DRAFT
Faculty of Public Affairs
Research Centres
Benchmarking Project

Presented to the Organizational Excellence Steering Committee
May 16, 2018
Executive Summary

The Faculty of Public Affairs (FPA) Research Centres benchmarking committee has worked to gain a better understanding of the value of research centres in general, to assess the contribution of research centres to the FPA’s research endeavours, and to determine better ways to meet the specific needs the centres in the Faculty. The committee has devoted much of its time to the examination of the great work being done by research centres in the Faculty and to the challenges faced by those centres in doing research, delivering quality programs and events, and engaging with the community-at-large. We have also looked outside the Faculty and Carleton to seek out other modes of support for research centres as well as different ways of understanding the value these centres can bring to the Faculty and the University.

What we have learned is that PARCs conduct a wide variety of activities that require varying levels of support and oversight from the Faculty. The committee has also concluded that these centres provide value services and enhance the reputation of the Faculty and the University; however, there is the potential for these centres to do much more with the right types of supports. Putting in place these supports would not be cost prohibitive. Moreover we fell that these supports will have an immediate and positive affect on the capacity of centres to do great work, and will maximize the exposure of that work.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Re-classify Research Centres (RCs) in order to recognize the diversity of needs, goals, and resources in each of the centres and to create support structures that can help centres of any type thrive.

Recommendation 2: Provide dedicated and ongoing administrative support to RCs through the FPA, through a cost recovery model.

Recommendation 3: Address physical requirements of centres through co-location of centres.

Recommendation 4: Update FPA Research Centre Policy with clearer expectations on the mandate of RCs.

Recommendation 5: Enhance research culture and collaboration through RCs by better promoting the centres.
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Background

One way that research at Carleton is organized and promoted is through Research Centres, which bring together faculty across disciplines to work on research issues of common interest. Historically Organized Research Units (ORU) were managed at the unit level. In 2000 a report to then Vice President (Research and External) John ApSimon, *Building a Research-Intensive University- Report of Carleton University’s Task Force on Research* (2000) recommended that “a more uniform mode of governance on ORUs be established throughout the university, with ORUs responsible to Deans rather than departmental units, and that ORU Councils be established within each Faculty to oversee and coordinate ORU activities while preserving their diversity,” (2000: 3). A subsequent Vice President (Research and International) spearheaded the creation of Carleton University Research Centres in 2007, which included some of the former ORUs. Currently, research centres at Carleton fall into two broad categories: Carleton University Research Centres (CURCs) and Faculty Research Centres. While both advance scholarly activity through collaborative and/or interdisciplinary research, student engagement, research dissemination, knowledge mobilization and outreach, CURCs are administered by the VP Research and International and are comprised of members from multiple Faculties. Faculty Research Centres can be smaller than CURCs and are administered by the Faculty Dean’s office from which the members of the centre are drawn. Given that the Faculty of Public Affairs (FPA) provides resources to both Public Affairs Research Centres (PARCs) and some CURCs, the project committee has looked at all research centres associate with the FPA regardless of how they are categorized.

In 2013, the Faculty of Public Affairs launched a document titled Moving FPA Forward, outing their strategic directions for the next five years. Each FPA Associate Dean was tasked with establishing a committee to address one of the strategic directions. This benchmarking project grew out of the Associate Dean (Research & International)’s committee tasked with developing “a plan to ensure more effective promotion of research by FPA faculty and students and to build relationships between the Faculty, the public sector, civil society, and the wider community”, (Moving FPA Forward: Priorities and Directions for the Faculty of Public Affairs, 2013-2018, 2014:8). The research committee felt that research centres are one site where faculty come together to engage in research and promote their research. As well, civil society and community actors are often involved in research centres. Challenges with providing support and the sustainability of research centers had surfaced and the committee decided that approaching the Office of Quality Initiatives to support a benchmarking project to investigate research centers was the best way to achieve the committee’s goal as set out by Moving FPA Forward. This document is part of the research coming out of that strategic plan.

Benefits and Challenges of Research Centres

There is a sense among those that are associated with research centres (RCs) that RCs bring heightened prestige to the Faculty, university, and to the researchers involved.
RCs provide points of entry for outside agencies seeking appropriate expertise as well as a platform for informing broader publics in Public Affairs issues. These centres can also raise the international profile of the research occurring in the Faculty. RCs also present challenges in terms of how to demonstrate their contributions, financial management during the ups and downs of the research grant cycle, the need for succession planning. It was these challenges and the desire to identify the wider benefits of RCs that was the impetus behind this benchmarking project.

Current Support Framework
The Faculty of Public Affairs has a number of Public Affairs Research Centres (PARCs) for which it provides support; however, FPA also provide resources for certain CURCs that have strong connections with the Faculty. While support exists for creating partnerships in the community and attracting grant funding, Carleton does not take a shared-services approach to the maintenance of centres post-grant. Within FPA there are other research clusters that are not formalized as PARCs or CURCs. These were not included in this study.

Support for faculty to participate in the formation and the ongoing research of CURCs has historically come in the form of course release from OVPRI. Faculty involved in PARCs have not historically been given course release. FPA also provides office space in some cases when needed. Costs associate with RCs include office space, heat and light, services (business office, computer support) as well as faculty time in administration and oversight. While some RCs have ongoing administrative support, RC administrative staff are typically hired on a soft funded, casual basis (i.e. not permanent).

Objectives

1. Develop a better institutional understanding of the value/benefits RCs have for the research profile of both the Faculty of Public Affairs and Carleton, as well as an understanding of the costs associated.
2. Develop a framework for the support of PARCs within the Faculty of Public Affairs, which maximizes the ability of PARCS to achieve their stated goals (which may include research activities, reputational and outreach activities). Contrast this framework with other frameworks of support including, but not limited to, the support provided to CURCs.
3. Develop leading practices for the support and maintenance of PARCs by exploring how RCs are supported at similar universities.
4. Develop an evaluation framework and/or rubric for RCs to effectively measure achievement of objectives and value-added of RCs.

* In other Faculties, there are RCs that are not financially supported by the Faculty and are not CURCs. These were not included in this study.
Project Methodology

Team Membership

Team Leader: Karen Schwartz, Associate Dean, Faculty of Public Affairs

Team Members:
- Florence Dzierszinski, Director, Grants Facilitation and Major Projects (until March 2017)
- Sheryl Hamilton, Associate Professor, School of Journalism and Communication, and Department of Law and Legal Studies
- Sukeshi Kamra, Associate Professor, Department of English Language and Literature (until Dec 1, 2016)
- Kyla Reid, Research Facilitator, Faculty of Public Affairs
- Andrea Lawrance, Interim Director, Grants Facilitation and Major Projects (replacing Florence Dzierszinski)
- Blair Rutherford, Professor, Department of Sociology & Anthropology (replacing Sukeshi Kamra)
- Stephan Schott, Associate Professor, School of Public Policy & Administration

Benchmarking Facilitator: Terrence Odin, Senior Advisor (Quality Initiatives)

Research Strategy & Data Collection

Environmental Scan
The committee reviewed policies and procedures for each Faculty, annual reports of the FPA RCs, as well as analyzing the online profiles of each of the RCs.

Literature Review
There is not a great deal of literature related to the organization and functioning of research centres as opposed to the research outputs of centres. However, we did review 16 peer-reviewed journal articles from international sources including the United States, Australia, Spain, Sweden, Norway and Italy. They are listed in Appendix B - Bibliography.

Carleton Stakeholder Interviews
We began our internal stakeholder discussions with interviews of the directors of each of the FPA RCs. The following were available to speak with us:
The committee also completed interviews with current FPA Chairs/Directors (those not already interviewed as RC directors) as well as Associate Deans Research from the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Engineering and Design, Science, and Sprott.

External Research
Based on a review of external university website content, as well as our discussions with internal stakeholders, the committee reached out to three universities that we felt could inform our recommendations. Interviews were conducted with the Associate Deans Research in Faculty of Arts and Social Science at Simon Fraser University and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta, as these were institutions with which we had connections in Faculties comparable to FPA. Early on in our investigation, York

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Centre</th>
<th>Interviewee(s)</th>
<th>CURC or PARC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre for European Studies</td>
<td>Joan de Bardeleben and Achim Hurrelmann, Co-Directors</td>
<td>CURC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre on North American Politics and Society (CNAPS)</td>
<td>Laura MacDonald, Director</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Media and Transitional Societies</td>
<td>Allan Thompson, Director</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Urban Research and Education</td>
<td>Christopher Stoney, Director</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory Governance Initiative</td>
<td>Robert Slater, Executive Director</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Trade Policy and Law (CTPL)</td>
<td>Philip Rourke, Centre Director</td>
<td>CURC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Monetary and Financial Economics (CFME)</td>
<td>Christopher Worswick and Hashmat Khan, Co-directors</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Security, Intelligence and Defense Studies (CSIDS)</td>
<td>Andrea Charron, Director</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carleton Centre for Community Innovation (3CI)</td>
<td>Kate Ruff and Peter Andrée, Co-directors</td>
<td>CURC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Governance and Public Management</td>
<td>Leslie Pal and Piotr Dutkiewicz, Co-Directors</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Citizenship</td>
<td>Adje van de Sande, Director</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Initiative on Law, Culture and the Humanities</td>
<td>Sheryl Hamilton, Director</td>
<td>PARC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modern Turkish Studies</td>
<td>Dane Rowlands</td>
<td>PARC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carleton Sustainable Energy Research Centre (CSERC)</td>
<td>Stephan Schott, Former Co-Director</td>
<td>CURC</td>
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University was identified as an ideal comparator given its size and research profile.† York had also recently moved many of its Social Sciences RCs into a building with floors purpose-built for RCs. For this reason, we felt it would be instructive to visit York’s RC facility (see “External Research” below).

† See Appendix C for some selective comparative data on performance in the SSHRC partnership program. The partnership program was selected as it is the most closely aligned with the purposes of RCs to develop research collaboration and act as a conduit for external agencies interested in university research.
Internal Findings and Analysis

Website Review

As community outreach is a goal for RCs, we began our investigation by assessing the effectiveness of each RC’s online profile. To do this we first conducted simple Google searches for the name of center between January 1, 2012 and January 1, 2016. We then counted the number of distinct references, excluding any on carleton.ca domains, for each RC. We divided these links into 3 categories:

- News/External Websites
- Book references (this was the number times that books that referenced the RC were returned in the search)
- Biographical – In these places only the name of the centre only showed in the biographical information of its members (LinkedIn for example)

We were also able to determine the number of times pages on the home site of the centre was either “liked” (Facebook) or “shared” (LinkedIn) as well as the number of publications listed on Google Scholar that referenced the name of the centre. Where the centre had a Twitter account, we also made note of the number of tweets and followers.

What we found was that the online profile of the FPA RCs was not very high. The average number of total external page references was 45 over a four-year period; however, three RCs had 92, 110, and 224 references respectively. With these three outliers removed, the average for the remaining centres was 20 total page references and 16 news/external references. Google Scholar citations were also similarly distributed: the three outlier centres had 48, 47, and 79 citations respectively with the rest having an average of seven. We were only able to determine twitter accounts for three of the RCs, with one of these dormant since 2009.

Of note is the fact that those centres with dedicated administrators (3CI for example) had markedly better numbers than those that do not. This was particularly evident in the social media profiles of the FPA RCs. For example, two of the three centres that have Twitter accounts also have dedicated administrative support. The one centre of these three that does not currently have support did have an administrator up to 2009, which is roughly, when its Twitter account went dormant.

Literature Review

Most of the articles reviewed discussed the lack of a universal definition of an RC. Sabharwal and Hu propose the definition of a university RC as “a formal organizational entity within a university that exists chiefly to serve a research mission, is set apart from the departmental organization, and includes researchers from more than one department”, (2013, p. 1301). While the majority of the reviewed articles were
authored by Americans, where RCs receive significant targeted funding by the national funding organizations (Sabharwal & Hu, 2013; Boardman & Corley, 2008), some of the benefits and challenges of research centres that they identify are similar to the ones that we experience. The benefits include collaboration and networking, facilitation of multidisciplinary research, mentoring colleagues, community engagement including industry partnerships, and increased publication, (Sabharwal & Hu, 2013; Boardman & Corley, 2008), and ability to attract graduate students (Sabharwal & Hu, 2013). There is a growing trend to correlate increased research collaboration with increased research productivity (Landry, Traore & Godin, 1996; Lee & Bozeman, 2005). Yet, it is unclear whether the research collaboration necessarily and always results in increased research productivity (Abramo, D’Angelo, & Di Costa, 2009).

Some of the challenges to research collaborations noted in this review include competition between faculty for resources such as time, research support and infrastructure, (Sabharwal & Hu, 2013; Boardman & Corley, 2008) and a limited focus on basic research rather than more innovative applied research which limits industry partnerships (Saez, Marco & Arribas, 2002).

‡ One study found that tenured full-time faculty members benefit more than junior faculty from an affiliation with a research centre in terms of collaboration and productivity rates (Sabharwal & Hu, 2013) and another stated that this varies by discipline (Abramo, D’Angelo & Di Costa, 2009).
Internal Stakeholder Interviews

Research Centre Directors

Common Themes & Continuities
First, research centre directors often told a common origin story: many (but not all) of FPA’s RCs were founded after receiving large-scale, longer-term research grants or contracts. After the end of that core funding, these centres struggled to continue their work – some folded, some merged, others became defunct; many centre directors noted the importance of administrative flexibility to the inherent boom-bust cycle in research funding. To this end, many centre directors noted specific challenges of balancing growing the centre with the time required to successfully sustain the centre and its activities. This was true of both centres with grant-funded directors or staff and those run by faculty members. In the case of the former, centre directors noted the struggle between devoting time to growing the centre in competition with the time required to secure funding to maintain current levels of staffing. In a similar way, centre directors without grant-funded employees noted that they face limitations in their capacity to grow by the energy and enthusiasm of the faculty members who run them. Another common theme from centre directors was on the diversity of their activities. For example, one director noted that, they “don’t necessarily conduct research through the centre”, rather the centre is there to “bring people together, support students, and organize conferences.” In fact, almost every centre director noted that organizing events, workshops and conferences is a key aspect of their activities. Centre directors commonly noted challenges with organizing events on campus from using the systems, to cost, to organizing burden, to finding appropriate space/parking for visitors.

The second common theme we heard from Research Centre Directors is the role that RCs play in public outreach. Directors regularly pointed that there is an important role for research centres reaching out to government, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community organizations in Ottawa and beyond. One RC Director said that PARCs “are the public face of what we do.” In this way, they contribute to Carleton’s reputation and community engagement. This role seemed to be primarily focused around the more applied research that PARCs conduct (such as the collaborative research of the Carleton Centre for Community Innovation (3ci) and Centre for Studies in Poverty and Social Citizenship) and in the events that are often the core elements of RCs’ activities (such as with the Canadian Initiative in Law, Culture and Humanities and the Centre for Security, Intelligence and Defense Studies). Centre directors noted that there are often barriers in maximizing these partnerships, collaborations and outreach activities for the broadest impact due to lack of support for RC communications, such as for websites and social media.

A third common theme was the international activities or aspirations of many PARCs. Almost all centre directors noted that international visitors, collaborations, mobility, training programs tend to be a common feature of their existing activities or key future goals. In many cases, centre directors noted that these kinds of activities could be better
supported by the university in specific ways, such as through introducing *more flexibility* in developing international collaborations and giving centres the ability to appoint visitors (students and fellows) directly, as opposed to having to appoint through an academic unit.

Finally, centre directors noted that while they were always very appreciative of the support they did receive from the central administration, they regularly experienced challenges with *Finance* in particular. Two common concerns surround the time it takes to be reimbursed, especially the reputational risk when such a payment is for a non-Carleton collaborator or partner, and the lack of scalability in support in Research Accounting when you are awarded a large research project/contract/grant. Centre directors overall didn’t tend to complain about paying indirect costs, but rather about the value for money they received from those payments and the lack of transparency around when those funds go and how they are redistributed back to the RCs/departments.

**Discontinuities**

While diversity of centre activities was a common theme, it also points to a key discontinuity in what we heard from centre directors. Some centres seem to be very externally oriented (acting almost more like consultancies or professional training programs), others coordinate networks of academic and non-academic partners to shared goals (presenting issues for when the funding for these large initiatives dries up), others are driven by the passions of 1-2 core faculty members (raising issues for sustainability over time), and others are internally focused clusters of shared research interest amongst faculty members (with less need for external resources, beyond events). Any model for supporting RCs must take into account this shared, but wide, diversity.

A few centre directors noted the important role that *University Advancement* had played in their centre’s success and sustainability, including endowments that paid for core administrative staff for the centre. Other centre directors noted a desire to work more collaboratively with advancement to achieve their goals and financial sustainability, but a lack of clarity on where to start and how to get their centre’s activities on to the fundraising priorities of the university. Finally, other centre directors did not mention fundraising or endowments at all. It seems that developing closer working relationships between university advancement and centre directors might be worthwhile to increase awareness on both sides.

A surprising discontinuity in what we heard from centre directors was around *the role of students and emerging scholars* in the RC. In some cases, the mentoring and training of students (especially graduate students) and new faculty members (including their recruitment to Carleton) was a core aspect of the centre’s activities, but for others it is did not come up at all. Some centres are actively engaging with students and others are more focused on non-student activities such as external training courses and
consultancies. It is worth considering how all centres might be better able to engage students and emerging scholars in their work. Is there a way to encourage more regular inclusion of students into RCs’ work? What support could the Faculty/University provide to encourage this engagement?

**Chairs and Directors of FPA Academic Units**

Common Themes & Continuities
The first commonality amongst what Chairs and Directors of FPA Units told us was that the general view was that RCs should be *self-sufficient*. Overall, most Chairs and Directors were not in favour of RCs that required constant support from the university administration or home unit and were skeptical of calls that RCs should be used to reduce the teaching requirements for engaged faculty members. One department head went as far as to raise concerns that “there is enough centrifugal forces that can take away from a Department’s teaching demands and its own research mission.” Thus, a RC could amplify these centrifugal forces that take away from the core mission of the department.

Secondly, Chairs and Directors shared a view that in order to be successful, RCs should be linked to *more than one faculty member or more than one project*. One exemplary comment to this effect stated, RCs are “not a vehicle for highlighting individual work.” Another academic head phrased this more positively, “A successful one needs to have more than one person and engages in a series of ongoing activities and have several revenue sources, etc.” This was often explicitly linked to their above view on the self-sufficiency of RCs – “they do not succeed unless they have ongoing sources of revenue – and sometimes people lose interest in them, especially if funding runs out.”

A final commonality in the comments from Chairs and Directors was a series of shared, but unsolicited comments, about *indirect costs* and RCs. Again, the concerns around indirect costs were not that they were charged at all, but rather the *lack of transparency* that surrounds the transfer of these funds back to the department and/or RC. Heads of FPA academic units often remarked on the need for more clarity on how these indirect costs are generated and when they would be transferred to them to allow for more strategic use of these funds to support research within their units. One academic head noted, “it would be helpful to get an annual statement from Research Accounting that summarizes the unit/centre’s research projects, including how much indirect costs were paid, and how much will be returned to the unit/centre and when. This would facilitate planning and appropriate reinvestment of indirect costs.”

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5 It is important to note that according to Carleton University’s Indirect Costs Policy, in the case of CURCs a small portion of the indirect costs that are generated by the centre are directly transferred back to the research centre. In the case of PARCs, this portion should be transferred back to the home academic unit of the Principal Investigator (PI) of that project.
Discontinuities
Chairs and Directors that we spoke to in FPA were less consistent in their view on the strategic value of RCs. For some, they had a clear view of the strategic value of the RCs that were based in their units. Some unit heads noted that the overall academic mission of an academic department is broad, so RCs can play a role in that it “focuses outsiders to their expertise – so can focus as branding for the department.”

Another aspect of divergence in what we noted in what we heard from heads of academic units in FPA was surrounding the role of RCs in student recruitment and training. In some cases, academic heads noted the key role that RCs play in recruiting students and engaging them in research. For example, one academic head noted that connecting student recruitment to engagement with RCs and its activities has been a clear advantage for their department. Other Chairs and Directors did not mention student recruitment or training at all in our discussion of RCs. This points to some discontinuities in how RCs might be formally engaging with the graduate programs in their related units.
External Research

Interviews with Associate Deans Research (ADRs) Simon Fraser University (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) & University of Alberta (Faculty of Arts)

One of the important points from both interviews was that the management of RCs posed challenges for the Associate Deans from both universities, related to resourcing RCs, the definition of what constitutes an RC and the benefit to the university. In addition, two other issues identified were the proliferation of RCs and the different challenges of those created in a top-down (a RC established by the VPRI) vs. a bottom-up process (an RC started by a collection of faculty members). One university does not provide any resources for RCs; they are supported by endowments and external resources. The home department of the faculty involved in the centre provides office space. Centres are required to complete a review of their activities every five years. These reports are summarized by the ADR and submitted to the VPRI. If the RC does not document activity in the form of funded research and workshops or colloquia, they are closed.

The other university has created an organization responsible for RCs that is staffed by 1.5 personnel who coordinate RCs by assisting with communications, event management and human resources support. They are also responsible for standardization and ensuring compliance with university regulations. They organize the review of directors, which is similar to the call for and review of unit chairs.

Both universities had complex governance rules, review and reporting structures without necessarily providing resources. Some of these rules include a strict definition of what constitutes a research center and RCs must conform to that definition. One of the universities organizes a review committee made up of the ADR, a different RC director, faculty involved with RC and community members impacted by RC that write a report on the outputs of the RC. The director of the RC under review has the opportunity to respond to the report and then the decision is made whether to renew the RC. The Faculty organizes the review of RC directors, in a manner similar to the review of unit chairs.

Site Visit York University

While at York, we met with Dr. Celia Haig-Brown, Associate Vice-President Research and her staff as well as representatives from the following Organized Research Units (ORUs):

- City Institute
- The Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies
- Centre for Feminist Research
Kaneff Tower

All the above ORUs are located in the Kaneff Tower, which is a recently constructed building that devotes more than three of its ten floors to ORUs. The building is also home to York’s executive offices, including the President and the Vice-President Research. ORUs in the Kaneff building are typically given roughly a quarter of the office space on a particular floor and have access to a central common area that includes a kitchen and multi-use space that can be configured for event seating or as a dining area. The office space includes cubicle space for graduate students as well as some offices for the ORU director, visiting scholars etc.

According to Dr. Haig-Brown, the impetus behind dedicating space to ORUs was to encourage collaboration between the ORUs, and to increase their involvement with graduate students and the community at large. The Tower was built “as a place where research happens” for prospective faculty/students etc. Funding for the building came through general fundraising (i.e. not as part of a targeted campaign) and fits in to the strategic plan of the university to encourage research. That said, the heightened exposure of the units is used by York’s Advancement team to attract donors. ORUs are seen as important to the branding of the university as a research institution.

The effect the building has had on the individual ORUs has been positive. Directors remarked that prior to moving to Kanefl, they had limited connection with other ORUs and, even within their own ORU, there was a lack of coherence. The move to the building attracted more students to the units, partly because of the attractive facilities but also because for the focus on research and collaborative opportunities in the building. Colocation of the ORUs in the Tower was also seen a great benefit for the administrative staff. Prior to moving to Kaneff Tower, most administrators were isolated from their peers and lacked a support network of others who do similar work. Being in the same building means that these administrators can create a community of practice where they can share information, ideas, and best practices.

Organized Research Unit Structure at York

The units housed in the Kaneff Tower are all “institutional ORUs“ as opposed to faculty-based ORUs and are thus of a size and scope that warrants the high level of support they receive from the Vice-President Research & Innovation (VPRI). The VPRI identified supporting ORUs as an important means to raise the research profile of the university. The formation and maintenance of all ORUs at York is governed by York’s “Senate Policy on Organized Research Units”, which includes regular and specific reporting requirements and approval processes. All ORUs require approval from York’s Senate and must comply with the policy regardless of the level of support received. Key elements of these requirements are:

- Standardized annual report, which must be submitted to VPRI and Faculty Dean
• Attendance at annual meeting of ORU directors where annual reports are presented
• Formation of ORU requires the completion of a charter, which is subject to external review. Charters are for a fixed term of five years and must be approved by Senate.
• Directors must be hired through the use of a search committee that includes the VPRI
• A quality assurance framework that includes external review every charter renewal (i.e. every 5 years).

The office of the VPRI provides the space free of charge, course release for the RC Director, administrative support for the center as well as centralized administrative support to help with event planning, director searches, re-chartering process, and external reviews. ORUs are required to raise research funds and must document this in their five-year review documents. ORUs must demonstrate that they are doing research that references the centre (i.e. not just the researcher), which speaks to the importance the VPRI places on the visibility of the centre.
Recommendations

1. Re-classification of Research Centres

The committee found a wide variety of activities occurring in the various FPA RCs. Many function as consultancies, leveraging the expertise of the faculty members associated with the centre to provide services off-campus. Others devote much of their time to community outreach and partnerships. By simply calling all of these “research centres” the differences and diversity of the service offerings of these centres is somewhat obscured. Moreover, different centres need different supports based on their goals, priorities, and directions. Based on the support received, different levels of oversight and anticipated outcomes should be expected as well. Broadly speaking, all centres are engaged in the knowledge transfer of research done in the Faculty. What differs is the manner by which the transfer of knowledge is realised.

Our intent is not to create a hierarchy of centres or remove any support the PARCs currently receive. On the contrary, by recognizing the diversity of needs, goals, and resources in each of the centres we hope to create new support structures that can help centres of any type thrive.

Towards a typology of research centres in the FPA, the committee proposes the following designations:

- Research labs or clusters: Teams of students and professors working together on projects or related research.
- Think Tank: Frequent opinion contributions to outside community, based on research conducted by members of the think tank.
- Consultancy and technical assistance: Work on specific (related to applied or fundamental research) contracts in teams for direct remuneration.
- Research promotion, student experience and outreach: Research and research presentations that are closely linked to teaching objectives and commitments, outreach and exposure of Carleton University’s contributions and achievements.
- Predominantly teaching or professional development initiative: Creation and delivery of specialized professional development or training programmes.

This typology of centres could by used by the various RCs to frame their mandates, goals and activities. RCs then could be assessed (at the level that is appropriate based on the supports provided) against their own mandates, goals and activities to determine where the centre should be placed on a spectrum from “active” to “dormant”. A more nuanced classification/typology of RCs will allow RCs to be evaluated against their own goals and avoid the challenge of comparing apples to oranges.

Service Level Agreements

The committee also recognizes that even within this new typology there will be some deviation, with centres engaged in a combination of activities that may not fit neatly in
the categories we have determined. To address this, and to provide a heightened level of understanding between the Faculty and the PARCs, we propose that each centre enter into a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Dean of FPA. This SLA would document the Dean’s expectations with respect to the realization of the stated goals of the centre and detail the level of support that the centre could procure from the Faculty, and the anticipated outcomes that the RC will achieve over the support period. The SLA would be for a fixed amount of time (e.g. 3-5 years) with a scheduled review.
**Table 1: Proposed typology of RCs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Research centre</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Current RC that may fit in this category**</th>
<th>Anticipated outcomes from additional support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Labs or Clusters</td>
<td>Teams of students and professors working together on projects or related research.</td>
<td>Administrative support on a fee for service basis. Access to negotiated bridge funding. Access to co-location. Access to negotiated course release for PARC Director.</td>
<td>Service level agreement. Full reporting requirements.</td>
<td>CSPSC</td>
<td>Increased research funding Increased publications (including co-authorship) Active cohort of graduate students Increased requests for visiting scholars and fellows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Tank</td>
<td>Frequent opinion contributions to outside community.</td>
<td>Administrative support on a fee for service basis, if required. Access to negotiated bridge funding. Access to co-location.</td>
<td>Service level agreement. Full reporting requirements.</td>
<td>CSIDS</td>
<td>Website hits Strong (traditional and social) media presence Reference to the work of the researchers outside the academy Increased research funding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Note that the RCs listed here are for illustrative purposes only. Upon implementation, each RC would have to be consulted to determine how their mandate best overlaps with the proposed typology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Research centre</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Current RC that may fit in this category</th>
<th>Anticipated outcomes from additional support</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy/Technical Assistance</td>
<td>Work on specific contracts in teams for direct remuneration.</td>
<td>Administrative support on a fee for service basis, if required.</td>
<td>Service level agreement. Full reporting requirements.</td>
<td>CTPL</td>
<td>Increased revenue for services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Promotion, Student Experience &amp; Outreach</td>
<td>Research and research presentations that are closely linked to teaching objectives and commitments, outreach and exposure of Carleton University’s contributions and achievements.</td>
<td>Administrative support on a fee for service basis, if required. Access to negotiated bridge funding. Access to co-location. Access to negotiated course release for PARC Director.</td>
<td>Service level agreement. Full reporting requirements.</td>
<td>CSERC</td>
<td>Increased student satisfaction and engagement Increased reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching/Professional Development</td>
<td>Creation and delivery of specialized professional development or training programmes.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Service level agreement.</td>
<td>CMFE</td>
<td>Increased revenue and reputation Broader attention to centre members outside the academy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Provide dedicated and ongoing administrative support to RCs through the FPA

While some RCs generate enough revenue to hire administrative staff, many RCs do not. Given the precarious nature of RC revenue streams, even those who can hire administrative staff are at constant risk of losing their employees because of lack of funds. Without administrative staff, faculty find it difficult to devote time to maintaining websites and social media, engage the wider community in events etc., and manage the finances of the centre.

Administrative support needs to continue through the busts of funding as well as through the booms for the RCs to function. The FPA is not in a position to devote individual administrative support to each RC, but the committee proposes that it do the following:

- Deliver consistent basic administrative support to allow directors to concentrate on growth. The committee proposes that shared administrative personnel (e.g. a “PARC Coordinator”) be hired by the FPA to provide support for websites and social media, financial reporting and regular reports to the Dean, event planning and execution, and basic support for legal/HR issues. We propose that access to experienced, trained, professional staff be acquired on a fee-for-service model, where RCs would pay for the level of support they require. This should ensure that administrative staff have better access to benefits and resources. The committee understands the cost of this to the Faculty and suggests that a one or two-year pilot may be advisable.

- Allow access to bridge-funding that PARCs could use to cover costs when revenue is temporarily halted (e.g. in-between grant applications). This bridge funding could come from existing overheads that are currently within the control of the Faculty. The home unit may also have a role in providing bridge funding.

Each of these centres would then receive the level of support and reporting requirements commensurate with the work it does. For example, a consultancy, which requires no office space or ongoing administrative support, would not be required to provide the FPA with the same level of reporting as would a centre that receives pre and post-Award support from the Faculty on an ongoing basis. The supports available to each of the different types of centres would also be tailored to its activities. Many may need pre- and post-award support, while others may need more help with communications and event planning.
3. Address physical requirements of centres through co-location.

Office space is at a premium at the University as it is at most organizations. The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) operates on the basis that universities will provide space and administrative support to their researchers so the cost for space and administrative support is not an eligible expense that can be written into SSHRC grant applications. That said, the primary support provided to centres by the FPA comes in the form of dedicated office space for researchers, visiting scholars, and graduate students associated with RCs. Even with office space secured, many RCs feel isolated from both their home academic departments, other RCs, and even from other researchers in their RC because of the way space is allocated to them. In short, office space is difficult to obtain and, once obtained, may not be in an area most conducive to the work being done by the centre.

This committee is not advocating for a dedicated building for RCs similar to the Kaneff Building at York University. We do feel that co-locating a number of RCs in a central location does address some of the challenges faced by the RCs such as,

- Grouping clusters of similar RCs in a single area addresses some of the feelings of isolation from the research enterprise of the University. While we do not feel that we can address isolation from the RCs’ home departments, we do feel that we can create a space where RCs can at least interact with each other. This promotes transdisciplinary research collaboration and new network formation.
- Shared spaces can be created for common areas such as breakrooms, photocopiers etc. leading to a better use of the existing space.
4. Update FPA Research Centre Policy

FPA currently has a document entitled “Policies and Procedures for the Formation, Administration and Review of Public Affairs Research Centres (PARCs)” that serves to guide the operation of RCs within the Faculty. This document has guidelines on such practices as reporting to the Dean, how PARCs are to be established and governed, as well as the role of the FPA Research Committee in reviewing PARC activities. While these policies and procedures are for the most part sound, what we found is that policy compliance was uneven. For example, annual reports were not regularly submitted and, in the cases where they were submitted, the value of the report was not apparent to the RC. There was a feeling amongst some RCs that what was imposed by the policy was not proportionate to the level of support the RC received.

One important part of annual reports is to document the benefit of RCs to the institution and to aid in highlighting their accomplishments on the website.

We feel we have addressed the issue of Faculty support for RCs in recommendation 2, which should make the policy requirements more palatable for RCs going forward. That said, the committee feels that the following amendments to the policy will further improve the relationship between the RCs and the FPA:

- There needs to be a clear policy for establishing new RCs and closing dormant/defunct ones. One director termed dormant centres as “Zombies,” which continued to exist long after support for and interest in the centre had ended.

  Having clear guidelines on the closing of such centres would have two salutary effects: 1. setting limits around the lifespan of a centre would diminish any stigma around closing centres that is currently felt by directors of RCs; 2. aid in the FPA resource planning for RCs. In service of these limits, the FPA would require RCs to submit a priorities and directions document that covers a set period.

- The committee also recognizes that it might look strange to outside groups, potential students, and job applicants to see that a RC is temporary or being closed shortly after formation. It is not our intent to create policy that would force constant rebranding or turnover of RCs. The committee feels that maintaining continuity of viable RCs is important, within reasonable limits. Included in this policy should be support for the continuity of RCs, which would include but not be limited to encouraging succession planning for RC directors.

- Where possible, faculty should be encouraged to include the name of the RC (and Carleton University) and their role in that centre, in their publications. The MacOdrum Library currently provides advice on maximizing the impact of publication that would be helpful in this regard.
• Establish a framework for the reporting and disbursement of indirect costs to RCs and Departments. Currently, funding overheads are collected by Financial Accounting. To increase the transparency of these, what is needed is a clear breakdown on how indirect costs were generated and by whom, what disbursements are expected to be, and when these disbursements can be expected.
5. Enhance Research Culture & Collaboration through Research Centres

One of the goals of this project was to determine the value of PARCs to the research profile of the FPA and the University. What became clear in our investigation is that RCs serve as vital connective tissue linking Carleton faculty, independent researchers, visiting scholars, students, and the broader community together in the pursuit of shared goals. RCs also bring attention to the research interests and competencies of Carleton faculty in a very specific and nuanced way, giving the world a sense of the particular strengths of Carleton’s research profile. This is useful in creating partnerships across universities, particularly when approaching institutions abroad.

With these benefits clearly in mind, the committee recommends the following actions to further research culture and collaboration through RCs:

- Promote the RCs through the FPA website and by including them more prominently in FPA Research Month.
- Encourage PARCS to engage undergraduate students associated with their centre to apply for Carleton University Research Opportunity Program (CUROP) undergraduate research internships and IPAF 4900 opportunities to engage in research. This would also increase the student involvement in the RCs further deepening their connection to the University and to the community-at-large.
- Promote the creation of new RCs by identifying research clusters and actively encouraging researchers to form into groups. Within the FPA, the roles of Associate Dean (Research and International) and Research Facilitator would take the lead in this promotion.

Support the RC directorships by giving some form of time release for Faculty who accept a management role in an RC. Clear qualification criteria (e.g. length of appointment, scope of work, etc.) and expectations of the PARC (amount of research funding and publications generated) would need to be set for this. (We acknowledge that this contradicts what the Chairs and Directors specifically stated, but we hope that the addition of qualifications will ameliorate any negative reactions.)
Conclusion

The Faculty of Public Affairs Research Centres benchmarking committee is certain that the proposed recommendations will not only address the specific needs of the centres in the Faculty but will also enhance the research profile of the Faculty and Carleton as a whole. We were inspired by the work done by these centres with the minimal resources at their disposal. With further support and direction, we are convinced that PARCs will thrive and continue to do great work in the future.

The benchmarking committee is committed to working with the Faculty to put these recommendations in place. Once we have the approval of the Organizational Excellence Steering Committee, the next step will be to have a Faculty-wide consultation on the report. The report and the feedback will then be discussed with Associate Deans, and the Dean will assemble a response document that will be shared widely in FPA. Next steps on implementation will be identified in that document.
## Appendices

Appendix A – List of Public Affairs Research Centres (PARCs) and FPA-centred Carleton University Research Centres (CURCs)

**PARCS (Also Carleton University Research Centres)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Name</th>
<th>Dept/School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carleton Centre for Community Innovation (3CI)</td>
<td>SPPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Conflict Education and Research (CCER)</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for European Studies</td>
<td>EURUS &amp; Pol. Sci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Security and Defence Studies (CSDS)</td>
<td>NPSIA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Centre for Intelligence &amp; Security Studies (CCISS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carleton Sustainable Energy Research Centre (CSERC) (CRUISE merged with them)</td>
<td>SPPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carleton University Survey Centre (CUSC)</td>
<td>Journalism and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Trade Policy and Law (CTPL)</td>
<td>NPSIA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PARCS (Former Organized Research Units (ORUs))**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unit Name</th>
<th>Dept/School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Centre on North American Politics and Society (CNAPS)</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Governance and Public Management</td>
<td>SPPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Urban Research and Education</td>
<td>SPPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Citizenship</td>
<td>SSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Media and Transitional Societies</td>
<td>School of Journalism and Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Monetary and Financial Economics (CFME)</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Initiative on Law, Culture and the Humanities</td>
<td>Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre for Women in Politics and Public Leadership, Possibly Merging with a CURC-CREWW</td>
<td>SPPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regulatory Governance Initiative</td>
<td>SPPA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B - Bibliography


Reid, K. (2016) CARA CRM – Optimising Unit and Organisational Effectiveness, Outcome 1: Be Able to Contribute Towards Optimised Organisational Effectiveness, report produced for CARA.
Appendix C - Comparative Data on SSHRC Partnership Grant and Partnership Development Grants between Carleton and York Universities††

| Year     | Partnership Grants Carleton |  | Partnership Development Grant York |  |
|----------|-----------------------------|  | ----------------------------------|  |
|          | Awards (#) | Funding ($) | Grants (#) | Funding ($) | Grants (#) | Funding ($) |
| 2012-2013 | 0             | $0          | 3           | $8,045,621  | 1           | $199,946    | 2           | $397,171    |
| 2013-2014 | 0             | $0          | 1           | $2,547,130  | 2           | $301,006    | 2           | $313,396    |
| 2014-2015 | 1             | $2,395,742  | 2           | $4,548,054  | 1           | $194,635    | 3           | $584,918    |
| 2015-2016 | 1             | $2,500,000  | 1           | $2,496,912  | 2           | $342,876    | 3           | $573,391    |
| 2016-2017 | 1             | $2,499,963  | 1           | $2,500,000  | 2           | $342,094    | 0           | $0          |
| TOTALS   | 3             | $7,395,705  | 8           | $20,137,717 | 8           | $1,380,557  | 10          | $1,868,876  |

†† SSHRC Partnership Grant and Partnership Development Grant competition results are for comparisons between Carleton and York universities, as opposed to those for the Insight Grant and Insight Development Grant competitions, due to the role that external relationship building, collaborative research, and public outreach play in these Partnership opportunities. These aspects overlap more directly with the suggested benefits of research centres than Insight Grant and Insight Development Grant projects, which tend to be focused on a specific project led by an individual or a small team of scholars. In our experience, often RCs or organized research units can act as a catalyst and provide the initial administrative structure to support the development of and implementation of these partnership-type projects.