



October 18, 2023

MEMORANDUM

To: Council on Academic Affairs (CAA)
Associate Professor Fabio Leite, 2023-2024 Chair
Professor W. Randy Smith, Vice Chair

From: CAA Subcommittee C
Associate Clinical Professor, Tara Spalla King
Professor Barry Lyons
Mr. Peter Spreitzer, Director University Exploration
Ms. Carrie Anne Thomas, Graduate Student Council

Re: Review and Recommendation for the Fisher College of Business: Center for Innovation Strategies (CIS)

The 2022-2023 Subcommittee C of CAA shares this report on the CIS.

Review Process

Our process was guided by [OSU Faculty Rule 3334-3-36 Centers and Institutes, Review of University Centers](#), and is outlined below.

- **The self-study report** addressing the five required components was prepared by Paul Reeder, Executive Director CIS, Jennifer Heckschner, Director of Operations and Planning CIS, and shared with Associate Clinical Professor King and Subcommittee C in June 2023.
- **The first interview** was held via ZOOM with Paul Reeder, Jennifer Heckschner, Tara Spalla King, and Peter Spreitzer on June 20, 2023. We discussed a high-level overview of the center, its accomplishments, and each of the five required components of the review.
- **The initial/draft review report** was shared with subcommittee C members, who provided feedback, including follow-up questions.
- **The second interview** was held via ZOOM with Dr. Anil Makhija, Dean of Fisher College of Business, Tara Spalla King, and Carrie Anne Thomas on August 3, 2023. While Barry Lyons could not be present due to work travel during this time, his input was incorporated. We

sought Dean Makhija's evaluation of the CIS, shared our preliminary findings, and asked clarifying questions.

Review Findings

Subcommittee C found the self-study report (Appendix A), including the five required sections of mission, faculty and student involvement and contribution, administrative structure and responsibilities, budget, and evaluative criteria and benchmarks, to be effective for the CIS.

1. Mission

- a. The mission of the CIS has three pillars: (1) acting as a catalyst and facilitator within the innovation ecosystem; (2) providing quality instruction and enabling the co-creation and sharing of innovation knowledge, frameworks, and tools, and; (3) advancing innovation research and applied practice. This is the original mission statement and is connected to their core values of collaboration, integrity, and diversity of people and ideas. Dean Makhija states that the first two pillars are exceptionally strong.
- b. They have found that innovation means different things to each organization with which they work. Both Paul Reeder and Jennifer Heckschner teach consistently and “put innovation in the [curriculum] stream . . . so students can learn innovation in real companies with real problems” (Paul Reeder, direct communication, 6/20/23).
- c. They connect with key scholars in the field for evidence-based practice. Paul has led facilitating sessions between sponsors and faculty to identify themes so industry sponsors can see short-term steps. CIS leaders share that the research component has not been consistent. Dean Makhija intends to help the CIS grow the research component. They will bring this need to the College Executive Committee as has already done for the Center for Operational Excellence. There is increased faculty awareness when they highlight the need in the College Executive Committee.

The subcommittee recognizes the strength in alignment of mission and goals between the College of Business and the Center for Innovation. It also recognizes the strength of the first two pillars of the CIA mission and recommends and supports collaborative efforts in the college in the pursuit of research opportunities as an integral part of the Center for Innovation's mission.

2. Faculty and Student Involvement and Contribution

- a. Faculty at the CIS have recently worked with OSU's Sustainability Institute, which received a \$1 million grant funded by IGS Energy. They led a research discovery workshop with students to promote sustainable energy initiatives. The Executive Director acts as a catalyst, connecting Fisher's entrepreneurship faculty with community entrepreneurs. CIS has been active in determining faculty needs to support work with the Energy Advancement and Innovation Center, particularly with

- Ohio State Energy Partners (OSEP). CIS received an award from OSEP of \$44K and used some of that award to do collaborative work to understand stakeholders' needs.
- b. CIS developed an initiative to support student innovation, coined OnRamp, a student-driven innovation program. The purpose of OnRamp is for students to take the lead in assisting companies through the innovation process. CIS faculty guide OnRamp student teams through the facilitation of weekly workshops where they help them discover areas for exploration. Students come in with a fresh mindset, use design thinking to help them solve problems, and fail ideas in corporate innovation. This work has resulted in over 650 students hired for paid internships and idea-generation workshop leadership teams, called SPRINTS, to develop early-stage ideas/concept areas, over \$2 million in contract revenue for CIS, and over 120 vetted innovation concepts. Some companies include Honda, Proctor and Gamble, Smucker's, Cambell's, JPMorgan Chase, United Healthcare, Steiner & Associates, Midmark, Grange, Columbus Fashion Alliance, Nationwide, AEP, and Ohio State Energy Partners.
 - c. The most recent CIS development supporting MBA and graduate students is a Medical Innovation Development Experiential Program (MID_EP). This initiative received a \$1 million grant from the Harry T. Mangurian, Jr. Foundation to strengthen collaboration between Fisher, CIS, the Wexner Medical Center, and the Drug Development Institute. Students in two-year graduate assistant roles conduct market analyses and competitive intelligence work for the medical innovation of these CIS partners. Early results include the first student being placed as an intern at a biotechnical company. Other students are in the pipeline. They would like to fund three students. This is the original mission statement and is connected to their core values of collaboration, integrity, and diversity of people and ideas.
 - d. The CIS has had a legacy project with Scotts Miracle Grow since 2016, hosting two incubator labs each fall and spring for a total of 60 high school students since inception "to enhance their growth mindset, enabling them to solve problems and think creatively" (CIS Self-Study document, p. 6).

The subcommittee considers this evaluation component of the CIS to be strong. Per Dean Makhija, many of the projects are very attractive to students. On-Ramp is such an example. Over 600 students have received some level of funding from them. More than a dozen corporations, Honda, P&G, Smuckers, Campbells, JP Morgan Chase, etc, are involved. Students are getting real-world experiences with these firms because of the CIS's commitment to faculty and student involvement and contribution.

3. Administrative Structure and Responsibilities

- a. The CIS is currently staffed with an executive director, a director of operations and planning, a program director, two Scott's Legacy program interns, 2-4 graduate assistants, 8-20 OnRamp student interns. The Program Manager role was filled with a student who has been with them for four years, strong in science and arts. They are

- currently interviewing for the Program Coordinator position. Their small team seems to be working effectively. They intentionally “stay lean on staff and try to under-promise and over-deliver” (Jennifer Heckschner, personal communication, 6/20/23).
- b. Dean Makhija shared that they like to keep the CIS lean and have many discussions before approving positions. He was pleased with the performance of CIS leadership.

The subcommittee considers this evaluation component of the CIS to be strong. All stakeholders interviewed agreed that the current administrative structure is effective in meeting their mission.

4. Budget

- a. The CIS has achieved self-sufficiency as evidenced by its budget. They “run lean” and fund themselves.
- b. The CIS leans heavily on contract revenue. They are still adding nuance to their membership/sponsorship model to generate more funding. They test, iterate, and learn with this as well.
- c. The CIS is wholly self-supporting and receives no budgetary support from the College of Business. Dean Makhija shared that centers are expected to manage their own budget. However, the college stands ready to support them if they need help, as they do not want students dropped or impacted negatively. It has not been necessary to step in for any of the centers, particularly CIS. They are watchful.

The subcommittee considers this evaluation component of the CIS to be strong. All stakeholders interviewed agreed that the CIS has been effective in managing their independent budget.

5. Evaluative Criteria and Benchmarks

- a. Upon interview, Subcommittee C learned that the evaluative criteria and benchmarks include: procuring money and managing an independent budget to support CIS staff and activity, growing the number of companies they have assisted in setting new business goals, developing partnerships in the community, funding student internships with local companies, and maintaining a diverse group of panels, speakers, and student interns, reflecting society.
- b. The overall expectation of the CIS is demanding and exacting—activities are fully funded by their own revenue generation. This puts quantitative expectations on them. All activities must be constrained or within that framework. They are aware if they want to expand the center, they must do more to support student and research activity. They believe this is a market test, that corporations are willing to support their activities. Thus far, the market values what they deliver. The CIS receives no tuition revenue or any other financial support from the University. They actively and continually procure revenue to help the organization to meet goals.

- c. The CIS helps companies set new business goals as each has a life cycle and has been increasing this activity.
- d. Partners – The CIS is increasing its partnership pool. They used to run speaker workshops; however, they stopped doing this due to the pandemic and the lack of a program coordinator.
- e. Internships – The CIS hires between 8 to 40 students based on contracts they secure. CIS leaders feel strongly about student involvement and engagement. They get to see the talent pipeline.
- f. Diversity – The panels and speakers are diverse, with many voices represented in innovation. As they bring in students, they also look at gender, race, and degree backgrounds on teams. This process is part of their standard operating procedure.


The subcommittee considers this evaluation component of the CIS to be strong. All stakeholders interviewed agreed that the CIS has been effective in managing their independent budget. As well, they have support, if needed, from the College of Business so that no students would be negatively impacted by a budget deficit.

Evaluation Summary and Subcommittee C Recommendations

CAA Subcommittee C reviewed the self-study report and supporting materials shared by the CIS and interviewed key constituents. The subcommittee has determined that the CIS:

- A. has successfully fulfilled the first two pillars and the applied practice piece of the third pillar of its mission,
- B. has been operating efficiently and effectively, managing its independent budget, and
- C. has been successfully meeting its evaluation criteria and benchmarks.

The subcommittee fully supports the plan for the College of Business to support the CIS leadership in finding opportunities for collaborative research projects and to utilize other Big Ten university innovation centers as a benchmark, as appropriate. **The subcommittee recommends to CAA that the CIS continue its operations and be reviewed on the standard cycle.**

Submitted by: 
Tara Spalla King
Associate Clinical Professor
College of Nursing
Chair, CAA Subcommittee C