

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

PROPOSED NEW CENTER
NUTRITION AND WELLNESS RESEARCH CENTER
AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Action Requested: Consider recommending approval to the Board of the request by Iowa State University to establish the Nutrition and Wellness Research Center.

Executive Summary: The mission of the proposed center will be to enhance human health and promote development of food-related industries in Iowa by evaluating the impact of new foods and nutrient supplements produced from microorganisms, plants, and animals on human health. The Center will be jointly administered by the College of Human Sciences and the Office of the Vice Provost for Research. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. There were no objections raised concerning the proposed center.

Background:

- ◇ **Need.** The Center will build on ISU's core-strength on research and education related to food. The biosciences revolution in agriculture has resulted in new foods and food products. A key ingredient in the commercial success of new foods and nutrient supplements is demonstration of their efficacy in human trials. The proposed Center will provide the capacity for researchers from a variety of organizations to test the risks and benefits of new foods and food-related products in a clinical setting. The Center will link food research to the health of consumers and help move food-related innovations in plant, animal, microbial, and food sciences to commercialization.
- ◇ **Duplication.** There are no other units in the state focused on testing foods and food products for their impact on human health and prevention of chronic diseases. SUI centers that focus on health issues have different missions, e.g., the health effects of environmental toxins, than the proposed Center.
- ◇ **Quality.** Food and food choices affect many chronic diseases, including obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and osteoporosis. The goal of the Center will be to reduce the incidence and consequence of chronic diseases and improve the quality of life of the citizens of Iowa. As the Center develops, it may expand its mission to include other factors, such as physical activity and socioeconomic status, which interact with nutrition to determine wellness.
- ◇ **Cost.** ISU will fund start-up costs of up to \$700,000 for building renovation and equipment. Annual expenditures will include \$250,000 for facility rental and operating costs which will be funded by center revenues; \$50,000 for salary supplement for the administrative director which will be funded through the Office of the Vice Provost for Research; and \$160,000 for program staff salaries which will be funded by commodity groups and food and health-related industries conducting research in the facilities. A grant of \$700,000 has been awarded by the Iowa Department of Economic Development through the Biosciences Alliance to initiate the Center.

- ◇ Collaborations. Faculty from the Colleges of Agriculture, Human Sciences, and Liberal Arts and Sciences will work on a common core of research issues related to foods and their effects on wellness and chronic disease prevention. This interdisciplinary research will integrate biological sciences and health promotion. The Center will also establish linkages with UNI and SUI. Essential partners will include established Iowa-based corporations (such as Kemin and Proliant), start-up companies (such as Starch Design and Metabolic Technologies, Inc.), hospitals and clinics, and commodity sponsors (such as the soybean, corn, beef, pork, and egg boards).

- ◇ Link to Strategic Plan. The activities of the Center will relate directly to the mission of the University “to make Iowa and the world a better place by enhancing research to reduce the incidence of chronic diseases, by increasing the value of Iowa’s agricultural products, and by promoting economic development in Iowa” and the Board of Regents’ strategic plan “to discover new knowledge through research, scholarship, and creative activities and to provide needed service and promote economic growth.”

Responses to the Board of Regents’ center approval questions are on file in the Board Office.