INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH TEAM CLUSTER HIRE PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: The Office of Academic Affairs, in collaboration with the Office of Research and Technology Transfer, is pleased to announce a call for proposals for an interdisciplinary faculty cluster hire. This initiative provides an opportunity to develop a critical mass of faculty in an emerging field that spans traditional academic and discipline boundaries. Successful proposals will identify an Interdisciplinary Research Team (IRT) that will lead to new external research funding and can support significant graduate enrollment increases through new degree offerings. The IRT should build upon and expand our current research strengths, have a strong applied research focus, and complement activities within the Innovation Campus. The IRT collaborations should span at least two colleges, with three or more being preferred.

This program will identify research areas prime for strategic growth. While the State and University are currently facing tough financial constraints, the outcome of this review process is that WSU will be able to quickly respond and build interdisciplinary research clusters once budget conditions improve.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW: The intent of the IRT Cluster Hire Program is to strategically hire several new faculty members to complement existing strengths and create a nationally recognized program in a particular interdisciplinary field. Funding will be negotiated among participating colleges and Academic Affairs with an understanding that part of the funding will come from existing budgets. It is expected that new revenues generated by the IRT will significantly offset the seed funding after the initial three years. Depending upon budget, funds to support research equipment capital investments may also be available. Proposals must include each of the following elements:

- The attached IRT Cluster Hire Program Cover Sheet
- Executive summary (1-page)
- Rationale (6-page max), the rational should include: (*i.*) a description of the cluster, (*ii.*) an explanation of how the cluster builds upon and extends research capabilities at WSU, including new external funding, (*iii.*) summary of specific impact on the strategic plans of the participating colleges, (*iv.*) a sustainability plan, (*v.*) resource requirements, (*vi.*) a summary of anticipated graduate education opportunities, and (*vii.*) a leadership plan.
- Summary of new positions, including expected creative/scholarly/research activity and home department for each person
- Proposed budget, including faculty salary ranges, space and equipment needs, anticipated start-up funds, and cost-sharing from the colleges
- CV (2-page max) of each existing WSU faculty member that will be part of the proposed IRT
- Letters of support from the Deans of the participating colleges

The proposals will be reviewed by an IRT Evaluation Team chaired by Dennis Livesay, Dean of the Graduate School and Associate Vice President of Research and Technology Transfer. The evaluation team will make a recommendation to the Provost, who will select the winning proposal in collaboration with the President and the Vice President of Research and Technology Transfer. Groups of faculty interested in submitting a proposal are encouraged to contact Dean Livesay (dennis.livesay@wichita.edu) as soon as possible to express their intent and ask clarifying questions.

IRT CLUSTER HIRE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1.) **What will be the status of the IRT faculty? Will there be special expectations of them?** While faculty expertise and scholarship criteria will be defined by the needs of the IRT, successful candidates will have regular faculty status within an existing unit with standard teaching, service, and research expectations. It is true that IRT faculty will be expected to create new opportunities within the selected area, but this is not unique to this program. All faculty are expected to create teaching and/or research opportunities within their discipline. The only difference here is that we expect that by having a critical mass of complementary expertise that there will be a synergy where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

2.) **How specific should the proposals be with respect to expertise and academic background?** The goal of the program is not to identify the exact expertise needed for a single project. Rather, the successful proposal will broadly identify a research area that will lead to new opportunities for external funding, student engagement, and graduate programs. The proposal should identify the types of expertise needed to be successful within that space and their expected academic home, but should also be mindful of the indefinite nature of faculty hires. As an analogy, the goal is to not to create a building that is so specific that it can only be used for one purpose; instead, the goal is to build a structure that is adaptable and able to nimbly and successfully respond to opportunities as they arise.

3.) **How close or distant should the identified area be from existing research strength at WSU?** The successful proposal will clearly build upon existing strength, but should also deliberately establish new critical mass within a currently underrepresented research area.

4.) **What is the exact budget limit?** There is no limit on the budget request, but the expectation is that the program will hire 3-6 new faculty, plus typically associated start-up funds. Shared use capital equipment critical to the research area might also be included in the request. The final University investment into the IRT will be negotiated after selection, and will be subject to available funds.

5.) **What is the timeline for creation of the IRT?** Proposals will be due in June 2017. If a proposal is selected for funding, the first wave of IRT faculty hires will be done for AY 18-19, but it is unlikely that the entire team will be hired in the first year. Rather, IRT faculty hires will be spread over 2-3 years.

6.) **Can faculty, departments, and colleges be associated with multiple proposals?** Yes, due to the cross-disciplinary emphasis of this program, it is expected that participants will likely be associated with multiple proposals.

IRT CLUSTER HIRE PROPOSAL COVER SHEET

Cluster Name	
Cluster Coordinator	
Cluster Lead Dean	
Abstract (50 words max)	

INSTRUCTIONS: Proposals are to be prepared by interdisciplinary faculty groups, and must follow the guidelines within the attached RFP.

ANTICIPATED TIMELINE:

RFP release date	September 2016
Proposal deadline	June 2017
IRT Evaluation Team review due	September 2017
Final decision and announcement	October 2017
Recruitment for AY 18-19	To begin in November 2017

CONSULTATIONS: Signatures are required from the chairs (or equivalent) from all departments affected by the IRT. Attach a second page if more space is need.

Date	Department / College	Chair Signature

APPROVALS: In addition to the signatures below, a letter of support is required from the dean of each participating college. The letter should include a summary of cost matching, expected outcomes, and how the proposal fits into the college's strategic plan.

Cluster Coordinator: _____ Date: _____

Lead Dean: _____ Date: _____