February 25, 2016

To: Tenure system Faculty, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers

From: Katherine S. Newman, Provost
Carol A. Barr, Vice Provost for Undergraduate and Continuing Education

Re: Request for Faculty First Year Seminar proposals

The Faculty First Year Seminar (FFYS) has been well received by both faculty teaching and first year students participating in the program. The Faculty First Year Seminar is an opportunity for faculty to teach something about which they are passionate, being able to choose a topic of their liking to engage first year students in a weekly seminar for 50 minutes. The first year students benefit by having a chance to meet a tenure system, senior lecturer or lecturer faculty member in a small classroom (maximum of 18 students), low stress environment and to discuss important topics with fellow students who have similar interests. This experience helps the student transition to the college environment and campus community, and provides an avenue for being mentored.

The Fall 2016 semester will follow the format we instituted last year by providing an opportunity for as many first year students as possible to participate in a first year seminar during the Fall semester – their first semester on campus. These seminars will be offered through various avenues including the Residential Academic Programs, their Schools and Colleges including the Commonwealth Honors College, and through the Faculty First Year Seminar program. We will not be offering Faculty First Year Seminars during the Spring semester, but instead would like to offer as many FFYSs as we are able to support during the Fall 2016 semester.

We are soliciting proposals from faculty to teach a Faculty First Year Seminar for Fall 2016. This is a one-credit class, meeting once a week for a 50-minute time block. Faculty First Year Seminars are taught outside a faculty member’s regular teaching duties, i.e., as an overload. Faculty teaching a FFYS with enrollment of at least eight students and maximum enrollment of 18 students will receive a stipend of $2000. The faculty can select to receive this stipend as research funds, which may be used on any legitimate research or educational-related expense, or as one-time additional compensation subject to appropriate taxation and other deductions.

Please consider submitting a proposal to teach a FFYS for Fall 2016. The application form can be found on the Provost’s Office website under the Teaching, Learning and Curriculum link, http://www.umass.edu/provost/teaching-learning-curriculum. The application deadline is Wednesday, March 23rd. Thank You.