



MARK P. BECKER  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR  
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS AND PROVOST

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Academic Deans

**FROM:** Christine W. Curtis

*Christine  
Curtis*

**DATE:** July 30, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Faculty Excellence Initiative Request for Proposals for AY 2008 – 2009

This request for proposals is for the AY 2008-2009 Faculty Excellence Initiative (FEI) program. The primary goal of the FEI program is to improve the overall quality and competitiveness of the University of South Carolina by focusing positions in areas that will advance the institution as a recognized leader in education and scholarship. For this, the fifth year of the FEI program, funding priority will be given to ensuring the success of previously funded FEI clusters and new and existing Centers of Economic Excellence (CoEE) programs by providing additional FEI positions to increase their breadth, depth and effectiveness. Eligible FEI clusters are those which were awarded positions to be filled in fall 2005, fall 2006 and fall 2007. All CoEE programs are eligible. Lead deans in conjunction with deans and directors participating in the FEI clusters or CoEE programs should evaluate previously funded FEI clusters and new and existing CoEE programs to determine if additional FEI positions are required to achieve the FEI program goals. The lead dean should then encourage the selected clusters' principal and co-principal investigators to submit cogent proposals for the FEI positions that are needed. The lead dean and all participating deans and directors must endorse the proposal. An endorsement form is attached.

Proposals should present convincing arguments and address the following evaluative criteria:

- make a compelling case for the potential to have "leapfrog" effects for the University by building upon areas of existing strengths to achieve national and international prominence;
- enhance substantially an established FEI cluster, CoEE program or academic program or department to increase its breadth, depth, and/or effectiveness;
- leverage existing resources, such as replacement hires or significant investments in programmatic development and infrastructure;

- be interdisciplinary spanning two or more departments or colleges/schools in addressing rising areas of scholarship and education that transcend the traditional boundaries of departments and disciplines.

It is expected that all proposals will materially support established strategic visions for the participating units.

Each position supported under the FEI program will entail a total of \$70,000 of recurring commitment towards salary and fringe benefits. In those cases where the salary and fringe benefits total less than \$70,000, the award will be capped at the actual cost of the position at the time of hiring. Commitments will not inflate over time, and all salary increases become the responsibility of the tenure home unit.

Proposals are to be coordinated through the deans of the participating academic units. For interdisciplinary proposals, a *Lead Dean* must be designated. For FEI cluster enhancement or CoEE Enhancement proposals, the *Lead Dean* and all participating deans and directors must endorse the proposal and clearly state the reasons for supporting the proposal. Proposals that represent collaboration with an established center or institute need to be vetted through the appropriate director(s), and all proposals must be submitted through the USCeRA online system.

### **Types of Proposals**

**1a. FEI Cluster Enhancements and 1b. CoEE Enhancements:** This year, for the first time, the FEI RFP specifically addresses adding new positions to previously funded FEI clusters and new and existing CoEE programs. As stated earlier, eligible FEI clusters are those which awarded positions to be filled in the fall semesters of 2005, 2006 and 2007. All CoEE programs are eligible. FEI clusters and CoEE programs, which, in the collective opinion of the lead dean and all participating deans and directors, need additional FEI faculty to form a robust cluster or CoEE program, may request additional FEI positions. The Provost's Office will commit to no more than two additional faculty for existing clusters or new and existing CoEE programs, although approval of one additional faculty member is more likely. These requests must have the endorsement of the lead dean and all participating deans and directors to be considered.

**2. Cluster Hires:** A typical cluster will involve hiring two or more faculty members, will span multiple departments, schools or colleges, and will reflect the opportunity to leverage existing university resources and programs to establish the University of South Carolina as a nationally rising or recognized leader in the identified area. For each approved cluster hire, the Provost's Office will commit FEI funds for three or fewer individuals in that cluster. If a cluster involves more than three individuals, the hiring deans supporting the cluster must agree to fund the additional hires with school/college funds.

**3. Innovative Additions to Faculty:** A limited number of positions will be focused on those cases where adding one new faculty member to a program will truly transform the teaching and

scholarship in the program. Proposals to leverage an FEI hire with center, institute, school or college resources for additional hires to significantly advance programs are encouraged.

**4. Endowed Chairs Program:** In order to facilitate the Research Centers of Economic Excellence (CoEE) Endowed Chairs Program truly transforming USC, the FEI program will contribute up to \$70,000 toward the base salary and associated fringe-benefits of a faculty member hired as a chair holder under the CoEE program.

### **Proposal Format**

Each proposal should be prepared according to the following structure:

- **Executive Summary** (500 Words): Identify the areas of inquiry and the opportunities being addressed with the proposal. Include the number of positions requested, and the faculty member designated as point-of-contact for the proposal. In addition, place the proposal into one of the following categories: (1a) FEI Cluster and (1b) CoEE Enhancement; (2) FEI New Cluster (3) Innovative Additions to Faculty; and (4) Endowed Chairs Program.
- **Body of the Proposal** (2500 Words): The main body of the proposal should address how the proposal has the potential to advance significantly the University of South Carolina as a recognized leader in education and scholarship. State clearly the goals of the FEI cluster, CoEE faculty or FEI innovative hires and how the goals will be achieved. When possible, be explicit in demonstrating the fit with school, college, and university priorities; i.e., “leapfrog” potential, fit with an explicated strategic vision, opportunity to leverage unit resources for high impact, and interdisciplinary approach to addressing a rising area of scholarship and education.
  - o **Assessment** (included in the Body of the Proposal Word limit): Proposals should address how the effectiveness of the FEI cluster, FEI CoEE program or innovative FEI in meeting the goals articulated in the proposal will be assessed. State clearly the assessment measures and mechanisms that will be used as well as the reporting lines and the individuals or entities who will be involved in the assessment. Explain how the assessment results will be used to enhance the cluster’s effectiveness.
  - o **Cluster/CoEE Request or Enhancement** (additional 300 Words): Proposals for new or enhanced FEI clusters or FEI CoEE faculty should address how the units involved in the cluster or CoEE program will meet the objectives and how the units will promote collaboration among the FEI cluster or FEI CoEE hires in research and teaching.
- **Proposal Team**: Identify the faculty, with names and unit affiliations, who collaborated on the proposal.
- **Hiring Plan**: Summarize the estimated timeline and search strategy for the proposed hire(s). Suggest members of the search committee.

- **Budget:** Provide estimates of the space needs, start-up costs, and starting salary for the position(s) requested. In addition, indicate how these will be met using unit resources, or otherwise, that will be in addition to those provided through FEI funding.

Each proposal should be prepared using either Times New Roman or Arial 12 font with at least one inch margins. The proposals may be either single spaced or double spaced.

**Timeline:**

February 1, 2008: Full Proposals Due. See above for proposal formatting, word limitation and font requirements.

February-April 2008: Faculty Review Committee meets to review proposals.

May 1, 2008: Final Funding Decisions. The funding decisions will be transmitted to the academic deans. In addition, to outright approval of proposals, some proposals will be approved in modified form.

**Process:**

A faculty committee will review and evaluate the proposals. The committee will score and rank the proposals within the categories identified above under Executive Summary. Evaluation forms with weighting for each section are attached. The Provost will then use the evaluations prepared by the committee to make the FEI allocations for faculty searches to begin in 2008. A *Lead Dean* will be appointed for each approved proposal.

The *Lead Dean* will be responsible for coordinating with deans, directors, and other lead administrators of units that will be involved in an approved search. A single search committee will be formed for recruiting a cluster and must include all entities involved in the cluster and diversity among its membership. The advertisement should include all possible units that may serve as the tenure home for the candidate.

The *Lead Dean* is responsible for

- setting the levels of the FEI positions
- constituting the search committee
- granting permission to advertise
- ensuring that the job advertisement is representative of the position and, at the same time, is sufficiently broad so that a strong and diverse pool of candidates is obtained
- monitoring the search process to ensure that proper search practices have been employed and that a diverse and academically strong pool of candidates is obtained.

All recruiting and hiring will, of course, be conducted in accordance with the *Faculty Manual*, human resources policies, and equal opportunity policies. The *Lead Dean* is responsible for obtaining approval from the Provost's Office before extending an offer. The FEI hiring plan does not provide any exceptions to University or State of South Carolina rules and regulations.

FEI funding decisions are tentative until the time an offer to a particular candidate is approved by the Provost's Office and accepted by the candidate. FEI funds will be transferred as a base increase in a recurring budget to the appointing unit for the fiscal year in which the faculty member hired under the FEI program assumes his or her appointment at USC.

Questions and requests for further information about FEI should be directed to Christine W. Curtis, Vice Provost for Faculty Development ([curtisch@gwm.sc.edu](mailto:curtisch@gwm.sc.edu) 777-2808).

**Attachments: FEI Review Criteria Forms**

- 1a. FEI Proposal Review Criteria for Enhanced Clusters
  - 1b. FEI Proposal Review Criteria for FEI Enhanced CoEE Program
  2. FEI Proposal Review Criteria for New Clusters
  3. FEI Proposal Review Criteria for Innovative FEI
- c: Andrew A. Sorensen, President  
Mark P. Becker, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost  
Harris Pastides, Vice President for Research & Health Sciences  
Center and Institute Directors  
Russ Pate, Associate Vice President for Health Sciences  
Rose Booze, Associate Vice President for Research  
William T. Moore, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs  
Judi Blyth, Assistant Provost for Budget  
Nid Stuessy, Office of the Provost