Requests for Community Center Process  
Date: April 2019  
Prepared for: Susie Brubaker-Cole, Vice-Provost of Student Affairs

**Charge from Vice Provost**

Stanford University has provided targeted resources in the form of community centers for historically underserved campus communities. Currently there are seven of these centers. Other student communities are seeking similar resources to support the vibrancy of their communities and help their members flourish.

This group is asked to advise the vice provost on the following matters:

1. In the context of the current centers, what criteria should be used to define and prioritize communities for receiving additional targeted resources from the university? In other words, who should be eligible for this support and to what degree?

2. Once identified, what resources should be considered to serve additional student communities? What might be the impacts on existing community centers if additional communities are provided targeted resources?

3. Some members of the overall Stanford community argue that creating additional community centers might fragment the student body in undesirable ways, and others suggest that new community centers would not address reality of “intersectional identities.” How should the university balance the tradeoffs between the potential benefits for students having their distinct new community centers and the potential risks to the overall campus community?

4. For communities that don’t meet the criteria for establishing additional centers to meet the needs they have articulated, what would be appropriate support to enhance their sense of belonging at Stanford?

**Process Overview**

**Advisory Group**
The Vice Provost of Student Affairs established a short-term advisory group to explore these issues and develop recommendations to respond to the charge. This advisory group included:

- anthony antonio, Associate Professor of Education  
- Peter Boennighausen, undergraduate student  
- Jennifer Calvert, Assistant Vice Provost for Strategy and Assessment  
- Anika Green, Assistant Vice Provost, Vice Provost of Graduate Education  
- Taylor Jones, graduate student, Chemistry  
- Paula Moya, Danily C. and Laura Louise Bell Professor of the Humanities and Professor, by courtesy, of Iberian and Latin American Cultures  
- Rob Reich, Professor of Political and, by courtesy, of Education  
- Diontrey Thompson, Interim Associate Dean, Residential Education
The group convened on June 7, 2018, for an initial meeting with Vice Provost Susie Brubaker-Cole and to develop a shared understanding of the problem. They focused on developing an understanding of requests for new centers, understanding the work of existing community centers, and understanding the array of resources needed to support student academic success through communities.

Understanding Current Requests
The advisory group was given access to the Long-Range Planning proposals that articulated requests or ideas for “community center” type needs. Campus groups that offered proposals included:

- Transfer students
- First-Generation & Low-Income students
- Abilities Hub (A-Hub)
- Military affiliated communities
- Center for African Studies
- Family Resource Center

In addition, the advisory group also interviewed persons and groups mentioned in recent Daily articles who were interested in having a center, including:

- Catholic community
- Mothers in the Academy
- Power to Act
- Disability Equity Now

Developing an Understanding of Current Centers
From June through December, 2018, the advisory group met with each group or individual who had requested a center in an effort to understand their needs and their requests more fully. In addition, the group met with each of the seven current community centers on campus to understand their history, their current role, and their issues and concerns.

Opening up the Conversation
While looking at currently articulated needs was important, the advisory group also wanted to ensure they opened up opportunities for the overall campus community to participate in the process. To this end, the advisory group:

- Held multiple open office hours in the fall and winter quarters.
- Met with ASSU executive team members multiple times
- Met with university leaders to develop a broader understanding of space on campus, including opportunities and constraints.

History of Centers on Campus
To better consider requests, the advisory group looked at the historical context of the establishment and purpose of the current community centers. Appendix A is a summary history of Stanford campus centers.
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Definitions
In working with the students requesting centers and the advisory board, it was important to develop working definitions for some of the core concepts. To see the group’s working definitions, see Appendix B.

Findings and Recommendations:

The advisory group responded to the Vice Provost’s charge and recommended a process that allows for the responsible stewardship of university resources to meet student needs. The process outlined below is designed to help students and their communities improve their ability to be successful at Stanford. This process is intended to address the differences for student support that are caused by historic, systemic, and real or perceived marginalization and oppression within the university.

Naming
The advisory group recommends a process that is broader than exclusively considering requests for community centers. Instead, it focuses on “Resources to Address Students’ Needs.” It is clear that there are a broad set of needs in the graduate and undergraduate student populations, and there must be a fair and transparent system to handle requests to meet these needs and apply resources effectively.

Governance
The advisory group recommends the following structure to govern the process for “Resources to Address Students’ Needs”:

- This process should reside in the Office of Student Affairs and within the Associate Vice Provost (AVP) for Inclusion, Community and Integrative Learning area. The AVP and staff should oversee this process.
- Under the AVP, a review panel that includes faculty, staff, and students should be created reflecting a balance of all parties, and with a designated staff member who is the convener and chair.
- All recommendations from the review panel should be brought to the AVP for Inclusion, Community, and Integrative learning, and shared with the Vice Provost of Student Affairs for their review, consideration, and decision.
- If an appeal or grievance is noted regarding a decision about a request, then the Vice Provost of Students Affairs, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, and Vice Provost for Graduate Education will review the appeal or grievance and communicate a final decision.

Proposal Submission Process
The advisory board recommends the following process for submission and review for requests for Resources to Address Students’ Needs. The process should be driven by students and executed in no more than 9-12 months, with a bias towards expediency to help address pressing student needs. The process should contain an ongoing and transparent way of communicating the status of requests and the expected timeline for a decision.
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We recommend the process begin at the start of the academic year 2019-20. Before the start of the academic year, the AVP and staff should identify proposal submission deadlines in autumn and spring quarters that are communicated broadly across campus and marketed on appropriate Stanford University websites.

Similarly, the process would open again at the start of the academic year 2020-21, including two proposal submission deadlines in autumn and spring quarters. After the second year, the process would begin a cycle of every two years (e.g., Academic Years 2023-24, 2025-26) for the foreseeable future.

In addition to the review process below, the university also will proactively examine data concerning student success across social identities to ensure early and timely response to emerging student needs.

We recommend working with a group of students and staff to create the submission portal and refine the outreach and submission process to ensure ongoing ease of use and continued relevance to students.

Process for Reviewing Requests

A. Information Gathering and Review

1. Submission of Request. The request should address the following questions:

   a. What are the student needs?
   b. How many students are impacted?
   c. How is this need impacting these students’ abilities to achieve their education at the university?
   d. What cultural, national, and/or international factors are influencing the need at this time?
   e. Is this a material need (physical materials and/or a need that has emerged from ongoing or historical marginalization), or an ideological difference (differences of ideas, thoughts, opinions, beliefs, or ideologies)?
   f. How much student support is there for addressing these needs?
   g. Any supporting data and/or recommendations of data you believe the university should look at to more fully understand the request.

2. Review of Request: Determining Need. After the materials have been submitted, a member of the review group should meet with the requesters to more fully understand the request.

   a. Are students’ educational goals being hindered by this need? What is happening that is impacting students’ abilities to achieve? The request must be rooted in the educational mission of the university.

   b. What data supports the articulation of the need? The review committee will need to work with the requesting group and institutional Research and Decision Support to gather the relevant data. Examples of supporting data could include:

      i. GPA
      ii. Sense of belonging (survey)
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iii. Campus climate (survey)
iv. Range or presence of academic majors
v. Faculty engagement (Are faculty engaged with this population?)
vi. Staff engagement (Are staff engaged with this population?)
vii. Level of representation on campus or in activities
viii. Mental health and wellbeing (CAPS)

c. How much student support is there for the request?
d. What is the number of students impacted?
e. What cultural/global factors influence the need?
f. Is there historic and/or systemic marginalization and oppression?
g. Is it a material or an ideological difference?
h. Is this a need that students are unable to address on their own? Does it require institutional intervention?
i. If the requesters have submitted a Long Range Planning Proposal, please attach.

3. Identification and Review of Existing Resources

a. Identify what are the existing university or campus resources and how might they be used to meet the need.

b. Request specific information from existing resources (e.g., department, office, or volunteer student organization) regarding how they might meet the need. (This information would be confidential.)

c. Evaluate what is not met by the existing resources and determine nature and extent of the gap.

d. Determine whether or how a new community center would work with existing resources to meet the need not addressed by existing resources.

4. Review Panel Decision.

a. At the end of the review process, the review panel will either “Accept” or “Reject” each proposed request. A panel member will meet with each group to provide feedback after a determination has been made on the request. A decision to reject will not preclude a group from submitting another request in subsequent cycles.

b. If a proposal is rejected, the requesting group can ask to appeal the decision. The appeal process is initiated only when the requesting group has identified and provided new pertinent information that was not available at the time of the review process, or is able to specifically identify bias in the review process itself.
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B. Allocation

The review panel will review the approved request to determine the most appropriate levels and kinds of support to ensure targeted resources are available to communities in need. The following areas of resource allocations are suggested for consideration to meet the approved request.

1. Resources
   a. Funding
   b. Information
   c. Access to people (e.g., faculty, staff, administrators, on-campus and off-campus)
   d. Access to programs and services

2. Dedicated space
   a. Designed with messages
   b. Ongoing and convenient access to appropriate shared space for the community
   c. A designated place for the community to gather and call “home”

3. Office and staff support
   a. Staff support for continuity
   b. Advocacy for the community and its issues and needs
   c. Access to administrative knowledge and issue expertise

4. Centers
   a. Resource Centers (e.g., Q Spot, Markaz, Women’s Center, Bechtel, OMAC)
   b. Community Centers (e.g., ethnic centers, women’s center)
   c. Targeted resources to better achieve equity on campus
      i. Staff
      ii. Focused outside resources: CAPS, BEAM, tutors, etc
      iii. Alumni networks
      iv. Affiliated Volunteer Student Organizations

C. Prioritization

The review panel will determine a priority order for meeting the approved requests for groups’ needs to appropriately and effectively allocate resources. The university’s primary educational mission should be foremost in this consideration by assessing which groups might be “most at risk” and need greater assistance to ensure educational success as Stanford students.

The criteria for determining priorities will include the following factors for the anticipated level of impact and student need, using baseline data and success indicators provided by the requesters noted above:

a. GPA
b. Sense of belonging (survey)
c. Campus climate (survey)
d. Range or presence of academic majors
e. Faculty engagement (Are faculty engaged with this population?)
f. Staff engagement (Are staff engaged with this population?)
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g. Level of representation on campus or in activities
h. Mental health and wellbeing (CAPS)

Summary
We believe these recommendations both answer the Vice Provost’s charge and create a robust framework to evaluate student driven requests for centers and resources to address students’ needs.

However, we also recognize that broader and ongoing divisional and institutional conversation is required to resolve the systemic obstacles and structural opposition regarding the issues of equity for inclusion, sense of community, and belonging on our campus so that all our students can achieve their educational potential, utilize the full resources of the university, and ensure that Stanford is a welcoming home to all members of our campus community.
Appendix A: History of Current Community Centers

Black Community Services Center (BCSC/The Black House), est. 1969

Four days after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in 1968, Stanford University cancelled classes and sponsored a university-wide convocation entitled “Colloquium and Plan for Action: Stanford’s Response to White Racism”. During comments from the provost, approximately 70 Black students from the Black Student Union stood up and walked on stage and took the microphone. Once with the microphone, they issued ten demands to the university concerning its responsibility to its Black students and other minorities. As a result, the Black Student Volunteer Center was established in 1969 with a focus on community service and outreach programs to East Palo Alto, then a predominately Black community near the university.

In 1972, the center changed its name to the Black Activities Center (BAC) and continued to serve as a hub of community service and political activity. During the early seventies, several Black Voluntary Student Organizations (BVSOs) were created to meet the needs of the ever-changing Black population. Many of these new organizations focused on pre-professional advising and interests, such as law, business, medicine and engineering. With this growth, the BAC professional staff broadened the center's scope to include student organizational development and leadership training. In 1979, the Black Activities Center was renamed the Black Community Services Center (BCSC).

Asian American Activities Center (A3C), est. 1972

The Asian American Activities Center has a long history at Stanford as a student-initiated space that has transformed over the years to meet the evolving needs of the Stanford student body. The first iteration of the center, the Asian American Resource Center, began in 1972 after a group of students involved in the newly formed Asian American Students Alliance (AASA) advocated for and received office space in the Old Fire House. For the first decade of its existence, the center was staffed entirely by five student volunteer interns. In 1977, the name of the center was changed to the Asian American Activities Center.

In 1987, the Dean of Students approved funding for a half-time director/dean position in response to a set of demands proposed by the Rainbow Agenda (including students from AASA, MECHA, SAIO, and BSU). In 1989, the Dean of Student Affairs formally institutionalized the ASC by hiring Richard Yuen as the first full-time director.

Queer Student Resources, est. 1972

The QSR began in 1972 as the Gay People's Union, but changed to its name in 1999 to be more inclusive to community members of different identities. The Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Community Center was renamed as the LGBT Community Resources Center in 2000. In 2011 the LGBT-CRC and Vaden Health Center founded the Weiland Health Initiative, supported by a gift from alumnus Ric Weiland. The Initiative promotes mental health and wellness across the spectrum of gender identities and sexual orientations through education, training and clinical services at Stanford and beyond. In 2017, the LGBT Community Resources Center was renamed Queer Student Resources. Also in 2017 was the launch of
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Gender-Inclusive Stanford, a campus-wide effort to make Stanford a place where students of all genders and sexualities can flourish, focusing on institutional/culture change in the areas of teaching and learning, information infrastructure, enhanced health and wellness resources and the built environment.

Native American Cultural Center (NACC), est. 1974

Native American roots at Stanford date back earlier than the university itself, which was built on land originally inhabited by the Muwekma Ohlone Tribe. Three years later after the opening of the university, John Milton Oskison was the first Native American to graduate from Stanford. Fueled by the spirit of social and political change during the 1960s, a group of Native students worked with the university administration to increase educational opportunities for Natives. Since then, the number of Native community members has increased, and students have continued to take an active role in increasing opportunities for this community at Stanford. Today, Stanford has more than 350 undergraduate and graduate students representing more than 50 tribes.

This is a community both of similarities and differences. Over the years, the Native American community at Stanford has brought together people from a wide range of affiliations and hundreds of different tribal backgrounds—all with different talents, perspectives, and experiences. Once here, students explore different interests, become involved in a range of activities and participate in the community in many important ways. In our diversity we find strength as each individual brings a new gift, talent or perspective to the group. Though we may be very different in terms of background, viewpoint or level of involvement, each of us makes up a part of the whole that is our community.

External funding for Native American programming, staffing, and facilities was received from Educational Foundation of America in 1971. "Tecumseh House" on Alvarado Row became the first headquarters for the Stanford American Indian Organization. In 1974, the Native American Cultural Center was opened at the Clubhouse in the Old Union complex.

El Centro Chicano y Latino (El Centro), est. 1978

As the Chicano and Latino student population at Stanford University grew throughout the 1970s, so did the activities and organizations of this community and the need for a cultural center became apparent. In May 1977 the Chicano Cultural Center Committee, composed of faculty, staff and students, proposed that the university provide MECHA and its offspring organizations with a facility that would accommodate a cultural and activities center. The university accepted the proposal and allocated funds to renovate the basement of the Nitery, which already housed the Chicano Fellows Program. The center was named "El Centro Chicano de Estanford" at a community meeting and opened its doors to students in late 1978.

During El Centro’s early years, part-time student staff provided the administrative support. This was followed by the hiring of half-time assistant deans of students/directors. After a decade of student effort to convince the university of the need for full-time professional staff, Dr. Frances Morales started her position as El Centro's first full-time director and assistant dean of students in December 1989.
Since its establishment, El Centro Chicano y Latino has been an integral part of countless students' Stanford experience. Stanford's Chicano/Latino community reflects the diversity of a population that is rapidly becoming the second largest in the United States. As a campus center of activity for this community, El Centro Chicano y Latino provides a home away from home that fosters student personal success.

**Women's Community Center (WCC), est. 1991**

The history of the Women's Community Center can be traced to the 1970s when a group of Stanford women started holding regular meetings to discuss common challenges of being women students in a male-dominated academic setting. As this group grew, they named themselves the Women's Collective and advocated for meeting space at the Toyon eating clubs. These women worked together to advocate for a more equitable educational experience for women students and to address issues that include sexual harassment, pay equity, and discrimination in the classroom.

In the 1980s the group successfully appealed to the university for a half-time graduate student coordinator position to assist with providing programs and services to the greater campus community. In 1991, the group was allocated space in the Old Fire House and was renamed the Women's Center. The center obtained additional funding that allowed for the creation of a full-time director position as well as the addition of seven student staff members.

As the result of more recent efforts to develop quality programs and services for women students at Stanford, the center now employs two full-time professional staff members, three graduate student coordinators, and eleven undergraduate student program coordinators. The Women's Community Center is now a university department under the Division of Student Affairs. The Women's Collective is currently known as the Women's Coalition and serves as an umbrella organization for other Women's Voluntary Student Organizations (WVSOs).

**The Markaz Muslim Resource Center, est. 2013**

Stanford announced plans in May 2013 to establish The Markaz: Resource Center for Engagement with the Cultures and Peoples of the Muslim World. The Markaz is located in the Nitery Building of the Old Union. The creation of the center is a result of advocacy over the years by faculty, staff, and students. The Markaz seeks to accommodate personal, institutional and educational needs of the campus community by promoting and enhancing cultural diversity, and it serves as a safe space for a whole community of students on the Stanford campus.

The Markaz, whose name comes from the Arabic, Farsi, Hebrew, Turkish, and Urdu word for "center," is unique in its cultural focus and goal. It serves the community that identifies with or has an interest, culturally, scholarly, or otherwise, in Islamic culture, the Muslim world, global Muslim communities and non-Muslim minorities within the Muslim world, as well as the American Muslim experience.

The organized Muslim community at Stanford has a history that dates back to the 1950s when the first Islamic Society at Stanford University (ISSU) was formed to promote cultural and social events for its members. In the 1990s a wave of second-generation Muslim students entered the university and
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expanded the focus of the organization. To fulfill their goals, a host of new organizations grew out of the ISSU in the mid 90s including the Muslim Student Awareness Network, the Turkish Student Association, and Pakistanis at Stanford, among many others. Through this decade, the organizations have continued to grow and have strengthened their presence on campus to accommodate the increased interest in the Muslim world and the growing constituencies.

The Markaz serves as an entry point for students who want to get more information about opportunities to engage outside the classroom with the cultures, faiths and peoples of this vast region. The resource center facilitates dialogue and discussion around the critical social and political issues that have been at the forefront of the national conversation since 9/11.
Appendix B: Working Definitions

**Belonging.** Belonging is a student’s experiences and perceptions of mattering and feeling “seen” and a part of the larger system, in this case, Stanford.

**Center.** A collection of resources, space, and staff created for students to provide targeted resources and support to bridge the gap of material differences to ensure equitable access to a rich and meaningful education.

**Community.** While belonging considers individuals’ sense of connection to and personal identification with the whole, community refers to the important educational and collective benefits that derive from the individual’s participation and belief in something larger than themselves.

**Equity.** Regardless of their personal history or social identity, everyone participating in the institution has fair access to the same opportunities and resources offered by the system.

**Ideological Differences.** Differences of ideas, thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and ideologies.

**Inclusion.** The action or state of including or being included within a group or structure with minimal barriers, and the opportunity to contribute fully to the institution and to those around them.

**Material differences.** Differences that are measurable or difficult to overcome. There are two forms of material differences for the purposes of this process. The first is the physical material differences such as access to resources, materials, opportunities, and courses, and the ability to participate in the educational process regardless of financial means. The second is the material difference that emerges from systemic and/or historical oppression that has created an unequal educational environment, typically based on social identity.

**Office.** A physical location with dedicated staffing and financial resources.

**Resources.** Tools that assist with navigating or participating in systems. For example, information, money, and access to spaces and key people, and knowledge of opportunities were often described as resources that assisted students or communities to meet their needs.

**Space.** Physical space in buildings that is free, available, or unoccupied.