TO: College of Liberal Arts Department Chairs
FROM: Esther Raizen, Associate Dean
DATE: December 12, 2014
SUBJECT: College of Liberal Arts Thematic Graduate Recruitment Program

The College of Liberal Arts announces the 2015-16 round of its Thematic Graduate Student Recruitment program. The program seeks to increase our competitiveness in attracting top students and provide student recruitment opportunities for faculty hired under the Thematic Faculty Recruitment initiative in areas such as Women’s and Gender Studies, Mexican American and Latino Studies, Asian American Studies, Native American and Indigenous Studies, and African and African Diaspora Studies. Because these thematic areas tend to draw students from underrepresented groups, we expect that students recruited through this program will add to the diversity of our graduate programs.

The program will provide funding for an entering cohort of six to seven doctoral students who will receive four- to five-year funding packages and other benefits designed to attract the most talented graduate students in these thematic areas to the departments of the College of Liberal Arts. These students must have indicated and demonstrated in their applications an interest in one or more of the above mentioned thematic areas as the basis of their graduate study.

Each fellowship will come in the form of a stipend, in-state tuition, full tuition support (9 hours) for two long semesters each year during the award period, and health insurance over the course of the award period. The value of the standard fellowships will total approximately $30,000 annually ($20,000 stipend, full tuition, and a one-time payment to cover the cost of purchasing student health insurance).

Each fellowship recipient will be offered two years of fellowship funding, and two or three years of funding in the form of TA/Al/GRA assignments from the admitting department (two years for students who enter the doctoral program with an MA, three for those who do not). Students will not be considered for the fellowship without such departmental commitment. The distribution of fellowship and TA/Al/GRA years will be determined individually by the admitting department for each recipient.

The COLA Graduate Thematic Recruitment Fellowships will be offered, on a competitive basis, to applicants recruited by COLA departments and other PhD-granting units in the college with faculty whose scholarly activity is aligned with the targeted thematic areas and who are committed to mentoring graduate students matched with them through their academic interests.
How to Apply:

Departments may nominate up to three students for the fellowship. Departments interested in having their applicants considered for the fellowship must submit, for each student, a nomination packet that includes the following:

- All UT Graduate Application materials combined into a PDF document
- Letter from the nominating department Chair/Graduate Advisor, including:
  - Commitment to support the nominee for two/three years as outlined above, with plans for the distribution of TA/Al/GRA assignments and fellowship;
  - The names of three faculty members who are willing to serve as an informal committee for the nominee;
  - The name of one faculty member who will serve as initial faculty mentor to the nominee;
  - Statement of the nominee’s fit within the designated thematic areas;
  - Statement illustrating the department’s commitment to work in this thematic area;
  - Note on the nominee’s place on the departmental admissions rank-order list;
  - A plan for active recruitment of the student, should he/she be offered the award.
  - If more than one nominee is submitted by the department, rank order of the students nominated for the fellowship;
- A statement from the proposed mentor that provides an overview of the expected mentorship relationship and indicates how it will help the nominee achieve success at UT and in his/her career path. This statement should outline a plan for yearly evaluation of the student’s progress toward the degree, based on the departmental milestones.

Departments are invited to submit nominations for individual recruits who do not meet the thematic criterion but have the potential to significantly impact the diversity of the graduate student body in the department. Such applications must include the materials listed above, with the statements on thematic areas replaced by a detailed statement on the expected impact of this particular recruitment, with reference to the current situation in the department and broader diversity issues in the discipline/field. While thematic recruitment will be the focus of the fellowships, the committee may consider awarding a small number of fellowships to such recruits.

Schedule:

- By Tuesday, 1/20/15: Lauren Apter Bairnsfather will send a message with instructions for using the online awards system to nominate three students for thematic fellowships.
- Thursday, 1/22/2015: 8:00 AM – Wednesday, 1/28/2015, 12:00 PM – Nomination portal will be open to departments.

Questions may be directed to Lauren Apter Bairnsfather, apter@austin.utexas.edu