



Research and Service Organization (RSO) Guidelines

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I. PURPOSE AND DEFINITION

A Research and Service Organization (RSO) is an academic entity the University has established to provide a supportive infrastructure for activities complementary to the mission and goals of the University and of specific academic/administrative units. Functions of an RSO are to facilitate instructional and research collaborations, disseminate the results of research and scholarly and creative activities through conferences, meetings and other activities; strengthen graduate and undergraduate education by providing students with training opportunities and access to facilities; seek extramural support; and carry out university and public service programs related to the RSO's expertise. An RSO may not offer degree programs. The Associate Vice President for Research and Sponsored Programs (AVP for Research) maintains a directory of RSOs at the University.

The Administrator most directly overseeing the unit (Dean, Associate Vice President, or Vice President) are responsible for the operational and fiscal activities of RSOs under their jurisdiction. The overseeing administrator reviews all requests for the establishment of RSOs and submits the request to the AVP for Research for review and approval. The AVP for Research will forward his or her recommendation to the appropriate Vice President supervising the unit who then forwards - his or her recommendation to the President for final consideration of establishment of the RSO. The RSO policy is SF State's implementation of CSU Executive Order 751 on Centers, Institutes, and Similar Organizations. It is important to distinguish between formally established and approved RSOs and other units of less formal character. Other units such as special library collections, art galleries, museums, tutoring centers, departmental laboratories and special initiatives are not RSOs, unless they have been officially approved as such. In the solicitation of extramural funds for a project by a unit that has not been granted RSO status, care should be taken not to use terminology nor make presentations which suggest that the proposing unit is in fact a university-approved RSO or is about to become one. The designations enumerated in the following paragraphs shall only be used as formal labels for units that are designated RSOs. If a unit is likely to evolve into an RSO after a trial period of operation, the possibility should be mentioned at a suitable stage in the planning; in such a case, the designation Project or Initiative may be suitable.

RSOs normally carry the designation Institute, Laboratory, Station, or Center. An RSO that covers a broad area may in turn contain other more specialized units; for instance, an Institute may be comprised of several Centers, or a Station may be comprised of several Facilities. It is recognized that some established units have designations that do not conform to the definitions that follow (some Centers are rather like Institutes in their activities). However, insofar as possible, designations of new

units shall be taken from those defined below. If an informal group would like to take on a name that is reserved as one of the specialized designations below without formal request for RSO status (e.g., a request for a Center name), this request can be submitted to the appropriate Administrator overseeing the entity who then forwards the request to the AVP for Research. The AVP for Research submits the proposal to the appropriate Vice President supervising the unit for approval who will make a recommendation to the President, who has the ultimate supervising authority over all RSO activities on campus.

Institute: a major unit that coordinates and promotes faculty and student research and scholarly and creative activities on a continuing basis over an area so wide that it extends across department, school or college, and perhaps even beyond campus boundaries. The unit may also engage in public-service activities stemming from its activities, within the limits of its stated objectives.

Center: a unit, sometimes one of several forming an Institute, that furthers research, scholarly and creative activities, and public service in a designated field; or a unit primarily providing facilities and services for other units and departments.

Laboratory: a non-departmental organization that establishes and maintains facilities for research and scholarly and creative activities in several departments.

Station: a unit that provides physical facilities for interdepartmental research and scholarly and creative activities in a broad area, sometimes housing other units and serving several campuses.

There are programs and services on campus that use “Institute,” “Center,” “Laboratory,” or “Station” as labels but they are not considered university-approved RSO. RSOs that are university-approved RSO are those listed on the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs website.

II. - DIRECTORS, COMMITTEES, AND MEMBERSHIPS

A. Director

Each RSO will be headed by a Director. A selection committee will be appointed by the Administrator supervising the unit and the Administrator shall make the final recommendation for appointment to the AVP for Research who will forward the request to the supervising Vice President.

B. Advisory Committee (optional)

The Director may be advised and aided by a standing Advisory Committee (if any is created) to determine criteria for affiliation with the RSO, recommend changes in the units’ participants, advise the Director on major decisions affecting the unit, and critically evaluate the unit’s effectiveness on a continuing basis. The Chair of the Advisory Committee, and as many other participants as practical, should meet with the five-year and continuation review committees (see sections V and VI) and otherwise be available for consultation by five-year and continuation review committees during the course of their review.

C. Ownership of Activities and Program

If the university-approved RSO is supported by multiple funding sources (e.g., grants, campus, and auxiliary) and the funds are housed at the different units, the RSO Director is responsible that its operations follow and strictly comply with policies and procedures established by those units and the University (Fiscal Affairs, U-Corp, etc). This may include but not limited to following the unit and/or University’s guidelines for timely submission of transactions, getting the appropriate approvals needed for

requests, executing agreements, handling of cash/revenue (as appropriate), the use of funds are within the activities and programs' intended purposes, etc. Regardless of the source is that is used to support the university-approved RSO or which unit administers, the appropriate Administrator (Dean, Associate Vice President, or Vice President) still oversees the operational and fiscal activities of the RSO under their jurisdiction and is responsible for compensating the University for any overruns in RSO expenditures in a given year.

D. Membership

RSOs may have diverse types of affiliates. Some examples are given below:

1. Active SF State faculty (including adjunct professors); project researchers/scholars; faculty and academics from other universities, and federal laboratories who are active collaborators on RSO projects, or who are interested in the activities of the RSO, but who are not collaborating on the RSO's projects.
2. Industrial affiliates: companies with an interest in the RSO's activities. They may pay an annual fee and gain defined privileges.
3. Public Service Affiliates: government, non-government, non-profit organizations and community members who are interested in and supportive of the RSO's activities.

III. Procedure for Establishment

A. Proposal

At an early stage of development, proposed RSO core participants are encouraged to consult with department chairs and administrator overseeing the unit. In developing a proposal, potential RSO developers should address the following:

1. Goals and Objectives.
2. Proposed research, scholarly and creative activities, and public service activities.
3. Discussion of the added value and capabilities to be brought by the new RSO and an explanation of why they cannot be achieved within existing campus academic units.
4. Impact on existing academic programs and units.
5. Names of participants who have agreed in writing to participate in the RSO's activities; projected numbers of faculty, graduate students, professional appointees, and other personnel who will participate in the RSO's activities.
6. Resource needs and anticipated sources of funding with plans and time lines to achieve a level of self-support acceptable to the jurisdictional Administrator.
7. Immediate space needs and how they will be met for the first year, including anticipated building and room number if known; realistic projections for future space needs.
8. Proposed organizational location/reporting line, i.e. to what position will the director report for RSO-related questions and support?
9. Advisory Committee (optional)

B. Review Process

The proposal is submitted via the Department Chair or School/Program Director to the Administrator most directly affected by the proposed unit. After review and approval at these levels, the proposal is forwarded to AVP for Research for his or her review and approval. The AVP for Research will then

forward it to the supervising Vice President who will make a recommendation to the President, who has the ultimate authority to establish an RSO.

IV. Annual Report

By November 1 of each year, each RSO submits a report on the RSO's activities for the past fiscal year to the Administrator directly overseeing the unit. When the RSO has an Advisory Committee, its Chair is to be consulted in the preparation of the report. The report will include the following:

1. Brief summary of major activities during the past year.
2. Names, titles, and organizational affiliations of persons serving on the unit's advisory committee (or else N/A).
3. Names of faculty members actively engaged in the RSO's research and scholarly and creative activities or its supervision.
4. Names of undergraduate and graduate students and postdoctoral fellows directly contributing to the unit who are on the unit's payroll, participate through assistantships, fellowships, or traineeships, or are otherwise involved in the unit's work.
5. Extent of student and faculty participation from other CSU campuses or universities.
6. Extent of participation by industry, government and non-governmental organizations.
7. List of publications developed by the unit, including books, journal articles, and reports and reprints issued under its own covers, showing author and title.
8. Sources and amounts (on an annual basis) of income including contracts and grants, gifts, University support, service agreements, and income from sale of publications and other services.
9. Expenditures from all sources of support funds, distinguishing use of funds for administrative support, direct research, and other specified uses.
10. Description and amount of space currently occupied.
11. Any other information deemed relevant to documentation of a RSO's achievements.

Additionally, one of the responsibilities of the supervising Administrator is oversight of the RSOs' budgets, which entails compensating the University for any overruns in RSO expenditures in a given year. All RSO activities must carefully abide by University and/or Auxiliary fiscal policies.

Following the submission of the annual report, AVP for Research, the relevant Administrator directly overseeing the RSO, and the appropriate Vice President supervising the unit will determine whether the RSO Director should meet in person to review the report, the budget, regulatory, risk and liability issues, and to determine whether the RSO is functioning according to SF State and CSU Guidelines. It is recommended that any RSO with one or more of these characteristics undergo this expanded in-person review. Such an expanded review may involve Fiscal Affairs, ORSP, the Administrator directly supervising the unit and Risk Management meetings with the RSO Director.

- more than one funding stream
 - an external location
 - external partnerships
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- split accounts and employees between UCorp and SF State
- a retail activity;
- international involvements
- a recent change in leadership
- involvement with the mayor's or governor's offices

Recommendations will be provided in writing to the supervising Administrator and RSO Director for possible amendments to the annual report. The amended report will be forwarded to the supervising Vice President.

V. Five-Year Review

Each RSO is reviewed at intervals of five years or less, and no RSO may be continued without periodic review. The review considers the RSO's original goals, present functioning, future plans, and continuing development. The RSO is reviewed to ascertain whether it is functioning in a manner that justifies the space and support it receives. Its success in meeting previously established objectives and plans to meet new challenges also are examined. The effectiveness of the RSO Director likewise is reviewed at the same time as the RSO's.

A. Review Process.

The Administrator directly supervising the RSO coordinates all aspects of the review.

1. The RSO Director prepares a profile (see Appendix) covering the RSO's mission and history, resources, staff, research and scholarly and creative activities, and administration. After review by the Advisory Committee, the materials are forwarded to the Administrator directly supervising the RSO.
 2. The supervising Administrator appoints a review committee composed of three faculty members, two administrators and the AVP for Research.
 3. The review committee examines the materials provided to them about activities and accomplishments of the RSO, including annual reports covering the five-year period under review; interviews with the RSO Director, Advisory Committee members, associated faculty, the supervising Administrator, and other individuals deemed pertinent to the review, including non-SF State faculty and personnel; tours of the RSO's physical facilities; and submits a report of its findings to the supervising Administrator.
 4. The supervising Administrator meets with the RSO Director to discuss the report.
 5. The RSO Director prepares a written response to the review report after consulting with members of the RSO and the RSO Advisory Committee.
 6. The RSO Director and the supervising Administrator meet to discuss the report, the RSO Director's response and future plans for the RSO.
 7. The supervising Administrator sends the report along with his or her comments regarding continuation, directorship, and other review matters to the appropriate department chair if needed- and the RSO Director for consideration and written comment if warranted.
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8. The supervising Administrator sends his or her final recommendation to the AVP for Research for review and approval. In consultation with the jurisdictional Administrator, the supervising Vice President considers the comprehensive findings and recommends to the President to continue or disestablish the RSO. S/he also makes a recommendation for the retention/termination of the RSO Director.

B. Report of Five-Year Review and Committee

The report should speak to the positive as well as negative aspects of the committee's findings. Good work needs the reinforcement of recognition, but the committee may wish to recommend changes in organization and policy, or recommend disestablishment of the RSO if it no longer seems to be fulfilling the needs or if it seems unable to maintain an adequate level of activity.

Every effort should be made to coordinate the report with the academic program and/or accreditation review of the appropriate academic department, school or program.

Justification for continuation of a RSO must be documented carefully. The review committees should consider and make specific recommendations on the following range of alternatives to the status quo: a change in funding from state or University resources; a change in other resources (such as space, etc.); a change in the mission of the unit; a merger of the unit with one or more units on campus; discontinuance.

Directors of RSOs are normally appointed for five-year terms, the appointment period coinciding with the RSO's review period. Normally, directors are limited to ten years of continuous service. The review committee should look critically at the stewardship of the organization and comment on its quality. An evaluation will be completed before the committee makes a recommendation for reappointment or termination of the RSO Director.

In the five year review, the review committee should include any other suggestions for improvement in policy or activities. The review committee may, if it thinks appropriate, prepare a confidential statement to the jurisdictional Administrator. It may also provide the jurisdictional Administrator with confidential letters received from individuals during the review process.

C. Report of Ten-Year Review and Committee

The review processes are the same as those for 5-year reviews (follow the instructions for writing the five year report from Section B. Report of Five-Year Review and Committee

VI. Continuation Reviews (Beyond Ten Years)

If an RSO would like to extend beyond ten years, a short proposal should be prepared indicating need for support funds and space in the context of the University's needs and resources at the time. The RSO may continue beyond the continuation period with review by the AVP for Research, the Vice President supervising the unit, and approval of the President.

All RSOs must establish a rationale for continuance, in terms of scholarly or scientific merit, self-sufficiency and campus priorities, at 10-year intervals.

The continuation review processes are the same as those for 5-year reviews, and continuance proposals should incorporate items covered in five-year reviews.

VII. Procedure for Disestablishment

1. Five-year, ten-year, and continuation review committees recommend, among other things, continuation or disestablishment of the RSO. In addition, an ad hoc review committee or a RSO director with the concurrence of the RSO's advisory committee may recommend disestablishment.
2. A recommendation to disestablish receives careful review by the RSO director, RSO advisory committee (if any), department chairs, directors of other RSOs that would be affected by the disestablishment, relevant supervising Administrator and the AVP for Research.
3. After reviewing comments from all the committees and individuals listed on the Advisory Committee (if any) , and if the jurisdictional Administrator that disestablishment is the best course of action, then the jurisdictional Administrator recommend(s) such disestablishment to the AVP for Research who then forwards the request to the supervising Vice President. The Vice President then forwards their recommendations to the President.
4. The President issues a letter formally disestablishing the RSO.

VIII. Procedure for RSO Name Change

The request for a new name usually reflects new directions in the research or scholarly and creative activities, the expansion or addition of new knowledge or fields of research and scholarship to the RSO's mission, or the institutionalization of new methodologies of study.

Procedure for Name Change:

1. Director of RSO, after consulting with the RSO's advisory committee (if any), prepares a proposal describing the rationale for requesting a new name for the unit and submits the proposal to the jurisdictional Administrator. The jurisdictional Administrator submits the proposal for the name change to the AVP for Research for review and comment.
2. The AVP for Research and the Vice President supervising the unit review the request; and if approved, will forward the recommendation for the name change to the President for final approval.

IX. Other Considerations: Initiatives

Initiatives are small-scale, beginning affinities of faculty interested in working together. An Initiative may or may not plan to develop further, and does not require full RSO establishment review.

A potential Coordinator of an Initiative should write a one-page Memo to the cognizant supervising Administrator asking that a named Initiative be created, with current and future aims and requirements. -

Following supervising Administrator review, and if approved, the Initiative's information (including online presence/s) will be shared with AVP for Research, the supervising Vice President, the University Corporation (if relevant) and University Advancement. It may then begin its activities under the Initiative's name and Coordinator's direction. Similar to RSOs, the cognizant supervising Administrator is responsible for the Initiative's fiscal activities and they must adhere to campus fiscal policies.

