

Cluster Hiring Initiative – Cycle Two

Overview and purpose

This initiative aims to facilitate interdisciplinary strategic hiring within the College to:

- Bridge gaps in existing faculty expertise where a critical new hire could lead to significant advances and increase reputation in that area;
- Catalyze, encourage and foster interdisciplinary research across departments, in innovative and exciting fields of study;
- Increase diversity and improve equity and inclusion;
- Address enrollment growth, instructional gaps, and strategic teaching needs.

This is the second year in a multi-year, faculty-driven process where funds in the College will be reserved for cluster hires. The final number of approved cluster hires is subject to availability of proviso funds, and Provost approval.

Proposal guidelines

- Proposals must describe how the cluster will benefit the research and educational mission of the College of Engineering by bridging gaps in expertise and/or fostering research in innovative and exciting fields of study.
- Any group of faculty may propose a cluster but must include faculty from 2 or more departments, with a designated cluster leader. Cluster proposal participants can also include non-Engineering faculty, and the cluster leader does not need to be an Engineering faculty member.
- All requested hires must be in Engineering departments. It is not necessary for proposals to include joint hires, especially at the assistant professor level. The proposal must identify potential home departments for each hire.

- Hiring requests can span several years, beginning in 2021-22 and continuing through 2023-24.
- Buy-in from department faculty not involved in the clusters is essential. Your proposal should identify ways in which potential home departments will be engaged at all stages, including before, during, and after the search, hiring, and onboarding processes (i.e., presentations about the cluster at faculty meetings, faculty participation in candidate interviews, integration of faculty hire into departments, etc.)
- Proposals must outline plans to attract a diverse candidate pool and comply with diversity, equity, and inclusion best practices in recruitment, hiring and retention. Effective practices include inclusive job ad language, candidate evaluation rubrics, reducing bias in evaluation skill-building, real-time reporting of faculty candidate pool demographics, faculty on-boarding, mentoring plans, etc. Proposals must outline plans to provide new hire mentorship and cluster team-building activities to ensure that the cluster continues to work as a cohesive unit post-hire.
- Proposals must identify any unusual startup costs and/or resources needed.
- **The word limits in the proposal template will be strictly enforced. Anything exceeding the limit will be removed from each section prior to the evaluation of the proposal. Any supporting documentation, such as letters of support, will also be removed prior to the evaluation in order to ensure an equitable review.**

Three-stage proposal evaluation process

In the first stage, a faculty evaluation committee will review proposals based on an established rubric and make recommendations to the dean. The dean may then choose from existing proposals or invite more proposal submissions.

A subgroup of proposals will advance to the second stage where department chairs and the faculty at large will have the opportunity to review all proposals and presentations. Department chairs will provide feedback and describe to the dean how specific proposals fit into their department strategic research and hiring initiatives, educational plans, and growth needs. Based on the feedback of the

committee and the chairs, the dean will select final proposals to move forward to hiring.

Cluster hire interaction with hiring committees

The cluster participants are expected to serve on the hiring committees of their respective departments. The chair of the committee should be a department faculty member who is not a participant in the cluster, with a possible co-chair from the cluster. The committee should also include faculty members who are not cluster participants to ensure departmental buy-in and engagement in the hiring process.

The hiring committee must follow established DEI best practices and assume responsibility for engaging department faculty and leadership during each step of the search. To keep the College apprised on the status of the search, the hiring committee must also share search progress information with the Dean's office.

Failed searches can be re-launched in the next year.

Support for teaming and proposal development

Due to current public health guidelines, we do not plan to hold any in-person brainstorming or teaming events during this cycle. Faculty seeking collaborators for their proposals are asked instead to fill out a short questionnaire (provide link) to indicate their interest in submitting a proposal, and requesting support with finding potential collaborators.

In the fall and winter, Vice Dean Jihui Yang will hold several virtual cluster hiring office hours, which faculty can attend to ask questions about the process, indicate their interest in a proposal topic, or request information about potential collaborators.

These office hours will be held on **Tuesday, December 1, from 3-4 pm and Wednesday, January 13, from 9-10 am**. Connection information will be sent out closer to the dates.

Key dates and deadlines

December 1, 2020, 3-4 pm - cluster hiring virtual office hours

January 13, 2021, 9-10 am - cluster hiring virtual office hours

March 12, 2021 - proposals due

May 17, 2021 - successful proposals selected

Questions?

Contact Dean Nancy Allbritton (nlallbr@uw.edu) or Vice Dean Jihui Yang (jihuiy@uw.edu).

For questions related to diversity, equity and inclusion best practices, contact Joyce Yen (joyceyen@uw.edu)

Please submit proposals, using the attached template, to Lucia Ersfeld (luciap@uw.edu) by **March 12, 2021**.