

# A Proposal for Establishing a Quantitative Institute for the Social Sciences at the University of Kentucky

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## Abstract

To reach its goal of becoming a top-ranked public research university, the University of Kentucky should take immediate steps to provide the kind of research infrastructure to advance research in the quantitative social sciences that is available at all of UK's benchmarks (see Appendix I). We propose the creation of a Quantitative Institute for Social Science (QISS) to support research in the social sciences across all colleges and departments of the campus and would report to the Vice President for Research. The primary **mission** of the QISS will be to enhance social science research at UK by: 1) helping to train social scientists in advanced and innovative research methods, 2) encouraging high-quality interdisciplinary research across departments and colleges, 3) supporting grant proposals that effectively promote scientific research, and 4) disseminating research findings that address significant challenges in the Commonwealth and the rest of the world. The QISS will be modeled after institutes that exist at our benchmark institutions, but will be tailored to the particular challenges confronting social scientists at UK. As we point out in more detail below, with a modest investment of university resources, UK can raise the profile of the social sciences as well as the research ranking of the rest of the University.

Based on the Administrative Regulation, [AR 1:3](#), the QISS would be a multidisciplinary institute that is primarily research in nature and will not be the home unit for courses, degrees, or primary appointments.

## The Need for a Quantitative Social Science Institute

A Quantitative Institute for Social Science makes particular sense at UK because it would help to integrate social scientists and students who are scattered across the campus in various departments and colleges. Not only are there a variety of different quantitative social science units spread across different colleges (e.g., the Martin School, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, the Colleges of Business & Economics, Education, Social Work and Behavioral Sciences), but social science faculty reside in a number of other colleges, as well (e.g., Agriculture, Communications, Dentistry, Health Sciences, Law, Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy and Public Health). As social science research becomes increasingly interdisciplinary and collaborative, a QISS is essential for providing a platform for cross-disciplinary collaborations across diverse departments and professional schools at UK. And because funding initiatives from federal agencies and private foundations in the social sciences increasingly call for collaborative research by scientists from multiple disciplines, an Institute can maximize the University's potential to attract external grants.

A quick survey of UK's benchmark universities, as well as top 20 research universities across the country, makes it clear that social scientists at the University lack a critical element of institutional support (see Appendix I, Parts A & B). Virtually all of UK's benchmark universities advance social science research with a variety of specialized support structures, including: 1) one or more *institutes* designed to support research across a variety of social science units, and 2) several more specialized *centers* that provide many of the same support

functions. These institutes or centers advance social science research in a variety of critical ways — by encouraging collaboration across various departments and professional schools, sponsoring lecture series and methods workshops, providing research support to attract and retain top-tier faculty and students, and supporting grant proposals that effectively promote scientific research. To the extent that such support is available at UK, however, it is provided on a piecemeal basis by the Research Office, different colleges and individual departments. Collectively, the level of current research support available to most social scientists at UK tends to be quite low in comparison with our benchmark institutions. Those of us who collaborate with scholars at other institutions are acutely aware of the superior resources available to our colleagues, on whom we often rely for research support.

In short, for a variety of reasons, UK needs to establish a Quantitative Institute for Social Science to provide the kind of institutional support that is available at virtually all of our benchmark institutions, but cannot be effectively provided by financially strapped departments or more general research offices at the University. As all of our benchmarks have discovered, providing institutional support for the quantitative social sciences is a public good that needs to be supplied by the university, since it is unrealistic to expect colleges and departments to commit scarce resources to duplicate services that can be provided more efficiently at the university level.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, it is important to emphasize that *funding for the Institute would not draw on resources that would go to departments*. The purpose of the Institute is to provide services and resources that are not already provided by departments. For the proposed QISS to be successful in its goal of raising the research profile of the quantitative social sciences, it is extremely important *not* to divert resources from departments.

## The Orientation and Core Activities of the QISS

Before describing the activities of the proposed QISS, it is important to point out that even though the QISS would tilt toward quantitative research—an orientation that is largely in keeping with social science institutes at UK’s benchmarks, the institute will not be exclusionary. All of us recognize that good social science often requires a skillful use of qualitative as well as quantitative approaches. At the same time, given the constraints of the proposed budget (see pp. 15, 21), in order to be successful in the short term, the institute must maintain focus and avoid spreading itself too thinly. The important point is that even though the QISS will tilt toward quantitative methods, as will become clear in the proposal, the QISS will support qualitative research in a number of important ways in both the short term and the long term. Specifically, in the short term, the QISS will encourage qualitative researchers to participate in the institute and apply for intramural support, will offer workshops in qualitative methods, and will appoint several qualitative researchers to the Advisory Board to help with the selection of intramural awards and advise the QISS on its policies. In the long term, the QISS “will explore various ways to support qualitative methods in social science research” (p. 9).

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<sup>1</sup> As Harvard University’s Institute for Quantitative Social Science ([IQSS](#)) states, “We specialize in *infrastructure that scales*”—i.e., building infrastructure that facilitates the research and productivity of many faculty, students and others around the university.

As noted in the Abstract, the **mission** of the QISS will be to advance innovative social science research at the University of Kentucky by: 1) helping to train social scientists in advanced and innovative research methods, 2) encouraging high-quality interdisciplinary research across departments and colleges, 3) supporting grant proposals that effectively promote scientific research, and 4) disseminating research findings that address significant challenges in the Commonwealth and the rest of the world. Toward this end, the QISS will undertake a variety of **core activities**:

1. **Awarding seed money and summer stipends to encourage innovative, high quality research and grant submissions.** To help raise the research profile of the social sciences, the Institute would award *seed money* for pilot studies and *summer stipends* for writing grant proposals based on a university-wide competition. At least once a year, the Institute would convene a multidisciplinary panel of senior researchers in the social sciences to select internal grant awardees from across the university. The awards would be granted only to individuals who: have a track record of research productivity, are deemed likely to submit external grant proposals, have a high probability of success in attracting funding and do not have access to such funds from other sources. To encourage interdisciplinary research initiatives, the QISS would target a portion (from one-quarter to one-third) of the internal grants to proposals that are designed to promote new research collaborations across departments and colleges.

Presumably, a specialized Institute would be well-positioned to evaluate the merits of innovative social science research, as well as monitor how effectively support funds are used over the long haul. In addition, the QISS would provide important mentoring opportunities for applicants of intramural support by providing feedback and opportunities to discuss their applications. By increasing funding from external grants with overhead, such awards would presumably help to pay for themselves in the long run.

2. **Playing an entrepreneurial role in targeting funding opportunities and facilitating collaborative grant applications.** The Director of the QISS (along with the Advisory Board) will visit public and private funding agencies annually to identify grant opportunities in the social sciences and encourage researchers at UK to take advantage of them. Obvious possibilities include the development of NSF Integrative Graduate Education and Research Traineeship (IGERT) proposals that emphasize collaborative research and graduate training across disciplinary boundaries of the social and natural sciences. There are also opportunities at UK to bring together researchers of different colleges and centers to tackle problems from different disciplinary perspectives. The social networking analysis of the LINKS Center in the Gatton School, for example, could be part of a collaborative venture in public health, psychology or public policy. And various centers and research clusters could be galvanized by increased funding opportunities. While several UK social scientists have been quite successful in developing funding sources, the QISS could provide needed assistance in identifying and tapping other potential sources.

3. **Sponsoring a social science speaker series and methods workshops.** Quantitative social science research published in top journals requires cutting edge statistical methods that change constantly. And social scientists increasingly must bring to bear different approaches in quantitative and qualitative methods to investigate social problems. To help upgrade the methodological skills and substantive knowledge of social science faculty, the QISS will organize and publicize an annual *speaker* series of nationally recognized scholars that present their research and offer methods workshops for faculty and graduate students. In the past, such speaker series have been highly successful and enjoyed widespread participation from faculty and students in several departments.<sup>2</sup> The QISS will also recruit methodologists from UK and elsewhere to offer *workshops* and short courses covering particular statistical methods (e.g., multilevel modeling, hazard models, spatial econometrics) as well as qualitative methods (e.g., using qualitative software, “mixed” methods research, sampling in qualitative research, and constructing useful interview guides).<sup>3</sup> To encourage multidisciplinary research initiatives, the QISS will solicit proposals to fund speakers and workshops that are designed to promote new research collaborations across departments and colleges. Such seminars help develop networks of social scientists by bringing faculty and students together to explore shared interests and to exchange information.
4. **Working with the support units of the Research Office to ensure that, regardless of their research field, social science faculty receive the assistance they need for developing and submitting grant proposals.** Grant production varies considerably across social science units and faculty, depending largely on differential funding opportunities across fields of study. Faculty with less grant experience or who apply outside the primary federal funding agencies (e.g., NIH, NSF, NIDA and NIAAA) often experience difficulties in applying for external grants. The QISS will work closely with the support units of the Research Office (e.g., PDO, OSPA and college grant officers) to ensure that, regardless of their field of study, social science faculty receive the kind of assistance they need for locating funding opportunities, contacting funding agencies, and grant writing. By serving as a liaison between social science faculty and the support units of the Research Office, the QISS will help raise the level of grant submissions (and awards) among social science faculty.
  - a. For many types of grant assistance, the services of the Institute would be provided without cost, since the Institute will be under the Research Office. Faculty submitting external grants with overhead—particularly individuals who receive internal grants and other assistance from the QISS—would be encouraged to designate a portion of the F&A (i.e., indirects) from an awarded grant to the Institute under the university’s new [Research Enrichment Program](#).

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<sup>2</sup> In October, 2009, for example, the nascent QISS helped cosponsor a talk by an economist (Steven Ziliak, “The Cult of Statistical Significance”) that attracted over 100 social scientists from Political Science, Psychology, the Martin School, and Sociology, as well as Economics.

<sup>3</sup> Model institutes at other universities provide regular methods workshops and short courses (e.g., see the [short courses](#) at Odum Institute at UNC-Chapel Hill).

Because the new policy increases the portion of indirects from an awarded grant from 10% to 16%, a Center or Institute could receive up to 6% without endangering the usual 10% that goes back to departments.

5. **Organizing networks of experienced researchers and regular workshops to enhance grant production** in the social sciences. *First*, the Institute will develop networks of experienced researchers who have been successful in obtaining external funding to help others develop proposals. These networks would be fostered through an annual gathering of senior and junior researchers, through speaker series and workshops, and through the feedback and monitoring of internal grant applications and awards. *Second*, the Institute will work with the support units of the Research Office to provide workshops on grant writing, human subjects, and related topics. This will include experienced faculty as well as representatives from the social science divisions of external funding agencies (e.g., NSF, NIH) and private foundations (e.g., Robert Wood Johnson, Ford Foundation, Pew Foundation).
6. **Creating a web gateway to serve as an information hub for the quantitative social sciences at UK.** The QISS will create a state-of-the-art web presence to publicize the Institute's activities, provide links to existing resources and centers, disseminate methods expertise and graduate course information to students and faculty, help publicize funding opportunities, raise the visibility of social science research achievements on campus and in the Commonwealth, and facilitate outreach and development. If possible, the QISS will help other centers in developing a similar, state-of-the-art website. For examples of excellent websites of social science institutes at other universities, see Appendix I, especially the [Odum Institute for Research in Social Science](#) at the University of North Carolina –Chapel Hill, the [Institute for Research in the Social Sciences \(IRISS\)](#) at Stanford University, and the [Social Science Research Institute \(SSRI\)](#) at Pennsylvania State University.

## **Benefits of the Institute**

As indicated, the design and scope of the QISS would be tailored to the needs of social science faculty and students at UK who are scattered across various departments and colleges and therefore find it difficult to organize collaborations and pursue common interests. Accordingly, the major benefits of the proposed QISS include the following:

**Facilitating Interdisciplinary Collaboration & Grant Submissions:** A Quantitative Institute for Social Science at the university level would be well positioned to provide a platform for collaboration and grant development across various departments, colleges and professional schools. Research in the social sciences is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, bringing together theories and methods developed across the social sciences. Social scientists are addressing real world problems that span across disciplinary boundaries, such as poverty, disease, illiteracy, immigration, discrimination, violence, mental illness, crime, and international conflicts. And social scientists must be able to use a variety of methods to adequately study

these problems, including surveys, experiments, historical studies, statistical analysis, simulations, meta-analyses, and focus groups. Increasingly, funding initiatives from federal agencies and private foundations call for collaborative research by scientists from multiple disciplines using a wide array of methods, theories, and data. While many researchers at UK have been quite successful in acquiring external funding to support their research, which is often interdisciplinary, there remains untapped potential. If the amount of external funding is to continue to grow, the research infrastructure needs to be developed to capitalize on the multidisciplinary, multimethod and problem directed thrust of funding organizations.

**Expanding External Funding:** In addition to providing more opportunities for collaboration, the Institute will expand external funding in the social sciences by upgrading methods training and providing individual researchers with more resources, incentives and assistance for applying for external grants. And by expanding external funding opportunities, the Institute would facilitate the promotion of social science faculty, especially from the Associate to Full Professor level.

**Graduate Student Training & Placement:** Another obvious benefit of an Institute is that it would provide a tremendous boost to efforts to attract and retain top-caliber students and faculty. In the quantitative social sciences, graduate students who receive advanced statistical training, serve as Research Assistants on external grants, and work with prominent research faculty outside their primary discipline receive better job placement, and thus enhance the reputation of their graduate programs.

**Attracting & Retaining Productive Faculty:** The QISS would also aid the rebuilding efforts of several departments that lost highly productive senior faculty to more prestigious institutions and are now faced with the challenge of retaining productive junior faculty to take their place. Although it is fair to say that retaining productive faculty is a problem across the University, it has been particularly acute in the social sciences. The good news is that these same departments have done an exceptional job of hiring junior faculty with highly promising research trajectories from excellent institutions. Research support and leadership from the QISS would make a critical difference in retaining productive faculty by providing them with the resources necessary to carry out and externalize their research.

**Faculty Outreach:** The QISS will develop ongoing activities to familiarize faculty with resources for research. New faculty are critical for growing funding activity. Each year, new faculty in the social sciences will be invited to a research reception introducing them to people and resources that can help them in developing proposals. The Director will offer to meet with departments to talk about services provided by the QISS, seek feedback and encourage proposal development.

**Providing a Web Gateway to the Quantitative Social Sciences:** QISS's website will be a gateway to the social sciences at the University, disseminating statistical methods expertise and courses to students and faculty, providing links to existing resources and centers, news on achievements by faculty and students in the social sciences, and a calendar of events. The QISS's site will include links to information about social science nationally and internationally. By promoting the contributions of the social sciences to the research, teaching and service missions of the university, the QISS will facilitate outreach and development. Resources permitting, the QISS will also help social science Centers on campus develop their websites.

**Enhancing Intellectual Life at the University:** The Institute’s focus on methods training and grant assistance should not obscure another vital benefit of the QISS. By bringing prominent outside scholars to UK and building internal networks of researchers across a variety of disciplines, the Institute will play a critical role in enhancing the intellectual life of the University.

**Improving University Rankings:** By enhancing support for grant writing, methods expertise, and collaborations across units, the QISS would help to close the resource gap between UK and its benchmark institutions in the social sciences. Any effort that encourages grant production and publications in prestigious outlets will elevate the research visibility and reputation of the social sciences at the University.

**Improving Perceptions at UK:** One final benefit for the University is also worth noting. The creation of a QISS would serve as an effective counter to the widespread perception that the quantitative social sciences are undervalued at UK, compared to the humanities, natural sciences and professional schools. Investing in an Institute would go a long way toward reversing that impression.

**Improving Conditions in the Commonwealth:** By advancing social science research, the Institute would also provide a number of clear benefits to the Commonwealth of Kentucky. As noted, social scientists are addressing real world problems in their research, and virtually all of these problems (e.g., disease, illiteracy, immigration, poverty, drug abuse, mental illness, crime) have a local counterpart in the state and the region. All of the Kentucky Uglies, for example, involve a large human dimension that cuts across economic, social, health, political, psychological and policy fields. To advise policy-makers on how to effectively combat Kentucky’s ills in today’s complex and rapidly changing world requires ongoing, high-quality social science research. The QISS will serve as a hub for directing individuals outside UK to university experts and teams of social scientists that can provide practical advice for how best to combat a variety of political, economic and social ills confronting the citizens of Kentucky.

## **Vision for Growth for the Institute: A Four-Year Plan and Beyond**

We propose a **“phased” launch** of the QISS, with three primary phases: 1) in the Fall of 2009, the proposal for the QISS will be developed, vetted and refined before introducing it for consideration in the University Senate; 2) in the Winter and Spring of 2010, pending approval by the Senate, limited core activities (e.g., the speaker series) and personnel (i.e., a Director and limited staff support) of the Institute would be brought online; and 3) beginning in fiscal year 2010-11, the Institute would provide a more complete range of services that will continue for three years before the Institute is evaluated for renewal at the end of the 2012-13 fiscal year.

More specifically, **the first phase** (Fall, 2009) has been devoted to developing the proposal for the Institute based on feedback from various sources: 1) meeting with UK social science faculty, 2) researching several “model” social science institutes at other universities through various meetings, phone calls and on-site visits, 3) periodic meetings with the nascent Advisory Board and James Tracy, UK’s Vice President for Research, and 4) organizing forums and meetings to solicit feedback from UK faculty and administrators, prior to introducing the proposal in the University Senate. Such careful planning should increase the likelihood that

QISS will be successful in its goal of advancing quantitative social science research at the University.

In the **second phase** (Spring 2010), the Institute will be limited largely to the core activities identified earlier—namely, a speaker series and methods workshops, grant workshops, awarding a limited number of internal grants, and creating a website for the Institute (see the Budget for Fiscal Year, 2009-2010).

In the **third phase**, beginning in fiscal year 2010-11, the annual budget will be expanded for the next three years, when the speaker series and workshops will be expanded and more internal grants will be awarded (see the Budgets for Fiscal Years, 2010-2013).

Additional Activities:

In addition to the core activities listed in the budget, the Institute will also give serious consideration to a variety of additional ways to improve support for the social sciences, discussed briefly below.

1. **The Institute will explore various ways to support qualitative methods in social science research.** As noted earlier, qualitative methods are an important part of social science research and deserve more support at the University. In the short term, within its limited budget, the QISS will support qualitative methods to the extent possible by sponsoring workshops in qualitative methods (see #3, p. 5), appointing individuals with qualitative methods expertise to the Advisory Board and encouraging qualitative social scientists to participate fully in the institute. In the longer term, the QISS will work with others to explore various options for expanding support for qualitative methods, such as broadening the institute to include qualitative methods, creating a center or institute for qualitative research or establishing a qualitative social science lab that provides equipment and software for collecting and examining qualitative data. One possibility is that as the QISS becomes more established, its mission could be expanded to represent the broad array of social science research methods, with qualitative and experimental designs comprising a larger portion of the institute's focal activities. If so, it might be reasonable to change the name of the institute in the future (e.g., Institute for Behavioral and Social Science Research).
2. **The Institute will explore various ways to ensure that the *Social Sciences Teaching and Research Statistics (SSTARS) Center*, which provides statistical consulting, is adequately staffed and is capable of serving the consulting needs of quantitative social science researchers across campus.** Although the SSTARS Center was created to provide statistical consulting to social scientists, funding for the Center was reduced and its profile on campus has diminished. The Center needs, at the very least, a revamped website and an adequate professional staff to ensure that advanced graduate students who are employed as statistical consultants have strong methods skills and are familiar with statistical software used in the social sciences.
3. **The Institute will explore ways to encourage the hiring of a quantitative social scientist with a joint appointment in Statistics.** Although currently there are no social scientists

in UK's Statistics Department, social science departments at benchmark universities often employ individuals with a joint appointment in statistics as a way of upgrading the statistical methods training of quantitative social scientists.<sup>4</sup> Social science statisticians are an invaluable resource not only because they can provide advice to other faculty who teach quantitative methods in social science departments, but because they can be added (as a Co-PI) to an external grant proposal when the PI's statistical expertise needs strengthening.<sup>5</sup> Based on conversations with the Dean of Arts & Sciences, the A&S College would be open to supporting a joint position in Statistics and another department in the College if the funding of the first two years of the position were provided by the Provost.

4. **The QISS will explore various ways to provide data management and archiving services for social science faculty**, a need that arose in several discussions with faculty about what services the QISS should provide. With the proliferation of massive streams of digital data in virtually every field of study, researchers are quickly realizing that before the data can be analyzed they need help in managing and integrating diverse data and information sources. In addition, faculty or centers (e.g., the Survey Research Center) who collect data need help with archiving and posting data in ways that are accessible to other researchers. Providing access to data is not only a good scientific practice, but increases the visibility of UK scholars and greatly enhances opportunities for external funding and new collaborations. Indeed, many public and private organizations solicit "Requests for Proposals" (RFPs) to create data sets that can be analyzed by others. Currently, however, social science faculty receive very little, if any, assistance with data management and archiving.
5. The Institute should explore how it can help to create an **experimental lab for quantitative social science research** so that more social scientists at UK can conduct experiments.<sup>6</sup> Experiments are an increasingly popular method for quantitative social scientists to enhance causal inference in their research and complement other observational methods. With a relatively modest investment in software, equipment (3-4 desktop computers) and office space, an experimental "lab" could easily be created where faculty could design experiments and run subjects (i.e., primarily undergraduates and adult volunteers).
6. The Institute should explore strategies to **help upgrade the facilities at the Survey Research Center at UK** and to **help make survey research more affordable** to social science faculty. The [UK Survey Research Center](#) (UKSRC) is an excellent facility that is currently under-utilized by many social science faculty because high quality survey

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<sup>4</sup> Examples include [Indiana University](#), the [University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill](#), [Penn State University](#), the [University of Washington](#), Washington University, and the University of Houston.

<sup>5</sup> In the health sciences, for example, NIH often requires a biostatistician to be added to a grant proposal.

<sup>6</sup> Although several experimental labs exist on campus (in Kastle Hall [Psychology], the Matthews Building [Economics], and Barnhart Building [Agricultural Economics]), they are inaccessible to many faculty, due to their location or because they are running at capacity.

research is costly and the SRC was required to raise its rates to market level after being mandated to be self-supporting. Consequently, we have less accumulated knowledge about the attitudes and behavior of citizens of the Commonwealth. The Institute will explore various strategies that other top research universities have adopted to help social science faculty afford survey research conducted by the UKSRC.

Clearly, by working with the SRC, the Institute should **help faculty locate funding sources** to help pay for survey research. In addition, the Institute should explore whether UK's SRC can once again provide grants of limited survey time on the Kentucky Survey that can be used by social science faculty as **pilot studies** to apply for external funding for larger surveys conducted by the SRC. The Institute might also help the SRC organize **multi-investigator surveys** that allow several teams of social scientists to share the costs and the content of a single survey. The Institute might also apply for grants to conduct **annual surveys** assessing consumer satisfaction with healthcare or education policies, similar to the monthly surveys conducted by the SRC at the University of Michigan used to assess consumer confidence in the economy. The Institute should explore joining a [consortium](#) of 37 universities coordinated by MIT, Harvard, and Stanford that organize large scale, biannual national surveys for which interdisciplinary faculty "teams" at member universities contribute survey questions at below-market rates.

In the long-term, the QISS should work with the SRC to find support for Graduate Research Assistants who can receive graduate training in survey research at the Center. In addition, the SRC needs funds for archiving Kentucky Survey data online so scholars can search, download and perform preliminary analyses of past survey data on the SRC's website.

7. **Additional activities** worthy of further consideration:
  - a. **Providing research assistantships to graduate students.** The vast majority of funded graduate students in the quantitative social sciences are required to serve as Teaching Assistants (not Research Assistants) who take classes and teach their own course during the academic year. RA support is therefore restricted to faculty with large external grants (during the academic year) or small internal grants (during the summer). To enhance faculty research and reward promising students with research experience, the QISS will explore supporting graduate students on their own research and on joint projects with social science faculty.
  - b. **Providing research assistantships to exceptional undergraduate students.** This would benefit the research projects to which the students would be assigned, and provide these students with valuable insight into the research process that cannot be obtained in the traditional classroom setting. This experience would help our undergraduates obtain marketable skills for employment at research institutes, as well as in government. Additionally, some of these students may be attracted to pursue graduate training at UK or elsewhere.
  - c. In addition, the Institute might **convene conferences** of leading social scientists and students to contribute to the innovative study of large-scale societal problems. Such conferences could result in an edited volume of scholarly works, and, if held

regularly, would help position UK as a recognized national leader in quantitative social science scholarship.

8. In the long run, once the QISS improves external grant production, the Institute should consider awarding select faculty with QISS **fellowships** to assist departments and programs retain top social science faculty and attract new talent.
9. Finally, the QISS will explore whether the Institute can serve as an **umbrella** organization to help integrate various Centers (e.g., Survey Research Center, SSTARS, the Poverty Center) that serve the quantitative social sciences across campus, similar to the role institutes play at other universities (e.g., Penn State University, Indiana University, and Stanford).

Clearly, many of the additional activities listed above can only be undertaken effectively in the long term. Nevertheless, the QISS can, at the very least, begin to communicate the short term and long term needs of many social science researchers at the university, which, in the eyes of many faculty would be a huge improvement, in and of itself.

## **Criteria for Evaluating the Institute's Performance**

The seven core activities of the QISS listed on pp. 3-4 of the proposal constitute the primary (though not the exclusive) activities by which the Institute proposes to move toward its four mission goals of: 1) supporting grant proposals, 2) encouraging interdisciplinary research, 3) promoting advanced training in research methods, and 4) disseminating research findings. For each of the four mission goals, we list various QISS *activities* designed to further the goal as well as *indices of success* by which the success of the QISS in reaching each of its goals can be assessed. We propose that these and other performance indicators be used to assess the Institute's performance.

The Director of the QISS and the Advisory Board will conduct an **annual performance review** beginning at the end of the 2010-11 fiscal year. Then, at the end of the 3-4 year trial period of the QISS, the same performance criteria will be used to help determine whether to continue funding for the QISS.

### ***Goal 1: Supporting grant proposals that effectively promote scientific research***

#### **Activities**

1. Encourage external grant proposals using internal grants to fund seed money for pilot studies and summer stipends for writing grant proposals.
2. Working with the support units of the Research Office to ensure that quantitative social science faculty receive the assistance they need for developing and submitting grant proposals.
3. Organizing networks of experienced researchers and regular workshops to enhance grant production in the social sciences.

4. Monitor the funding priorities of appropriate funding agencies, communicate these to social science faculty, and identify opportunities for UK researchers to apply for grants of designated agencies.
5. Work with deans, associate deans for research, research center directors, department heads, and faculty members to communicate internal (QISS) as well as external (agency) funding opportunities.

#### **Indices of Success**

1. The number of internal grants submitted and funded.
2. The number of internal grants that develop into grant proposals and funding.
3. The number and quality of improvements in assistance provided to quantitative social science faculty by the support units of the Research Office.
4. The number and variety of grant workshops and their attendance by faculty and graduate students.
5. The number of consultation meetings to discuss faculty members' research proposal plans.

#### ***Goal 2: Encouraging high-quality interdisciplinary research across departments and colleges.***

##### **Activities**

1. Encourage interdisciplinary activities (e.g., proposal idea development, speaker workshops) using internal grants to fund speakers and faculty research.
2. Monitor the funding priorities of various agencies, communicate these to faculty, and identify opportunities for UK researchers to apply for grants of particular funding agencies that call for interdisciplinary collaborations.
3. Work with deans, associate deans for research, research center directors, department heads, and faculty members to identify topics for interdisciplinary collaborations and proposal development.
4. Assist researchers in making collaborative connections with a searchable web site, workshops and consultation.

##### **Indices of Success**

1. The number of internal grants submitted and funded whose goal is to promote new research collaborations across departments and colleges.
2. The number of internal grants promoting new collaborations that develop into grant proposals and funding.
3. The number of consultation meetings to discuss faculty members' research proposal plans.

#### ***Goal 3: Promoting advanced training in quantitative research methods in the social sciences.***

##### **Activities**

1. QISS funding of speaker series, workshops and short courses on a regular basis.
2. Assist graduate students and faculty identify methods courses and methods expertise

through the QISS web site.

3. Encourage the hiring of a statistician with a joint appointment in the social sciences.

#### **Indices of Success**

1. Number of attendees of talks, workshops and short courses, as well as the range of their departmental affiliations.
2. Number of departments reporting improvements in faculty and student methods training, as well as strategic plans to initiate improvements.
3. An increase in the number of collaborations and consultations with methodologists and statisticians across campus, as well as their inclusion on external grant proposals as co-PIs.
4. An increase in the number of top-tier social science journal publications where advanced statistical methods enhance the likelihood of publication.

#### ***Goal 4: Disseminating research findings that address significant challenges in the Commonwealth and the rest of the world***

#### **Activities**

1. Creation of a state-of-the-art web site for the QISS that raises the visibility of quantitative social science research achievements on campus and in the Commonwealth, publicizes the Institute's activities, provide links to existing resources and centers, disseminates methods expertise and graduate course information to students and faculty, helps publicize funding opportunities, and facilitates outreach and development. If possible, the QISS will help other centers in developing a similar, state-of-the-art website.

#### **Indices of Success**

1. Increased level of awareness of activities, research and opportunities by various groups inside and outside the University.

## **Impact**

The various benefits of creating the QISS were discussed earlier. Here we highlight the cascading ripple effects that establishing an Institute would have for the social sciences, the University and the Commonwealth. The creation of a QISS will have **immediate benefits** for recruiting promising social scientists and students, signaling to the faculty that the social sciences are valued at the University, and retaining our most promising and productive faculty in this vital area of research in the Commonwealth.

In the **near future**, the QISS will help train social scientists in advanced and innovative research methods and facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations across departments and colleges. Such efforts should lead to high-quality research and increased grant production, thus raising the research profile of the social sciences across the University of Kentucky. Research also impacts on the teaching mission of the University and the social sciences lie at the heart of

UK's mission to educate global citizens in an innovation-driven economy, investigate complex problems facing people in the Commonwealth and the world, and understand the role that diversity plays in strengthening the Commonwealth and American society. By enhancing research and education, the QISS would make a key contribution to the University's goal of improving its rankings as a public research university.

Finally, as noted earlier, the benefit of advancing quantitative social science research for the **Commonwealth of Kentucky** would be considerable, inasmuch as UK social scientists are addressing real world problems in Kentucky and the world that cut across economic, health, social, political, psychological and policy fields. To advise policy-makers on how to effectively combat Kentucky's ills in today's world requires ongoing, high-quality social science research.

In these and many other ways, it is clear that for a relatively modest investment, the returns of a QISS would be immeasurable.

## Governance

The QISS will report to the Vice President for Research. In addition, a Dean's Advisory Group will serve as an oversight committee that will be composed of three to five deans or their designees from participating colleges. A Director will manage the QISS and will appoint an Advisory Board consisting of 15 or more social science research faculty from various participating units and colleges. The Advisory Board will advise the Director concerning the direction and administration of the QISS.

## Budget

A detailed budget appears at the end of the proposal. Following the phased launch of the QISS, only limited expenses for minimal core activities and personnel would be brought online in FY 2009-10, depending on whether and when the proposal is approved. By the end of the Spring semester of 2010, expenses for limited travel, speakers and workshops will total approximately \$15,000. Based on the likely timetable for evaluating the proposal, other expenses for FY 2009-10 (e.g., intramural grants) appear unlikely.

The budget in each of the following three years of the QISS's trial period, from FY 2010-11 to FY 2012-13, will average between \$120,000 to \$140,000 per year, when core activities are expanded and full funding begins. The size of the proposed budget is comparatively "lean," when compared to model social science institutes at UNC, Duke, Penn State and elsewhere whose budget base ranges between \$1M and \$2M. Comparatively "rich" institutes have a staff of 4-5 full time assistants, award several FTE's to faculty associates, and provide thousands of square feet of office space. On the other hand, the proposed funding is not too far from the budget for the new Bureau for Social Science Research (BSSR) at Indiana University (Bloomington) that will receive \$250,000 in startup funds. As should be clear from the proposal, the budget of the QISS is "lean" and fiscally responsible, but is large enough for the institute to have an impact, to grow over time and to sustain itself.

## Schedule of Meetings and Forums with Social Science Faculty

The QISS proposal was revised many, many times, based on countless communications with UK faculty, the Advisory Board, administrators and personnel at benchmark institutes (e.g., Indiana University, Northwestern, and Penn State). The various versions of the QISS proposal were posted on a publicly accessible [website](#). Formal meetings between QISS organizers (Mark Peffley and members of the Advisory Board) and UK social science units were scheduled during the months of January and February, 2010.

- January 14, Meeting with Council of Chairs in Arts & Sciences College
- January 25, Meeting with Executive Committee in Arts & Sciences College
- February 3, Meeting with Agricultural Economics Department, Agriculture College
- February 4, Meeting with Martin School in Graduate School
- February 10, Forum in the Education College
- February 12, Meeting with Behavioral Science Department
- February 16, Forum for Gatton School, Communications and Social Work Colleges
- February 23, Forum for Public Health, Medicine, Nursing, Health Sciences , Pharmacy and Agriculture Colleges
- February 26, Forum for Arts & Sciences College

## Appendix: Examples of Quantitative Social Science Institutes at Other Institutions

### A. **Quantitative Social Science Institutes at UK Benchmark Institutions**

Below we provide links to at least one Institute or Center at each of UK's benchmark institutions that provides many of the functions proposed for a QISS at UK.

<b>Benchmark Institution</b>	<b>Relevant Quantitative social science Institute (or Centers);</b>
<a href="#"><u>Michigan State University</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR)</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>North Carolina State University</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Center for Developmental Science</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Ohio State University</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Various centers</u></a> , too numerous to mention
<a href="#"><u>Pennsylvania State University</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Social Science Research Institute (SSRI)</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Purdue University</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Social Research Institute</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Texas A&amp;M University</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Race and Ethnic Studies Institute (RESI)</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>University of Arizona</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Institute (SBSRI)</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>University of California - Los Angeles</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Institute for Social Science Research</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>University of Florida</u></a>	Various centers
<a href="#"><u>University of Georgia</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Institute of Behavioral Research</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Institute of Government and Public Affairs</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>University of Iowa</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Social Science Research Center (SSRC)</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>University of Maryland - College Park</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Various centers</u></a> , too numerous to mention
<a href="#"><u>University of Michigan - Ann Arbor</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Institute for Social Research</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>University of Minnesota - Twin Cities</u></a>	Various Centers, <a href="#"><u>for example</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>University of North Carolina -</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Odum Institute for Research in Social Science</u></a>

[Chapel Hill](#)

[University of Virginia](#)

[The Carter G. Woodson Institute for African-American and African Studies](#)

[University of Washington](#)

[Center for Statistics and the Social Sciences](#);  
[WISER](#) (University of Washington's Institute for the Study of Ethnicity, Race, and Sexuality)

[University of Wisconsin - Madison](#)

[NRCS – Social Science Institute](#)

B. **Four Illustrative Examples** that range from smaller Centers in individual departments to more full-fledged Social Science Institutes. It should be noted that many benchmark universities have long provided individual departments with the kinds of resources and support that we are requesting for the entire University of Kentucky campus.

1. [Program In Statistics and Methodology](#) (PRISM): PRISM is affiliated with the Political Research Laboratory in the Department of Political Science at The **Ohio State University**, and serves as an example of *how benchmark universities have supported quantitative research within individual departments*. PRISM has a [Director](#), a renowned methodologist and active researcher in Political Science, supports two PRISM [fellows](#) each academic year, sponsors a [Speaker Series](#) where scholars present cutting-edge methodological work, and organizes statistical methods instructional [brownbags](#) in the use of statistical packages (e.g., STATA, R) and is a clearing house for information on [methods courses](#) and requirements in Political Science and other social science departments at Ohio State.

PRISM is an excellent example of how benchmark universities have provided support to individual departments for quantitative research.

2. [Institute of Social Research \(ISR\) at Indiana University](#): The Institute of Social Research at **Indiana University-Bloomington** was founded by the Department of Sociology in 1963 primarily to support faculty research and graduate training in Sociology, and has recently broadened its mission to include interdisciplinary [grant development](#) administration, and [intensive summer methods programs in Bloomington](#), in addition to serving as an umbrella for various interdisciplinary research centers ([Center for Survey Research](#), [Indiana Consortium for Mental Health Services Research](#), [Sociological Research Practicum](#)).

For many years, the ISR at IU was a fine example of how benchmark universities helped individual departments support social science research; presently, the ISR serves as an example of how institutes can evolve to serve the wider social science community. Currently, the ISR is being folded into a more integrative [Bureau for Social Science Research](#) at the University level designed to integrate many existing social science institutes and centers and IU-Bloomington.

3. [Odum Institute for Research in Social Science](#): The Odum Institute is considered the first, and perhaps the foremost, social science institute founded at a public university—**UNC- Chapel Hill**. Faculty and students come from all over the university to take advantage of the training and

courses, consulting services, data, software, and facilities that the Institute offers. The list of [services](#) is impressive for both its scope and depth. Especially impressive is the array of [short courses](#) the Institute provides on methods and grants on a regular or semi-regular basis. Unlike some institutes, Odum did not develop from grant activities in a single department. Rather, UNC has made a serious effort to provide public goods (i.e., services) that facilitate high quality social science research across the university.

4. [Institute for Research in the Social Sciences \(IRiSS\) at Stanford University](#): IRiSS at **Stanford** trains social scientists in advanced and innovative research methods, undertakes high-quality interdisciplinary research, and disseminates research findings that address significant global challenges. Founded in 2004 as an initiative of the School of Humanities and Sciences with the broad goal of advancing social science research at Stanford, IRiSS provides a platform for collaboration across the departments of Anthropology, Communication, Economics, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology, and Stanford's professional schools. More specifically, IRiSS:
  - *Invests in new core research infrastructure for the social science community, including the development and deployment of advanced technology systems;*
  - *Creates a collaborative research community, and expands research support, that strengthens Stanford's ability to attract and retain top-tier faculty and students;*
  - *Makes seed grants and sponsors a faculty fellows programs for interdisciplinary work that effectively promotes scientific research and results;*
  - *Teaches graduate and undergraduate students state-of-the-art methods for data acquisition and analysis that strengthen scientific inquiry;*
  - *Equips faculty and students with research tools to maximize their productivity and potential;*
  - *Convenes conferences of leading scholars and students to further the debate and bring scientific methodology to bear on large-scale societal problems.*

Although Stanford University is not comparable to UK in many respects, the mission statement and specific goals of Stanford's IRiSS, listed above, provide an excellent statement of principles for the QISS at UK to emulate, albeit on a smaller scale. Perhaps because IRiSS was founded in 2004, its organizational goals offer a relatively "clean" statement of what a social science institute *should* be instead of what an existing institute has evolved to become, given a unique organizational history.

## QISS Budget, FY 2009-10

Following the phased launch of the QISS, only limited expenses for core activities and personnel would be brought online in FY 2009-10, such as summer stipends, a methods speaker series, Director support (travel, RA), and website construction.

Item	Expense
<b>1. Internal grants for research support for pilot studies and summer stipends for developing external grant proposals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Up to 5 awards at \$5,000 each</li> </ul>	\$25,000
<b>2. Social science lecture series and methods workshops (2-3 speakers, at \$2,000 to \$2,500 per speaker)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Speaker stipends will range between \$500 (for a one-time methods talk) to \$1,000 (for a 2-day methods workshop).</li> <li>Approximately \$1,500 for travel, lodging and miscellaneous expenses for the speaker that includes dinners with UK social scientists and graduate students.</li> </ul>	\$6,000
<b>3. Travel budget</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>To visit 2-3 "model" QISS's.</b> The sites would include: 1) Indiana University in Bloomington, IN (\$600); and 2) 1-2 of the following: Stanford University, Vanderbilt University, University of Pennsylvania, or UNC-Chapel Hill (\$1,500 to \$2,000). Note: the budget is for a single individual to visit a site.</li> <li><b>To visit program directors at NSF, NIH or various foundations.</b></li> </ul>	\$5,000  \$2,500  \$2,500
<b>4. Website construction for the QISS (along with setup of SharePoint sites &amp; email address list-serves)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 weeks, 160 hours of work at \$15.00 per hour, paid to a UK IT employee</li> </ul>	\$2,400
<b>5. Director Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Half-time Research Assistant (to assist Director until a full-time staff assistant is added in FY 2010-11)</li> <li>Part-time Instructor for Director course reduction</li> </ul>	\$8,500  \$6,000 \$2,500
<b>6. Miscellaneous expenses for up to 2 grant information workshops (e.g., box lunches for 20 faculty &amp; graduate students)</b>	\$200
<b>7. Limited Staff Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Clerical assistance</b> will be required as soon as money budgeted for the QISS comes on-line. However, with a small operating budget in FY 2009-10, clerical assistance may be too sporadic to justify a regular secretary. Until FY 2010-11, one day/ week for 47 weeks of clerical time may be "purchased" from another unit, which would amount to 376 hours. If priced at \$15/hour, the cost would be \$5,640.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Alternatively, this amount could be absorbed by the Research Office.</p>	\$5,640
<b>8. QISS Office Space</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Director's office, Part-time secretary's office, and a small meeting room in the outer-office area</li> </ul>	
<b>Total FY 2009-10</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lower amount excludes limited clerical support (Item 7), higher amount includes it.</li> </ul>	\$47,100 to \$52,740

## QISS Annual Budgets for FY 20010-11 to FY 2012-13

The budget in each of the following three years, from FY 20010-11 to FY 20012-13, will be approximately the same. Expenses increase over FY 2009-10 as core activities are expanded.

Item	Expense
<b>1. Internal grants for research support for pilot studies and summer stipends for developing external grant proposals</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approximately 10 grants of \$5,000 each awarded each year, with 2-3 grants between \$5,000 and \$7,500 awarded for proposals designed to promote new research collaborations across departments and colleges.</li> </ul>	\$50,000
<b>2. Social science lecture series &amp; methods workshops</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>4-5 speakers, at \$2,000 to \$2,500 per speaker</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Speaker stipends will range between \$500 (for a one-time methods talk) and \$1,000 (for a 2-day methods workshop).</li> <li>○ Approximately \$1,500 for travel, lodging and miscellaneous expenses for the speaker that includes dinners with UK social scientists and graduate students.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Additional methods workshops and short courses</li> </ul>	\$23,000  \$12,500  \$10,500
<b>3. Travel budget</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To visit program directors at NSF, NIH and various foundations.</li> </ul>	\$7,500
<b>4. Website maintenance for the QISS, and assistance for web development for Centers (along with setup of SharePoint sites &amp; email address list-serves)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 160 hours of work at \$15.00 per hour, paid to a UK IT employee</li> </ul>	\$2,500
<b>5. Director Support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half-time Research Assistant (to assist Director in research)</li> <li>• Course buyout for Director (1 PTI per semester for two semesters)</li> </ul>	\$11,000  \$6,000 \$5,000
<b>6. Miscellaneous expenses for up to 4-6 workshops &amp; receptions</b> (e.g., box lunches for 20 faculty & graduate students)	\$2,500
<b>7. Clerical assistance</b> <b>*Note:</b> various models of clerical support are being investigated.	\$14,000
<b>8. QISS Office Space</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director's office, Part-time secretary's office, and a small meeting room in the outer-office area</li> </ul>	
<b>Total FY 2010-11</b>	<b>\$115,000</b>