

Creating Signature Centers at IUPUI: Request for Proposals June 2007

Dear IUPUI Colleagues:

As most of you already know, the Signature Center Initiative was begun last year in an effort to create strong research units that are uniquely identifiable with IUPUI. Signature Centers are an integral part of the Academic Plan for IUPUI, because they will lead the way in world-class research and creative activities that will substantially enhance IUPUI's reputation. With these aims in mind, a call for proposals in the Fall of 2006 resulted in a total of 19 project proposals selected for support. Summaries of these Signature Center projects can be viewed at http://www.iupui.edu/news/releases/070118_signature_centers.htm

There was a great deal of interest and enthusiasm for the Signature Center Initiative in 2006. The quality of proposals was very high, and it was decided to continue the development of Signature Centers across the IUPUI campus. Therefore, this letter is a request for the submission of a second round of proposals. It is expected that approximately seven projects will be supported in this round. The proposed projects may be entirely new, but proposals which were not funded in the first round may also be resubmitted, after suitable revisions have been made to update the proposals and address reviewer comments. It is appropriate here to recall the main characteristics expected of successful Signature Center proposals:

A signature center is a research unit distinctly identifiable with IUPUI. In addition to representing an area of research strength, the center will usually build on some ongoing activities and have many of the following attributes:

- *Signature Centers will often be interdisciplinary in character. They should have the capacity to attract significant external funding as appropriate to the disciplines involved, including federal grants and foundation support. The centers need to bring academic distinction to the campus. After initial campus-based seed funding, they should become largely self-sufficient in a 3 to 5 year time frame.*
- *The work of the center should be unique and distinctive, something which makes it stand out. It should not focus on an area commonly studied at many other universities, although collaborations with other institutions may be desirable.*
- *The center should engage in work which takes advantage of the urban location in Indianapolis and establish partnerships with local community and cultural organizations.*

Proposals must be no more than four pages in length; any proposal exceeding the page limit will not be considered. Proposals should contain the following sections:

- Cover page [not included in the page limit]: Name of proposed Signature Center, main faculty participants, and their department affiliations and contact information
- Proposed research or creative activities
- Background material and existing strengths in proposed area
- Uniqueness and interdisciplinary nature of the center
- Planned scholarly activities [conferences, workshops, exhibits, journal articles]

- Engagement of the local community [if applicable]
- Current and anticipated sources and amount of funding
- Three-year budget estimate
- Appendices [not included in the page limit]: One page CV for each of the principal investigators and all main faculty participants, and letters of collaboration and support, if applicable. No additional attachments are permitted.

Please submit proposals before October 5, 2007 both electronically [in one pdf document] and in hard copy to your Dean as well as to my assistant:

Ms. Sue Herrell

Office of Academic Affairs; 355 North Lansing Street, AO 126
Indianapolis, IN 46202-2896; [317-274-4477; sherrell@iupui.edu]

In the first step, Deans will set up faculty committees within their schools to screen the proposals and rank order all of them based on academic merit and the criteria expected for signature center designation. This rank ordering, along with brief one paragraph descriptions of the strong and weak points of each proposal, should be sent to the Office of Academic Affairs by October 26, 2007.

Two faculty committees, the IUPUI Council of Associate Deans for Research and the IUPUI Research Committee, will independently review the proposals from a campus-wide perspective, and recommend potential signature centers for funding. These recommendations will be completed by November 30, 2007. Final funding decisions will be made soon after the beginning of the spring semester in mid-January 2008, after establishing the availability of matching funds from various schools.

The funding level for each approved proposal is expected not to exceed \$100K per year for three years, with the cost to be shared equally between the central administration and decanal units. Thus, for a proposal approved for \$240K over three years, the central administration will provide \$120K and the school will provide \$120K, both amounts being cash contributions to a special account set up for that proposal. In this way, decanal units will double their contribution to support research. The budget request in the proposals can be very flexible - it can include personnel hires (staff, faculty, and/or students), equipment, travel, event expenses, books, faculty release time, etc. After the initial period of campus-based funding, centers are expected to become largely self-sufficient in a 3 to 5 year time frame. The contribution from the central administration will begin in Spring 2008. However, in order to give more budget flexibility to the schools, they may choose to begin their contributions either in Spring 2008, or in Fall 2008 at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

I look forward with pleasure and anticipation to studying this round of proposals.

Best wishes,

Uday Sukhatme

Executive Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Faculties