November 21, 2016

FACULTY, DEANS AND DIRECTORS

Re: Call for Proposals—Academic Initiatives

Dear Colleagues:

I am pleased to announce the third call for proposals for Academic Initiatives, a campus program that is designed to provide up to three years of support for teams of engaged faculty from across multiple schools who are committed to developing new areas of interschool excellence. Initiatives are expected to encompass projects that involve research, undergraduate and graduate education programs, outreach to public and private organizations, and philanthropic potential. Proposals may focus on any one of these activities, but the intent of this program is to support initiatives with a wider range of activities.

Successful proposals will receive funding of up to $150,000 for the first year. Evaluation at the end of the first year will determine possible funding for up to two additional years. Funding can be used to support any legitimate academic purpose, including specialized administrative support, teaching release, research collaborations, workshops or conferences, student participation, collaboration with the academic units on new graduate concentrations or emphases and undergraduate minors, coordination of grant applications, and outreach and community engagement. General administrative staff support will be provided by the Provost, through the Office of Academic Planning, under the leadership of Vice Provost Judy Stepan-Norris.

Funded projects will be subject to annual review. Initiative directors should not have any expectation for funding support beyond three years, or the end of the period of the initiative if an earlier end date is determined through the annual review process. Sustaining the activity beyond the term of the initiative will require participants to become self-sustaining through a combination of external research funding, philanthropic gifts, self-supporting academic programs, and/or school-level allocations.

Proposals may be submitted by groups of faculty, departments, centers or institutes, and academic deans. Deans of the relevant schools should comment on the proposals and indicate whether additional school-based resources will be made available. Endorsement by the pertinent chairs and deans is not required, but they should be consulted and their comments appended to the proposal when it is submitted.

In fewer than 10 pages, proposals should:
- identify the team leader(s) and campus-wide participants;
- discuss the importance of the research theme and/or educational innovation;
- explain how UCI is positioned for global leadership in this area;
- describe potential contributions to each of the areas of Initiative interest: research, graduate and undergraduate education, community outreach, and potential external financial support;
- describe a structure of faculty governance and oversight; and
- recommend how the success of the proposed activity should be assessed for purposes of year 2 and year 3 funding.

Each team-based proposal should be submitted to the Office of the Provost at provost@uci.edu no later than noon, January 30, 2017 for funding beginning July 1, 2017.

Proposals will be reviewed by the Academic Planning Group and the deans, who will provide guidance on the importance of the activity, the possibilities for achieving leadership in the proposed area, the extent to which there is diverse faculty participation, the commitment of the leadership, the effectiveness of the plan, and whether it is likely to evolve into a self-sustaining activity after three years.

In making final award decisions I will supplement the peer-review process with considerations of the balance of topics and inclusive excellence, with the goal of including themes that permit widespread faculty participation. My preference is to provide higher levels of support to a smaller number of very ambitious proposals, but it is possible that the review process may lead to less generous funding of a higher number of proposals.

Please contact Judy Stepan-Norris at jstepann@uci.edu with any questions.

Sincerely,

Enrique Lavernia, Ph.D.
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
Distinguished Professor of Chemical Engineering and Materials Science

C: Judy Stepan-Norris, Vice Provost for Academic Planning
Pramod Khargonekar, Vice Chancellor for Research