To: Research and Arts Committee (RAC)
From: Christopher J. Keane, Vice President for Research
       Daniel J. Bernardo, Provost
Date: October 30, 2017
Subject: Request for Center/Institute Interim Status

In June 2016, the WSU Office of the Provost and Office of Research awarded more than $29 million over five years to support multidisciplinary research projects and student success initiatives through a Strategic Reallocation program. The awards demonstrate WSU’s commitment to offer a transformative educational experience to undergraduate and graduate students and to accelerate the development of a preeminent research portfolio.

The four multidisciplinary research projects funded through this program are expected to advance multidisciplinary efforts that fall under WSU’s Grand Challenges research priorities including: 1. Sustaining Health, 2. Food-Energy-Water Nexus, 3. Advancing Opportunity and Equity and 4. Sustainable Resources.

These projects will stimulate enhanced federal research funding support, increase impactful publications, increase commercialization activities, and boost faculty recruitment. In addition to the goal of accelerating research in ground-breaking research areas, it is important for these projects to achieve a significant return on the investment (as research funding) that WSU has made in them. Although a moratorium was initially placed on these teams’ ability to apply for Faculty Senate-approved Center, Institute, or Laboratory (CIL) status, based on their first annual reports it is clear that the projects are moving in the right direction and have been successful in recruiting a number of eminent researchers into faculty positions. The teams also have started to submit large multidisciplinary grant proposals.

In order to continue this progress and to enhance their chances of receiving funding from center-type grant opportunities, the Office of the Provost and the Office of Research respectfully request the Faculty Senate, via the Research and Arts Committee, to grant interim CIL status immediately to these projects. The project leads have been planning to apply for “center” status; therefore, we request that an interim status be granted, subject to the following: (i) submission of the full proposal within 90 days of granting interim status; and (ii) an agreement to remain in close contact with the Research and Arts Committee chairs during the proposal process. To prepare for the interim status, the team lead will submit a one-page request with the proposed name for the unit, the contact information for the team/unit lead, and a summary of the progress for the project and rationale for initiative to
become a CIL to the Research and Arts Committee. The full proposal stage will proceed as typical, and the leadership team of each CIL will be expected to be responsive to all feedback and requests throughout the final CIL approval process. Furthermore, failure to submit a full proposal within 90 days or to be responsive to requests for further information in a reasonable time period (e.g., 30 days) during the full application process will result in the interim CIL status being revoked.

The success of this program is of paramount importance to WSU and to the Drive to 25 effort. This special accommodation is being requested based on the high-level vetting of the projects that has already taken place, and is not to be seen as a precedent. Interim status will allow the projects to use their CIL identification and be able to operate as a CIL for grant submission, F&A purposes, etc.

The Strategic Reallocation projects (https://research.wsu.edu/research-initiatives/strategic-reallocation-research-projects/) to which we would like to grant interim status are as follows:

1. Functional Genomics Initiative. Through gene-editing technology, this research can help cure genetic diseases, improve agricultural production and improve models for biomedical and life science research.

2. Research Collaborative for Addressing Health Disparities: A Multilevel Approach to Health Risks and Resilience. This collaborative creates community partnerships and researches the determinants of health disparities across biological, behavioral, family and community levels.

3. Maximizing the Potential for Green Stormwater Infrastructure to Save Energy and Provide Clean Water for People and the Fish They Eat. This initiative helps WSU become a global leader in "green" solutions; their research will help the threat to the health of our waterways and the food sources that live in them.

4. Nutritional Genomics and Smart Foods. Leveraging the Nutritional and Exercise and Physiology program within the Elson S. Floyd College of Medicine, this initiative focuses on identifying connections between modern agricultural innovations, food production and health outcomes.

In addition, the Voiland College of Chemical Engineering and Bioengineering was recently gifted a large endowment for a new research institute, the Alexandra Navrotsky Institute for Experimental Thermodynamics, which will serve as an aegis for thermodynamics research. Unfortunately, approval for this institute was not sought prior to its announcement. Due to the large amount of the gift and the necessary publicity regarding establishing the institute, the Office of Research and the Office of the Provost request the same interim status requested for the strategic reallocation projects. Specifically, interim status subject to the following: (i) submission of the full proposal within 90 days of granting interim status; and (ii) an agreement to remain in close contact with the Research and Arts Committee chairs during the proposal process. To prepare for the interim status, the team lead will submit a one-page request with the proposed name for the unit, the contact information for the team/unit lead, and a summary of the progress for the project and rationale for initiative to become an institute to the Research and Arts Committee. The full proposal stage will proceed as typical, and the leadership team will be expected to be responsive to all feedback and requests throughout the final CIL approval process, as noted above.

Finally, the CILs Task Force, a group currently reviewing processes for CILs to address potential changes, has been charged with establishing a formal process for granting interim status to CILs formed by extraordinary funding events. Until those processes are established and put in place, if any further CILs are to be considered as a candidate for interim status, the request will have to be initiated to the RAC by both the Vice President of Research and the Provost.