Request for Proposals – Strategic Interdisciplinary Hire Program (SHIP)
April 14, 2014

Overview

The Office of the Vice President for Research (OVPR) at The University of Alabama invites proposals from faculty and department heads for an interdisciplinary strategic faculty cluster hire program (SHIP) targeting five OVPR-funded faculty positions, and involving at least two different UA colleges. In the first round SHIP competition, the OVPR will provide salary and start-up support for two to three faculty positions (at least one of which can be at a senior level; with all salary lines to fall within UA guidelines). An operating budget will be available for the first three years, depending upon satisfactory progress. In the second round SHIP competition, beginning at the end of the first round third year, an open competition including the incumbent team, will be held. The metrics used in review will also include the incumbent's satisfactory progress as determined by increased extramural funding and formal external review. In this second round, an additional two or three OVPR-funded faculty positions (including salary and start-up) will be possible.

The focus area for the SHIP award should eventually be recognized as one of the core research strengths of UA at the regional and national levels, as determined by performance outcomes and peer evaluations. The cluster must be interdisciplinary, and it must expand on existing University research strengths that advance University research efforts in an area of potential strength. The cluster must synergistically utilize existing resources (personnel, facilities, etc.) within participating colleges.

A two-step process will be used to select winning proposals. The first round competition will begin with a letter of intent (LOI); a two-page white paper due on May 16, 2014. Proposers of up to three white papers will be invited to submit a final proposal of no more than five pages by June 9, 2014.

SHIP Proposal Outline

1) Title

2) Proposal Body that includes:
   a. What is the proposed cluster area and its unique aspects?
   b. How does it build upon existing research strengths and/or creates new research strengths on campus?
   c. What is the present and future importance of the area of study in its broader discipline?
   d. How would the disciplines involved uniquely contribute to and benefit from the cluster area?
   e. How will the cluster increase scholarly output?
   f. How will the cluster attract and tap into external funding opportunities?
   g. What will the research impact of the cluster be for the University and region/state/nation?
3) SHIP Cluster Make-up and Synergistic support that includes:
   a. What is the overall make-up of the cluster (e.g., only new hires or a combination of new hires and existing faculty)?
   b. What would be the make-up of the new hires in the cluster (e.g., one senior faculty, one junior faculty; two senior faculty)?
   c. What resources would each college contribute to maximize the impact of the cluster? Ideally, a 1:1 match in faculty lines (potentially increasing the number of new faculty hires to 10 over the two rounds of this program).
      i. Dedicated faculty line(s) from participating colleges
      ii. Additional Personnel (e.g., GAs, postdocs, lab assistants, technical support, etc.)
      iii. Resources (e.g., facilities, equipment, lab and office space, additional start-up funds, summer salary, travel funds, etc.)

4) Recruitment/Assessment Plan
   a. How will the potential candidates be identified and recruited?
   b. What is the probability that the new hires will transfer existing resources and projects to UA?
   c. What are the roles and responsibilities of the proposing team members?
   d. How will the operating budget be utilized to ensure success of the cluster?
   e. What are the overall success criterion of the cluster and how will it be evaluated over time?

5) Proposed Budget (not counted in page limit)

**Deadlines and Review**

1) Deadlines
   a. Initial Letters of Intent are due May 16, 2014 at 4:30 pm. LOIs should be submitted electronically to Cheryl Leonard (celeonard@ua.edu). A confirmation of receipt will be provided.

2) Review Process
   a. LOIs will be reviewed and recommendations will be made by the Office of the Vice President for Research by June 9, 2014.
   b. Positions will be made available immediately to the colleges that submit the winning proposal.
   c. The Research Advisory Committee (RAC) will administer continuing review of the cluster activity annually.

*Note: Should members of the cluster not meet benchmarks or leave the University then faculty lines will revert back to the OVPR and/or other sources of funding.*