

February 4, 2009

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** All Members of the Graduate Faculty, Twin Cities, Duluth and Rochester Campuses

**FROM:** Gail Dubrow, Vice Provost and Dean of The Graduate School

**SUBJECT:** Call for the Formation of New Interdisciplinary Graduate Groups

I am pleased to issue a new call for the formation of interdisciplinary graduate groups. In order to seed new scholarly collaborations and provide a structure for the incubation of ideas that may lead to new interdisciplinary graduate education initiatives, The Graduate School in fall 2007 created a mechanism for appointing faculty and outside experts to interdisciplinary graduate groups. This mechanism responds to the recommendations of several Strategic Positioning Task Forces to establish means by which faculty with similar scholarly interests can identify potential intellectual partners and collaborators (particularly in emerging areas of interdisciplinary inquiry) and to facilitate the engagement of faculty across disciplines by providing visibility and support for their activities. The Graduate School is grateful for the generous allocation of funding from Senior Vice President and Provost Tom Sullivan that has seeded the activities of new interdisciplinary graduate education initiatives through the activities of interdisciplinary graduate groups in the past.

Membership in a graduate group does not confer any privileges related to advising graduate students or serving on examination committees, but simply recognizes an individual's intellectual interest and expertise in an area of specialization deemed "emergent" at the University of Minnesota in terms of research, education, and/or training. The basis for membership is evidence of intellectual interest and expertise in the area as reflected in grants, fellowships, publications, conference participation, and/or graduate teaching, among other scholarly and professional activities. University of Minnesota faculty, as well as experts in emerging fields who are located outside the University of Minnesota, may be appointed to membership in these interdisciplinary graduate groups. The Dean of The Graduate School has the authority to designate graduate groups and to appoint an interim leadership team to evaluate the credentials of prospective members and recommend appointments for membership. Beyond recommending appointments and coordinating the activities of the group, leadership teams will also be responsible for preparing an annual report to The Graduate School on the group's activities. Interdisciplinary graduate groups are subject to annual renewal based on their continuing intellectual vitality. The name and membership of each graduate group will be posted on The Graduate School's Web site, and group memberships will be routinely updated as new members are added.

The purpose of interdisciplinary graduate groups is to seed and support the development of research, educational, and training activities, including but not limited to, the development of proposals for formal programs of graduate study at the University of Minnesota. Following the formation and establishment of a graduate group, The Graduate School will consider requests for seed funding from the group's leadership team. This funding is intended to support the development of educational and training activities that extend the benefits of clusters of expertise across disciplinary lines to Graduate School students interested in emerging fields of knowledge. Funding proposals are due in the Graduate School **BY NO LATER THAN FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2009** for funding to be committed by June 1, 2010. Support for interdisciplinary graduate group activities in this next funding cycle is contingent upon available funding to continue this program.

#### PROPOSING AN INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE GROUP

Proposals for forming interdisciplinary graduate groups should take the form of a letter to the Graduate School Dean. The letter must

- identify the name of the group;
- describe the group's area of intellectual interest;
- propose initiatives that benefit graduate students;
- recommend a leadership team of two or three members;
- include as an attachment an Excel spreadsheet with the names and contact information for the group's initial members—name, department or program affiliation, Internet ID (X.500 ID), e-mail address and telephone number;
- include an attachment with the curriculum vitae of the proposed leadership team members.

#### REQUESTING FUNDING FOR GROUP ACTIVITIES

Once the group is established, funding may be requested. Funding requests should also take the form of a letter to the Graduate School Dean and must

- describe the activities for which funding is requested;
- explain how these activities support graduate students;
- describe how graduate students have been engaged in developing the initiative;
- propose a timeline for the activities;
- include a budget to support the activities.

Funding is contingent on the availability of funds and extending participation in the graduate group to graduate students. Average awards are expected to range from \$2,500 to \$7,500 for funding obligated by June 2010.

All Members of the Graduate Faculty

February 4, 2009

Page 3

Proposals to form interdisciplinary graduate groups, and to request funding for group activities, should be submitted to:

Vicki Field, Director  
Office of Interdisciplinary Initiatives  
Graduate School  
322 Johnston Hall  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455

Proposals may also be submitted via e-mail to [field001@umn.edu](mailto:field001@umn.edu). Please include "ID Grad Group" in the subject line.

We ask you to share this information with other interested parties. Please direct questions about the new interdisciplinary graduate groups Ms. Field, [field001@umn.edu](mailto:field001@umn.edu) or 612-625-6532.