessary, but at least annually to draft an annual report for the Director, the EAC and the Dean. Two- or three-year staggered terms are also recommended.

### Annual Reports

Both the EAC and the IAC should provide the Director of the Center and the Dean with a report evaluating the work undertaken during the previous year in terms of achievement of the mission of the Center, possible impact in the field, and use of funding. The report should also contain suggestions and evaluations of the plan of activities for the coming year and the budgetary considerations. These two committees are advisory to the Director and the Dean, and their recommendations should be reviewed in depth and given serious consideration. This annual report should be completed and distributed at least one month before the end of the fiscal year to make it effective starting October 1st.

## **Endowments and other Sources of Funding**

Management of the income from the Center's endowment is the responsibility of the Director in consultation with the Dean. The University has fiscal procedures whereby a proportion of the annual income of the endowment is set aside to increase the corpus of the endowment to protect against inflation. The remainder of the endowment income should be used to fund the Center's programs. At the end of the year, unspent fund balances could be placed in a quasi-endowment account available for program activities in subsequent years with the approval of the Dean.

Besides funding from extramural sources, the Centers could receive matching funds from other institutions and agencies or in-kind support to conduct specific approved programs. Such contributions could be accepted as long as contingency plans have been formulated to compensate for these funds and support at the time that they are no longer available.

Agreements describing such arrangements should be signed by the Center Director and the departmental chair or the state agency involved and endorsed by the Dean.