During the fourth cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process, the Centers & Institutes’ individual self-studies raised several issues that have important implications for all Centers & Institutes, and which require action at the university level. These issues were discussed among the Centers & Institutes Advisory Board, the APRC Chair, the Associate Vice President and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The following are commitments and actions resulting from these discussions which address these issues affecting all Centers & Institutes. The Office of Academic Affairs and the Centers & Institutes Advisory Board has the primary responsibility for initiating the implementation of these commitments.

A. Structural and Organizational Issues

1. The University recognizes and supports the diverse missions of its Centers and Institutes. There will be varying expectations regarding the kinds of programming, the level of internal support and the terms of accountability depending upon what type the C/I is. Some C/Is perform an administrative function within a college and are more properly considered as offices within their college (see #5). Other C/Is primarily provide certificate or other fee generating programs (see #4). Some C/Is provide internal programming for faculty and students or in other ways support a college's academic programs. These C/Is will largely be supported by a college’s own resources. Finally other C/Is are involved in significant community partnerships in fulfillment of the University’s Vincentian Mission (see #2 and #13). There will also be some C/Is whose programming places them into two or more of these categories. Deans will develop in conversation with the C/Is under their jurisdiction an explicit understanding of the types within which their C/Is fall and of the specific mission of each C/I (see #6b).

1. Academic Affairs views each college as having a role and a responsibility in achieving the University’s Vincentian mission with its emphasis on social engagement and educational partnership with communities and community organizations. It is the dean’s responsibility to work with the C and Is under his or her jurisdiction to determine what role(s), if any, a given C and I should play in achieving this college-based actualization of the mission. We recognize that not every C and I will be involved with community partnerships and that a college’s primary ways of contributing to the Vincentian mission of social engagement and community partnerships may be through other means than the work of its C and Is. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will devote one meeting of the Deans’ Council annually to discussing progress among the colleges in contributing to the University’s Vincentian mission.

2. Academic Affairs will consult with the deans and with the directors of C and Is with extensive external financial support regarding the best ways of supporting adequate budget management and of providing for sufficient fiscal accountability. This is especially important in relation to large external grants. The EVP agrees to talk with OSPR and Susan Wallace about ways to ensure adequate support for Centers & Institutes in managing these financial affairs.

3. Prior to the annual budget process, the Executive Vice President, deans, and Centers/Institutes with responsibility for developing and delivering certificate or other fee-generating programs will establish new or reaffirm existing expectations for contributions margins. In consultation with their deans such C and Is will explore possibilities for collaboration with the Office of Continuing and Professional Education. OCPE could support some of these C and Is by providing centralized registration, tuition pricing and marketing services.
4. Some C & Is appear to be constituted to fulfill an administrative function of a college (e.g., SNL’s Collaboration Center, Commerce’s Driehaus Center). These programs should be reviewed with their academic units and not be considered C & Is for purposes of the APRC process.

5. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Advisory Board in consultation with the Deans’ Council will establish minimum policies for the maintenance and enhancement of quality among C and Is. The policies will be sufficiently flexible to accommodate the variability in mission and activity among the Centers & Institutes and will include, among other possibilities: a) a provision for incorporating C and Is in the University’s annual assessment process, with modifications to the assessment guidelines outlined by the Office for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment; b) a provision for an annual review by each dean of C and Is under his or her jurisdiction; c) an understanding of the minimal financial and resource support by a college necessary for the establishment or the continuance of a C or I; d) a provision for terms, performance review, and renewal of appointment of directors of C and Is; e) processes for determining contribution margins for C and Is involved in certificate and other fee-generating programs.

6. Academic Affairs and the Advisory Board will work with the Deans’ Council to articulate or clarify the conditions under which a new C or I would be created. Adequate funding, staffing, and a clear purpose would need to be considered in such a creation. Where certificates or course credit would be offered under DePaul’s name, the appropriate academic review process must be followed. Currently, all certificate programs do not undergo a review process similar to that used for the establishment of new courses.

7. The Advisory Board for Centers and Institutes will continue to function as the current By-Laws stipulate. Membership will be modified so that all colleges which have a C or I will be represented on the Board. The Board would hold an annual membership meeting including all C& Is and quarterly Board meetings to address general issues of interest to C & Is.

8. Academic Affairs will administer a seed fund which will be established by base-line University funds. While Academic Affairs also has matching funds designated for projects related to service learning/community partnerships (see item #14), this seed fund is a separate fund for C&I projects that don’t necessarily meet the criteria for the Steans Challenge. The fund will be used to support startup and expansion funds for new and existing C & Is who submit a proposal for such funds. The Advisory Board will establish guidelines for review of proposals and awarding of funds. The Advisory Board would also review and approve proposals. The EVP commits to continued base-funding, with the possibility of increase if the use of the fund is successful. The Advisory Board and Academic Affairs will investigate ways in which the fund can be partially self-replenishing. The Advisory Board and Academic Affairs will review the success of the initial seed fund in one year.

10. While there are no current plans to staff/re-staff OCP, that remains a possibility depending upon future circumstances and the emergence of felt needs that cannot be met more efficiently in other ways. The Associate Vice President’s office will reallocate some of its resources to provide some limited assistance to manage such functions as: a) preparation of materials, logistics, minutes and notices for the meetings of the Advisory Board, b) maintenance of the general C&I website (not individual websites for each C&I,) information gathering of activities of the C/Is, d) basic clerical and some research support for C/Is developing proposals to meet the Steans Challenge.

A. Challenges, Collaborations and Communication

1. There will be a yearly meeting of C and I directors and assistant directors with the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The purpose for the meeting will be
towfold: a) the meeting will provide an opportunity for the Centers & Institute directors to meet directly with the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs to share ideas, discuss challenges and opportunities, and explore the potential for how the C&I activities can achieve the University’s mission and to suggest new opportunities and challenges offered to C and Is in contributing to the mission; b) the meeting will provide C and Is with the opportunity to gain information about one another’s activities and to explore possibilities for collaboration.

2. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Advisory Board will encourage collaborations among C & Is. These collaborations will include both joint applications for external or internal funds and for joint service projects, co-sponsored events, etc. One way to accomplish this task will be the publication of a regular column in Academic Affairs Quarterly focusing on C and Is current projects and plans for future activity. Another suggestion is the creation and maintenance of a common calendar with dates of important events sponsored by individual C&Is, not only to avoid overlap and conflicting dates, but also to improve publicity and encourage participation.

3. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs will work with C & Is to educate about the Steans Challenge. C & Is will be invited to participate by developing programs that meet the criteria of the Steans Challenge. The Associate VP will arrange meetings between C & Is and Development and OSPR to pursue funding for these programs.

4. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will establish a fund to assist C/Is involved in carrying out the University’s Vincentian mission. This fund will match resources committed by the dean of the college in which the C/I is located in order to expand the work of the C/I. The purpose of this matching fund is to position C/Is to be competitive in securing external funding and not to provide additional base funding for C/Is. To be eligible for Academic Affairs matching funds the expanded program must meet all three criteria of the Steans Challenge, that is, it must a) provide a direct benefit to a community or a community organization, b) involve faculty and students in a learning experience, and c) work in some loosely coordinated fashion with the Steans Center for Community-based Service Learning. The Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs will work with the Advisory Board to develop further guidelines for the fair allocation of scarce resources.

A. Support Services

1. The Center and Institute directors note that obtaining adequate assistance from many of the University’s support service offices continues to be difficult. They note that these services are critical to the effective operation of the C&I activities, yet assistance from these offices is not offered in an effective way and sometimes not at all. The turn-over of staff in many of these offices is often a road-block to sustained improvement. This lack of adequate support has been a long-standing problem. Now that the program review process has produced evidence of the problems and suggestions for solutions, the C&I directors hope that collaborative action will change this situation. While recognizing that Academic Affairs does not have direct accountability for many support services which impact the functioning of C & Is, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs will work with the Advisory Board to clarify and further refine the following issues. The Associate Vice President will coordinate meetings between the Advisory Board and the key support offices involved with the issues below. The EVP suggested that the Advisory Board consult with the C&I directors about problems and meet quarterly with different University offices each quarter to go beyond episodic problem-solving towards a greater understanding of the issues and a more permanent solution.

   a. Human Resources. HR is primarily set up to support academic units and has difficulty with some of the unique hires that C & I require. Issues such as the need for quick hires, hiring persons with nontraditional backgrounds, the need for special marketing (other than online listings), and the need to get multiple signatures on PRBAs are common complaints of C & Is. Staff turnovers in HR
complicate relationships with C & Is because new staff are typically unfamiliar with the unique circumstances of C & Is. Having a specific HR staff person work with C & Is would provide continuity and encourage better working relationships. Rather than actual written signatures on PRBAs, might electronic approvals be used?

b. **Controller’s Office.** PeopleSoft has been less than efficient in the grant accounting area. Trouble spots include difficulties with staff/faculty being paid from multiple account lines, special one-time payments (consultants) in a timely manner, and annual audits for external funding sources. Purchasing rules which require the use of specific vendors, slow payment of bills, and restrictions on the use of the ProCard are additional issues which pose frequent problems for C & Is. The EVP suggested that this office and also OSPR hold regular workshops on how to negotiate these aspects of financial and grant management. These meetings would also ensure regular communication with these offices.

c. **OSPR and Development.** C & Is often feel they are low on the agenda of the two units who have jurisdiction over the solicitation of external funds. Staff turnover has further complicated the working relationship of OSPR and Development with C and Is. The Steans Challenge offers the possibility for better collaborations around seeking outside monies. Development, in particular, could assist C & Is with establishing advisory boards and with connecting with alumni. It is hoped that Goal III in a broader sense than represented by the Steans Challenge will become an ongoing priority of the Office of Development and that the office will allocate staff for this purpose.

d. **General Counsel.** C & Is often need assistance with contracts, leases, and liability issues that are not present in academic units. The General Counsel’s Office could also be helpful in C & Is establishing By-Laws which govern the roles and functions of Advisory Boards.

e. **Space Allocation Committee.** Flexible-use space is needed for C & Is that hold one-shot workshops/classes or that need space for an entire day’s conference. Such space is at a premium during weekdays when classes are scheduled. Housing for conferences, workshops and participants in longer term programs sponsored by C/Is is also a concern.

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A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of the Centers & Institutes Advisory Board

Chair of APRC

Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs

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*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.*