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September 10, 2007

MEMO FOR: Academic Deans

FROM: Charlena M. Seymour
Senior Vice Chancellor and Provost

SUBJECT: Amherst 250 Procedures for AY 2007-08

As I discussed with you when we met on August 28, the 2007-08 academic year should be very active in terms of faculty hiring. I expect the success we have achieved during the first two years of the Amherst 250 program will continue, and that the quality and diversity of the new faculty we are bringing to campus will have an enduring impact on the campus.

In fact, it is important for all of us to keep in mind that Amherst 250 represents the second-greatest faculty expansion in the campus's history. The decisions we are making now will shape the campus for years to come, so I appreciate the care and patience all of you have shown in making these critical investments.

The goals and approach of this year's Amherst 250 process were described in Bryan Harvey's presentation to you on the 28th. A somewhat expanded version (providing more information on the goals of the Amherst 250 program) was presented to Chancellor Thomas Cole and to the Faculty Senate Amherst 250 Task Force on September 6. The Amherst 250 Task Force endorsed this year's plan, and the updated version of the presentation is attached in both Powerpoint and text versions. Please feel free to distribute them, and this memo, to your departments.

In this memo I want to detail the nature and timing of the information I will need from you in order to make this year's allocations, and also to provide a bit more context for some of the ideas we discussed on August 28th.

1. Amherst 250 Carryover Positions

As of this date there are 39 previously funded Amherst 250 positions that have not yet resulted in a tenure-track appointment. One of our first priorities is to move those positions through the pipeline as quickly as possible.

Of these, 27 have already been designated for specific programs. Some are still open because a search was conducted but did not result in an appointment. Others were intentionally delayed for one reason or another. I will assume that a new or continuing search will be conducted this year for any position that involved an unsuccessful search last year. Please notify Andy Effrat as quickly as possible if you do not plan on repeating a search this year. Positions intentionally deferred to the AY 2007-08 hiring cycle should now be gearing up for search this year. There are a couple of cases in which there may be special considerations, and we will be contacting the relevant Deans to discuss how to proceed.

The eight positions still to be allocated from last year's research and scholarship pool will be rolled over into an augmented pool to be allocated this year (see below). The four carryover positions in the spousal pool will be applied whenever appropriate at any point in the process (see below).

2. New Allocations

As we discussed, 29 positions (from the 57 funding commitments for this year) will be made available for this year's hiring cycle (please recall that the other 28 positions will be reserved for later use for curriculum improvement and other purposes).

The new allocations will be made through four processes:

- a. *Remaining instructional deficits.* Five positions have been reserved to address any continuing serious instructional gaps emerging from the update of the instructional analysis. This process will occur in early October. You do not need to provide any information at this time.
- b. *Spousal appointments.* You may request assistance with a spousal appointment at any time in association with any other appointment. Please keep in mind that we will have only a few spousal opportunities available, and need to make them go as far as possible. You may request either tenure-track or non-tenure-track assistance, temporary or base funding. Obviously, base allocations will require very compelling arguments. Please contact Andy Effrat as soon as the possibility of a spousal request arises.
- c. *Performance pool.* Twelve positions will be allocated to recognize and promote strong performance at the departmental level. Because we expect the results of the National Research Council's (NRC) survey of graduate programs to be available later this academic year, we will not allocate these positions at this time. The NRC results are not the only evidence to be used in assessing departmental performance, but the availability of such comprehensive and widely recognized data provides a unique opportunity we need to take advantage of. We will provide more details on this process as we come closer to the event, but a few points can be made now:
 - i. Research benchmarking data will be reviewed for all departments. Please recall that the benchmarking process for this year only involves updating the data for our own faculty, so you are not required to collect information from comparison institutions (although you are certainly free to do so, and may wish to do so especially if a department is not included in the NRC study). You will receive a separate memo describing the process and timeline for this year's benchmarking update, and you may contact Bryan Harvey with any questions.
 - ii. I recognize that not all departments will be included in the NRC study, either because they did not meet the study's threshold for doctoral degree production, or because the discipline itself is not included in the study. All departments, however, will be considered for allocations from the performance pool. If NRC data are available, they will naturally form a very important part of the analysis. If not, then I will consider research benchmarking data, external reviews, and other appropriate forms of evidence.

- iii. I also recognize that the fit between disciplines evaluated by the NRC and our department structure is not always good (e.g., Biology, Biochemistry, Psychology). We must still try to derive as much value as possible from the NRC data, so in those cases we will work with departments to develop as fair a view of performance as possible.
- d. *Research and Scholarship pool.* This is the only category for which I need information from you at this time. There will be twenty positions available for allocation (8 from last year's pool and 12 twelve additional from this year's commitments). As we discussed, the positions in this pool will be allocated through an RFP process, in which each Dean may submit one or more proposals. In developing proposals, please keep the following in mind:
 - i. The proposal is your request for positions. While we will ask you to update your three-year faculty hiring plan (see below), the hiring plan is simply a tool to log the requests you will have made through the RFP process.
 - ii. Proposals should be brief. It should be possible to make the main argument in a page or two, with supporting material as appropriate.
 - iii. The presentation on August 28th outlined the criteria I will be using in reviewing proposals. In general, cluster hiring, interdisciplinarity, and cost-sharing/leveraging will advantage a proposal, but only to the extent that they add real value.
 - iv. If you submit more than one proposal, you must place them in priority order.
 - v. If you submit a proposal that crosses school/college lines, it must also have been submitted by the other relevant Dean(s). The priority given by each participating Dean will be an important factor in reviewing the proposal.
 - vi. Proposals may be for a single position, or for several. Cluster hiring is desirable where appropriate, but it is not required.
 - vii. Keep in mind that there are only 20 positions available for the entire campus at this time. You are free to submit proposals as you see fit, but please do not request positions with little hope of success or to reflect "something for everyone."
 - viii. In general, proposals should involve requests for entry-level positions, regardless of the source of funds. Please refer to the hiring process guidelines separately distributed by Associate Provost Andy Effrat for more information on requests for hiring senior-level positions.
 - ix. Every proposal must very clearly articulate the opportunity or payback underlying the proposed investment's value. The more direct the relationship, the better. So, for example, a request for positions to create the critical mass necessary to apply for an existing grant opportunity will likely be more competitive than a proposal to add faculty in a general area in which it is hoped grant opportunities may arise in the future.

- x. Opportunities need not necessarily refer to specific grant or foundation funding, but if they do not, then persuasive evidence of payback to the institution must be presented in some other form. For example, a proposal to establish leadership in an emerging area of doctoral study must present evidence of the disciplinary shift, student interest, and so on.
- xi. In some cases, an “opportunity” may be defined as building necessary strength in a core area so as to maintain program viability. In such cases, however, the rationale must be particularly clear (as detailed in an AQAD report, for example), and no alternative to an Amherst 250 allocation is available (e.g., no retirement vacancies are available).
- xii. Proposals should be as specific as possible in terms of cost-sharing and leveraging of other funds. A proposal that makes specific reference to direct costs, matching funds, shared resources, and the like will be more competitive than one that simply asserts the possibility of leveraging resources.
- xiii. Proposals should clearly state any conditional features, who is assuming risk, and how success will be measured and consequences apportioned. For example, a proposal in which a Dean agrees to absorb a position if a hoped-for grant is not forthcoming will be more competitive than one that simply asks for a base position.
- xiv. For every position requested through the RFP process, please attach the facilities and start-up information requested on the faculty hiring plan worksheet. As we discussed on the 28th, the information on facilities and start-up will be very important in this year’s process. You can expect follow up from Bryan Harvey (facilities) and Susan Pearson (start-up) as part of the review process for the RFP process.
- xv. As we move through the process we will want to communicate to the campus community and perhaps a wider audience where we are making our investments, and why. You should therefore anticipate that your proposals may be made public, and you should try to cast them in terms that would be meaningful to a broad audience.

3. Faculty Hiring Plans

As we have done each year, you will be asked to update your three-year faculty hiring plan, incorporating all positions regardless of funding source. Some of you have already submitted updates of your plans. If you need your previous plan, or have questions about completing the update, please contact Associate Provost Bryan Harvey. Please keep in mind that the hiring plan does not constitute a request for positions.

At this time hiring plans should only include tenure-system faculty. A bit later in the process we will also want you to incorporate non-tenure-track faculty into your hiring plans. This will occur after the vacancy analysis has been completed, and the update of the instructional analysis is in hand. Under separate cover you will receive the worksheet for completing the vacancy analysis.

Thank you very much for your cooperation as we continue the Amherst 250 process. There are many issues to be sorted through, but the outcome is very positive and represents an exciting moment in the University's development.

Attachments

cc: Chancellor Cole
Prof. Ernie May
John Cunningham
Andy Effrat
Bryan Harvey
Susan Pearson