

**Call for Proposals: Cluster Hire in Racism and Social Inequality in the Americas**  
**Specific Focus: Health Inequities and Health Justice in Marginalized Communities**

*Released: March 18, 2021*

Washington State University (WSU) is continuing a new faculty cluster hire initiative in the scholarship and teaching about racism and social inequality in the Americas. For the next round, the cluster hire will focus on health inequities and health justice for marginalized communities; the goal is to seek scholars who will contribute to work in this area and help lead institutional transformation. WSU seeks to build a network of scholars who are committed to conducting and applying research on racism, ethnicity, social justice, power, and structures of inequality in their diverse fields of specialization. Aside from recruiting and retaining a more diverse faculty, when paired with an explicit [network-based mentoring program](#), such cluster hires can transform the institution through the building of new curricula, research foci, and community engagement. As a land-grant institution, the university is particularly interested in hiring scholars who are deeply connected to and integrated into the communities that they study, as a means to build on our strong tradition of engaged and applied scholarship at WSU.

By hiring in a thematic cluster, we aim to foster a strong sense of community among these new colleagues, while also ensuring high rates of retention and encouraging collaboration across departmental, college, and campus lines. While the cluster hire serves as a mechanism to attract, recruit, and retain faculty who share intellectual interests and professional commitments, each position will have a different departmental berth, although joint appointments and proposals will be considered.

We aim to fund 3-4 tenure track hires to begin Fall 2022 as the second cohort of the cluster hire initiative, with the goal of continuing the program for a total of at least three years so that we can build a strong and dynamic network among the cohorts. Priority will be given to proposals that clearly demonstrate how this position will complement existing strengths across the system and promote interdisciplinary collaboration. Start-up costs will be covered by the hiring college or campus.

A three-page (maximum) proposal should include the following:

- Department(s)/unit and area of specialization proposed, tenure berth, submitter's name.
- Each proposal should include the endorsement of the relevant Dean(s) and VCAAs.
- A discussion of how the position will complement existing strengths in the unit and across the WSU system.
- An indication of how the position will enhance interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaboration. Discussion of collaborations should not be suggestive, but rather specific and substantive, either through already established relationships among departments/colleges or through ongoing discussions of collaborative opportunities among departments/colleges.
- An advertising plan for reaching and recruiting a diverse pool of candidates. (Tips for improving recruitment strategies to attract diverse candidate pools attached.)
- Name of the potential chair of the search committee.
- Search committees will also need to attend required trainings in HR guidelines, implicit bias, tools for minimizing bias, and mutual mentoring.

**Position proposals should be submitted by April 16, 2021 to [provost@wsu.edu](mailto:provost@wsu.edu).** For questions, please contact Lisa Guerrero ([laguerre@wsu.edu](mailto:laguerre@wsu.edu)).

### **Creating a Recruitment Plan to Enrich the Applicant Pool**

Search committees that transform the recruitment process proactively design strategies that go beyond using advertising as a way to attract candidates. A robust recruitment plan increases the pool of candidates to include significant numbers of people from underrepresented groups, in particular women and people of color. The following suggestions can support committees to transform the search process:

- Encourage faculty and staff attending professional conferences or delivering papers at other academic settings to make personal contacts with people from underrepresented groups.
- Contact former students who are from underrepresented groups as potential candidates or for suggestions of other potential candidates.
- Contact colleagues elsewhere for suggestions of promising candidates who are from underrepresented groups.
- Contact departments at other institutions especially those with a diverse student body.
- Utilize directories and rosters of fellowship programs at both the dissertation and postdoctoral levels that support individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- Contact historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) to get lists of doctoral students graduating in a particular field.
- Go beyond the usual range of institutions from which you recruit.
- Consider candidates who may be currently under-placed and doing excellent work at less well-ranked institutions.

*(adapted from the Search Process Guidelines from University of Massachusetts Worcester)*