Cluster Guidelines and Best Practices: A Manual for DEOs

This manual summarizes requirements and best practices for DEOs when hiring, evaluating, and mentoring cluster hire faculty members. Much of the information comes from the *UI Cluster Hire Guidelines* and the *2012 Cluster Hire White Paper*. DEOs are encouraged to review these documents.

Guidelines: http://provost.uiowa.edu/files/provost.uiowa.edu/files/ClusterHireInitiativeGuidelines.pdf
White Paper: http://provost.uiowa.edu/files/provost.uiowa.edu/files/ClusterWhitePaper.pdf

Hiring Cluster Faculty Members

Before beginning a search for a cluster hire faculty member the DEO and the cluster director should meet to plan the search and review the requirements below. In addition, DEOs are encouraged to review all of the information below with their faculties so that there are no surprises or misunderstandings later on.

1. Job Description: Advertisements for cluster hire faculty members will include language about expected participation in the cluster. Here is the recommended minimum language:

> *The successful candidate for this position will be expected to participate actively in an ambitious new multidisciplinary initiative in [topic of cluster]. New faculty with expertise in [disciplines represented by proposed new faculty in the cluster] will complement the University's considerable existing expertise in these areas to form the core of this innovative multidisciplinary initiative. Participation in the [topic of cluster] will be an important component in performance evaluations.*

The director of the cluster needs to be consulted when preparing a cluster job description. The Office of the Provost will not approve a job advertisement for a cluster hire position without the approval of the cluster director.

2. Cluster Hiring Process: Department search committees for cluster hire faculty members must include at least one member from the cluster steering committee appointed by the cluster director.   This person will have full voting rights on the search committee and will inform the cluster steering committee on the extent to which each of the proposed interview candidates meets the mission of the cluster. The Office of the Provost will only approve interviews for candidates who have the support of the department, the dean, and the cluster steering committee.

When the department has selected a preferred candidate, the member of the cluster steering committee who serves as a full voting member on the search committee will inform the full cluster steering committee. The Office of the Provost will only approve for hire candidates who have the support of the department, dean, and the cluster steering committee.

3. Offer Letter Language: The offer letter to a proposed cluster hire faculty member will include language in each of the areas below.

Participation in the Cluster: The new hire is expected to do research or creative work pertinent to the cluster area and be expected to participate in cluster activities.

Tenure-track Annual Review: Written annual performance reviews are required by the DEO of the home department and by the cluster director for all tenure-track cluster faculty members. These are included in the candidate's personnel file.

Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion: At the time of reappointment, tenure, and promotion, a member of the cluster steering committee sits on the Departmental Consulting Group (DCG). In addition, the faculty members associated with the cluster across campus have the option of submitting a letter(s) to the DCG that summarizes the faculty member's contributions to the cluster initiative.

Some colleges have covered the above material and other functions, such as teaching expectations, in a separate Memorandum of Understanding that is appended to the offer letter.

Evaluating Cluster Hire Faculty Members

It is recommended that the DEO and the cluster director communicate at least once per semester to assess the progress of the cluster hire faculty member. It is also recommended that once a year:

- *the DEO attend a meeting of the cluster steering committee to learn about the activities of the cluster and the contributions of the department's cluster faculty member;*
- *the cluster director attend a department meeting to report on the activities of the cluster and the department's cluster hire faculty member.*

Finally, it is recommended that DEOs review all of this information with their faculties before the process of hiring a cluster faculty begins and annually thereafter.

1. Annual Evaluations: At a minimum, the cluster director will provide the DEO with a written evaluation of the cluster faculty member's activities in the cluster for the previous year. With this information, the DEO will prepare his or her written evaluation of the cluster hire faculty member. It is recommended that the DEO, cluster director, and the cluster hire faculty member meet to discuss the cluster member's activities and progress toward promotion and tenure.

2. Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure: A member of the cluster steering committee, appointed by the cluster director, will sit on the DCG with full voting rights at the time of reappointment, promotion, and tenure (in the Public Digital Humanities Cluster the steering committee member does not have voting rights). In addition, the faculty members associated with the cluster across campus have the option of submitting a letter(s) to the DCG that summarizes the faculty member's contributions to the cluster initiative. A letter from the cluster hire director is especially encouraged.