Request for Proposals—Cross-School “Bring Your Own Idea” Gatherings

The Office of the Provost wishes to encourage interdisciplinary faculty dialogue across school and departmental lines to enhance community, enrich faculty research, and broaden faculty perspectives on topics of teaching and research interest. Faculty who teach and research in different schools on similar or related topics may cross paths only infrequently, or interact in contexts where the task at hand forecloses discussion of common scholarly interests. In the interest of fostering relationships between faculty that may yield future teaching and research collaborations, the Provost announces the second round of the Cross-School “Bring Your Own Idea” program.

☐ In this program, two or more faculty will propose contemporary topics of research or teaching interest that are likely to engage faculty affiliated with more than one school within Washington University. Topics should be broad enough to draw a critical mass of interested faculty, but sufficiently specific that conversation about research and teaching interests contained within the topic might be meaningful (e.g., Sustainability & the Environment; The Global Financial Crisis; The Creative Process; Cities and Architecture; Technology & the Digital Revolution; Equality in Theory and Practice).

☐ The provost’s office will fund a series of gatherings dedicated to each topic, spread over the spring 2015 and/or fall 2015 semesters. Gatherings may be structured as breakfasts, lunches, coffees, or late afternoon cocktail hours. Regardless of structure, the purpose of the gatherings will be to connect faculty working in similar areas across school lines and to build relationships that may serve as the foundation for future research and teaching collaborations.

☐ Discussion at the gatherings should be informal. This program is not designed to fund a paper-based workshop series, but instead to acquaint faculty working on common subject matter areas with the research agendas and teaching interests of others and find common ground. Prior BYOI groups have pursued a varied range of agendas, including creation of new courses, proposals for new institutes or centers, jointly authored scholarly publications, cross-disciplinary conferences, and forming and strengthening cross-disciplinary relationships with faculty possessing common interests.

☐ The faculty members proposing the topic will assume responsibility for suggesting a core group of faculty with interest in the area who should be invited, and for organizing the discussion. The minimum number of faculty involved should total at least 6, and faculty must be drawn from at least two schools within Washington University.

☐ The provost’s office will assist with scheduling the gatherings and arranging meals.

☐ To apply, please submit (1) a one paragraph description of the topic, (2) a second paragraph explaining why the topic is important and appropriate for emphasis at Washington University, whether through continued investment in teaching, research or service, and (3) a list of faculty affiliated with more than one school at Washington University who you plan to invite (at least 6, but no more than 12). Please also indicate your preferred style of gathering (breakfast, lunch, coffee or cocktail hour).
Groups funded in the first round (2014) may seek funding for a second round during the 2015 year. Applications from these groups should indicate the number of faculty who typically attended the group’s meetings in 2014, the number of meetings held, and a description of progress toward any agenda the group decided to pursue.

Please send proposals, along with supporting documentation (faculty CVs for the proposing faculty; and a list of core faculty identified as likely invitees including school and/or department affiliation) to Provost Holden Thorp, Campus Box 1072 or provost@wustl.edu by February 20, 2015. Announcements will be made to successful applicants by March 2, 2015.