

Expectations for the Discovery Learning Center

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Preamble

As described in the April 1998 Program plan, the Discovery Learning Center (DLC) partners with the Integrated Teaching and Learning Laboratory (ITLL) in stimulating interdisciplinary, team-based, and hands-on learning. While the ITLL is focused on undergraduate curricula and K-12 outreach, the DLC extends this paradigm to include researched-based learning, graduate as well as undergraduate students, and industry partners. Discovery learning occurs through research, design projects, leadership and service. The DLC provides a forum for college outreach to the community and industry, and inreach to other university programs, and it uses modern technologies in research and education. Thus, the DLC merges the teaching, research and service missions of the College. In short, the DLC facilitates vertically integrated (teams of undergraduates, graduate students, faculty, and industry partners) and horizontally integrated (multidisciplinary teams) learning through research and other discovery-learning processes leading to knowledge generation and integration.

Criteria

As updated from a June 1999 memo to potential DLC occupants, the criteria and metrics by which existing and proposed tenants and activities in the DLC are evaluated include

1. *Is the activity of recognized high quality and productivity?*
 - Faculty, student or program awards
 - Numbers of peer-reviewed publications appeared and submitted
 - Annual expenditures from external funding
 - Technologies developed and/or used
2. *Is the activity vertically integrated?*
 - Number of undergraduate students involved
 - Number of graduate students involved
 - Number of faculty involved
 - Numbers of peer-reviewed publications appeared and submitted with student co-authors
 - Number of conference presentations with student co-authors
3. *Is the activity horizontally integrated?*
 - Number of departments involved
 - Number of peer-reviewed publications with authors from more than one department

4. *Is outreach included in the activity?*

- Number of companies involved
- Annual amount of support provided by companies
- Number and duration of K-12 or community outreach programs
- Attendance for the outreach programs

Reports and Review

Each DLC tenant will provide a yearly report to the Dean, due August 15 and covering the prior fiscal year. It should be 2-3 pages and include a brief narrative describing the activity and accomplishments in light of the criteria above plus quantitative data for the metrics listed under each criterion. These data should be for the fiscal year just completed. Student data should be provided on a semester basis (fall/spring/summer). The yearly reports will be used for assessment purposes and also to provide summary data on DLC usage for the College's annual report and to supporters.

A faculty oversight group will review the yearly reports, extract and disseminate best practices, and note deficiencies. Occupants whose performance is judged deficient will develop an action plan for the subsequent year. Deficient performance, especially two years in a row, may lead to a recommendation for the tenant to vacate the DLC. Every five years, a comprehensive review will be performed and tenants will reapply for DLC space.

Application Process

Applications (and reapplications) for DLC space will be solicited by the Dean's office and should include

1. A title for the laboratory and a listing of the involved faculty and their departments.
2. A narrative statement (1-2 pages) summarizing the proposed activity and addressing the four criteria listed above. Include estimates of the numbers of graduate and undergraduate students who will participate and of the annual external support that is already committed.
3. A description of the space requirements, including approximate square footage, layout requirements (offices, dry labs, wet labs, etc.), and analysis of any remodeling needs and cost estimates for remodeling. Also describe the space to be vacated, if any, in the main Engineering Center.