

Meeting the Grand Challenges of the 21st Century: The University of Iowa Cluster Hire Initiative Guidelines

1.0 Overview

The University of Iowa is one of the premier research institutions in the nation. We are committed to advancing knowledge and education through discovery, application, and creative work. Many of today's most exciting and important research frontiers transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries. If we are to maintain and strengthen our research and creative excellence we must facilitate multidisciplinary scholarship, instruction, and public service. This is precisely the aim of the cluster hire initiative. As a center piece of our 2010-2016 strategic plan, *Renewing the Iowa Promise: Great Opportunities—Bold Expectations*, the cluster initiative will bring 100 new tenured and tenure-track faculty to campus to collaborate with existing faculty in multidisciplinary cluster areas focused on many of the "Grand Challenges" of the 21st century.

2.0 Objectives

The primary objectives of the Cluster Hire Initiative are to:

- Address important scientific and/or societal challenges
- Promote multidisciplinary research, scholarship, and creative work
- Advance undergraduate and graduate teaching and learning
- Enhance community engagement and service
- Benefit the people of Iowa and beyond

3.0 Specific Guidelines

The cluster hire guidelines laid out in this section are meant to provide general direction for forming and managing the clusters. We recognize that flexibility in applying the guidelines is necessary to ensure that clusters reach their full potential. Every cluster is unique and will require individualized development strategies to flourish.

At their core, the clusters are faculty driven: proposals emanate from the faculty; searches are run by academic departments; and promotion and tenure decisions for cluster faculty originate with academic departments. The Executive Vice President and Provost is the final authority on all cluster matters and he or she will be formally advised by a standing committee comprised of collegiate deans, a representative from the Office of the Vice President for Research, and the Associate Provost for Faculty.

3.1 Choosing Cluster Areas

The 2009 Water Sustainability cluster emanated from President Mason's call for a strengthened emphasis on sustainability at UI. The 2010 clusters in Digital Public Humanities and Aging Mind and Brain have their origins in the UI Strategic Task Force reports of 2009. The 2011 call for cluster proposals was open, encouraging faculty to submit their ideas for successful clusters. We see value in continuing to experiment with various ways of determining cluster areas and selecting among competing proposals for the same cluster. As such, cluster areas and selections processes will be announced annually by the Provost.

3.2 Cluster Leadership

It is expected that cluster proposals will identify faculty leadership for the clusters. After a cluster proposal is selected for implementation, the faculty leader will work with the dean(s) involved in the cluster to form a cluster steering committee comprised of at least five faculty members whose research or creative interests intersect the cluster area. The committee is subject to approval by the Office of the Provost. The faculty leader will serve as chair of the committee and be the key spokesperson for the cluster on and off of campus.

3.3 Cluster Position Advertisements

Advertisements for the cluster positions will include language about expected participation in the cluster.

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.

3.4 Cluster Faculty Hiring Process

The steering committee will work with the dean(s) to determine the home departments for cluster faculty searches. Each department search committee for a cluster faculty member will include at least one member of the cluster steering committee appointed by the steering committee chair. This person will have full voting rights on the departmental search committee and he or she will report to the cluster steering committee on the

extent to which each of the proposed interview candidates meets the mission of the cluster and is likely to enhance the success of the cluster. The steering committee chair will report to the departmental search committee if the cluster committee has concerns about one or more candidates meeting the mission of the cluster. The steering committee chair will also report to the dean(s) and the Office of the Provost on the acceptability of the department's proposed interview candidates before the Office of Provost gives approval to begin interviewing.

Once the interview list is approved the hiring process will proceed according to the practices of the home department. The member of the cluster steering committee who served on the department search committee will be a voting member of the department as the hiring process moves forward and he or she will participate in the interview activities. When the department has selected a preferred candidate the member of the cluster steering committee serving on the search committee will report to the cluster steering committee on all of the interviewees. If the steering committee has concerns about any of the candidates meeting the mission of the cluster the steering committee chair will discuss the issues with the department DEO. The steering committee chair will also report on the interviewees to the dean(s) and the Office of the Provost before an offer letter is extended.

3.5 Offer Letter Language

The offer letter to proposed cluster hire faculty members will include language in each of the following areas.

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.

3.6 Cluster Hire Initiative Funding

Salaries for new cluster hire faculty members come in part from the Office of the Provost and in part from the colleges. Under the current model, the Office of the Provost

provides \$100,000 recurring per position for half of the lines in a cluster and the college(s) matches these lines 1 for 1. Lines may be split 50-50 between the Office of the Provost and a college, in which case the Office of the Provost provides up to \$50K recurring for support.

Covering start up costs for new faculty members in a cluster will be determined on a case-by-case basis in discussions between the colleges and departments involved in the cluster, the Office of the Vice President for Research and the Office of the Provost. For each cluster, a plan to cover start up costs should be outlined and approved by the dean(s), Office of the Vice President for Research, and the Office of the Provost before the Provost approves the cluster.

Clusters will have a variety of administration needs in their early years. Primary among these are the costs of: 1) conducting faculty searches; 2) providing release time for faculty cluster directors; 3) developing a web presence and other promotional materials; and 4) sponsoring activities and events that stimulate a sense of community among cluster participants. Financial resources for these needs will come primarily from the Office of the Provost for the first few years and then it is anticipated that many clusters will be able to generate other internal and external support.

3.7 Departure of a Cluster Faculty Member

If a Provost-or college-funded cluster faculty member leaves the university the Provost and the Dean(s) decide whether to reinvest the position in the cluster. If they decide not to reinvest the position in the cluster they may choose to invest it in another cluster or they may choose to close the position, in which case half of the departing person's support (not less than \$50k) reverts back to the Office of the Provost and the remainder stays in the college.

If a Provost-or college-funded cluster faculty member stays at the university but his or her research or creative interests shift away from the focus of the cluster, then the Provost and the Dean(s) will decide whether half of the departing person's support (not less than \$50k) reverts back to the Office of the Provost.

3.8 Evaluating Clusters *(revised fall 2011)*

Each cluster hire initiative will develop a five-year plan with measureable metrics and benchmarks to evaluate its success. Cluster leadership will present the plan for consideration to the Deans, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of the Vice President for Research during the spring semester of its first full year of operation. Final approval of the plan rests with the Office of Provost. Every subsequent year the cluster will report back to the Deans, the Office of the Provost, and the Office of the

Vice President for Research on its progress in meeting the five-year plan. The annual meeting may also be used to report on recommended modifications to the plan. After review of the plan in the fourth year each cluster will develop a new five-year plan.

The measureable metrics and targets of the five-year plan should consider the five primary objectives of UI's Cluster Hire Initiative:

1. Address important scientific and/or societal challenges
2. Promote multidisciplinary research, scholarship, and creative work
3. Advance undergraduate and graduate teaching and learning
4. Enhance community engagement and service
5. Benefit the people of Iowa and beyond

The five-year plan should also include metrics and measureable targets to document its own long term sustainability and viability, and demonstrate a commitment to diversity as appropriate.