**November 25, 2019**

**Cluster Hire Program**

**Request for Cluster Suggestions**

The Office of Academic Affairs, in collaboration with the Research Office, is pleased to announce a call for proposals for faculty cluster hires. The purpose of this program is to broaden and deepen research at OU by creating a critical mass of faculty across schools and departments in the College in promising new areas of research.  A successful cluster will be one that attracts significant external research funding, provides opportunities to support graduate and undergraduate students, and that catalyzes collaboration across disciplines.

In order to assist groups of faculty in responding to this RFP, the Research Office will hold 3 events during which faculty from across campus will have the opportunity to share their research and their ideas for potential clusters. Faculty will then have four weeks to submit their joint cluster proposals.

Cluster proposals are expected to request between 3-5 strategic hires.

A model cluster might, for example, be composed of 5 hires: a very senior researcher/scholar (perhaps attracted by an endowed chair); 2-3 established scholars/researchers with active funding; and 1-2 positions for early career faculty.  It is expected that clusters will be intellectually diverse and reflect academic breadth of the university’s capacity in the topic area.

Clusters should therefore include proposed hires in at least two Schools (or one School and the College) and at least three departments. **NOTE: These are guidelines and all proposed cluster configurations will be considered as long as the proposal demonstrates how the cluster meets the larger goals of this program.**

Strong cluster proposals should also demonstrate that the university already has some existing strength in the area proposed; this could include faculty strength, but may also include other types of programs on campus that could serve as the locus for a cluster, or some feature of our region that would lend strength to an Oakland-based cluster.

Proposals will be reviewed based on the following criteria:

1) evidence of existing activity/strength in the thematic area among OU faculty/programs that would serve as a solid and attractive basis for the cluster

2) evidence of existing and stable sources of external funding that could support the work of the cluster

3) evidence that existing OU strengths plus those of the cluster would make OU competitive for external funding in the thematic area of research chosen for the cluster (major competitions should be identified in the proposal)

4) strength of the rationale for the specific proposed positions

5) potential contribution to student success and community engagement

6) potential to include or attract diverse faculty

Proposals will be reviewed by a committee composed of Deans and others, and chaired by Dr. David Stone, Chief Research Officer. The committee will make a recommendation to the Provost, who will select the winning proposal(s) in consultation with Dr. Stone and the President.

**Proposals must include the following elements:**

A one page executive summary

A four page rationale for the cluster detailing all of the following:

* a description of the thematic research area and the proposed cluster
* a description of the existing activities/strengths upon which the cluster will build and an explanation of how the cluster will leverage existing assets and resources
* evidence of existing and stable external funding (faculty should work with the Research Office and/or Advancement to identify funding possibilities)
* evidence that the cluster/thematic area is one in which OU can be competitive for external funding (and identification of who the likely competition is)
* a plan for organizing and managing the cluster/thematic area to ensure that the group works synergistically
* a description of how the cluster could also support the strategic goals of the university, specifically related to student success and diversity, equity and inclusion.

Brief descriptions of the intended positions, including the role/importance of each to the cluster and their home department (two pages total)

A description of any equipment and space needs (one page)

Two page CVs of each of the existing OU faculty members who will participate in the thematic research area

Letters of support from the Deans of the participating Schools and/or the College

**Timeline:**

RFI posted: 11/22/19

Faculty Networking Events:  12/2/20 – 1/31/20

Proposals Due: 2/28/20

Committee Review: 3/9/20 – 3/27/20

Decision announced: 3/31/20

Faculty with questions are encouraged to contact Dr. Stone (dstone@oakland.edu).

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