

## **New State Funded RA Positions to Enhance Ph.D. Program Quality September, 2005**

*Context:* The state funded 30 new graduate FTE in FY06 and an additional 30 in FY07. This funding provides a fantastic opportunity to continue our focus on enhancing the graduate programs at WSU. From the state vantage, it creates a clear mandate to grow graduate enrollment. Continued receipt of these funds depends on our ability to demonstrate a significant increase in the size of our Ph.D. enrollments and the number of Ph.D. graduates from Washington State University. Thus, these new RA positions must catalyze, beyond a simple “60 more” mode, increased graduate student enrollments.

At the university level, three primary objectives must be attained with these positions.

1. Increase the quality of our incoming Ph.D. students.
2. Increase the enrollment in our Ph.D. programs and increase the number of Ph.D. graduates from Washington State University.
3. Enhance the national reputation of selected Ph.D. programs.

These funds will be distributed on a competitive basis to departments, graduate programs, and academic interdisciplinary programs. Proposals must be submitted to the Dean, Graduate School, on or before November 23, 2005. Awardees will be announced December 13, 2005. Thus, knowledge about these positions will be available prior to the beginning of the recruitment season.

The Graduate School anticipates making 6-10 awards. You should request an appropriate number of new RA positions consistent with the goals and objectives of your unit. This number should be well justified in the body of the proposal.

The funds for these RA positions are permanent. Thus, units can request continuation of this funding source. Each unit, however, must submit a renewal every two years and document the progress being made toward their stated objectives. Continuation of funding will be based on meeting the objectives of this program.

### *Request for Proposal (RFP):*

Proposals are limited to 8 pages in the following format.

- Page 1: Cover page including submitting unit/program; contact information; specific # of RA positions requested and how many years of funding re requested
- Page 2: Executive Summary / Abstract
- Pages 3–7: Body of Proposal (arranged to clearly address the points outlined below). Sections should be numbered as 1, 2a, 2b, etc as per the RFP instructions on page 2 of this document.
- Page 8: References, necessary data, etc.

Proposals must be received by 5:00 pm on November 23, 2005. They should be submitted electronically as PDF files to Bonnie Watters ([bonnie@wsu.edu](mailto:bonnie@wsu.edu)).

*Each RFP must specifically address the following points.*

1. Context for graduate education in your unit. What is the purpose of your Ph.D. program? Why would a student elect to enter your department over others across the nation? How does your internal communication and recruiting plan portray these core messages?
2. Articulate a concise and realistic plan, using new RA positions, that enhances your Ph.D. program. Address to the best extent possible the following points:
  - a. Current number of Masters / Ph.D. students and the expected number in each year from 2006 – 2012. How will these RA positions factor into this?
  - b. How will these positions be used to attract a diverse group of outstanding Ph.D. students? What will you be able to do differently from your current practices?
  - c. Will there be any change in the training or academic objectives that these funds directly stimulate? If so, describe these changes and how they will positively impact the graduate student experience.
  - d. How, exactly, will you use these positions to create incentives for your faculty to further engage in Ph.D. training?
  - e. Address the distribution of these positions in your unit to maximize their impact. How will the internal decision be made in their allocation amongst your full, associate, and assistant professor ranks? How will this process be implemented to maximize the impact of these positions to enhance the quality of your Ph.D. students, grow your Ph.D. program, and enhance the national reputation of your unit?
  - f. How will these positions directly lead to increasing the number of your Ph.D. students on extramurally funded Research Assistantship positions over the next 2-10 years? Quantify the goal for your unit over time.
  - g. How might these positions positively impact our undergraduate teaching mission? Describe any changes your unit would be able to make in this core mission.
3. In addition, there may be unique opportunities for established interdisciplinary programs or centers to use these RA positions to positively impact their admissions procedures. The objectives would remain the same: increase the quality of our incoming Ph.D. students, grow our Ph.D. programs, and enhance our national reputation. However, in an interdisciplinary context there are other mechanisms that may be used to achieve these objectives. If applying as an interdisciplinary program please address the following (in addition to 2a – 2e as applicable).
  - a. What specific new admissions procedures could be implemented with these positions? How would this be managed initially and over time?
  - b. Address the decision process for the allocation of these positions to the faculty in different units within the interdisciplinary program? How will this process achieve the three major objectives of these new positions?

*Review Process:*

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. how well the top three objectives are addressed
2. articulated and demonstrated commitment of the submitting unit to Ph.D. training
3. enhancement of extramurally funded RA that this investment catalyzes (and/or stimulating externally funded research in general)
4. enhancement of national reputation of submitting unit/program
5. positively impacting the recruiting of diverse graduate students
6. enhancing the quality of your graduate program and the student experience
7. enhancing the quality of teaching to our undergraduates.

The ranking will be done by an external panel consisting of three prominent Graduate School Deans from doctoral-intensive institutions. Their ranking will be forwarded to Howard Grimes for implementation. Decisions will be announced December 13, 2005.