Conceptual and Methodological advances in the STEM disciplines have been occurring at a phenomenal rate over the last several decades and show no sign of slowing. Job opportunities related to the STEM disciplines have also increased substantially during this same period. Not surprisingly, undergraduate applications mirror these trends with large numbers of highly qualified students competing for the limited number of seats available in STEM majors.

As a result, the University of Minnesota’s new administration has allocated recurring resources to hire additional STEM faculty. Rather than conducting independent searches for faculty members in the various departments, CBS has decided that we can have the greatest positive impact on the college’s research and teaching mission by conducting cluster hires.

Proposals are hereby requested for clusters that will launch new research and educational themes for the University. Searches will be authorized for up to six faculty members per cluster, with rank ranging from assistant to full professor. Proposals will also be accepted for strengthening existing clusters of expertise, where the addition of one or two new faculty members would significantly elevate capacity.

While the resources for cluster hiring will be allocated from the college, partnerships with other colleges are encouraged, in terms of recruiting, searching, and joint appointments. It may be possible, in some cases, to partner with another collegiate unit to expand the number of faculty who could be hired in a given cluster.

**Rationale for the College of Biological Sciences’ Faculty Cluster Hire Initiative** — It is the administration’s belief that conducting cluster hires will accomplish several goals.

- Advertising multiple faculty positions in this difficult economic climate will attract a great deal of positive attention, will attract the best applicants and will increase the probability of hiring our top choices.
- Defining clusters of faculty positions will encourage CBS faculty to think about interdisciplinary research and teaching, and new opportunities at the interface between the departments.
• Hiring multiple faculty members with an explicit idea about how their work relates to each other will increase the probability that they will collaborate with each other.
• Hiring multiple faculty members in broader areas identified as critical by current CBS faculty, will make current faculty more productive.

Proposal Deadline – Completed proposals should be emailed to Elizabeth Wroblewski (wrobl003@umn.edu) by 4pm, November 11, 2011.

Proposal Guidelines – Proposals should not exceed 8 pages and should include the following information:
1. Cluster Name and description
2. Discussion of how such a cluster would position the university in the competitive, national landscape.
3. Discussion of external research funding opportunities for faculty hired in this cluster.
4. Discussion of how faculty hired in this cluster would meet CBS’ undergraduate education needs.
5. Discussion of how faculty hired in this cluster would meet CBS’ graduate education needs.
6. A draft job announcement.
7. List of departments that might be appropriate tenure homes for individual faculty members hired in this cluster.
8. List of suggested members for a search committee.
9. Suggestion, and justification, of the number of positions at each career stage (Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor).
10. A single page with a list of researchers who exemplify the kind of expertise that would ideally emerge from a search for this cluster. Include the researcher’s name, web page if available and a description of each person’s research program.

Proposal Evaluation – Proposals will be evaluated and ranked by department heads and associate deans with a final decision by the dean. The goal is to complete this evaluation by November 30 and to launch at least one search immediately thereafter*. Additional cluster priorities will form the basis of negotiations with the new university administration.

*It is recognized that launching a search in December is out of phase with the typical “search” season. However, it may be strategic to first recruit and search for senior member(s) of a cluster, followed a few months later (September of 2012) with repeated advertising and searches in earnest for more junior members.