



Call for Proposals: Cluster Hire in Racism and Social Inequality in the Americas Specific Focus: Food and Environmental Justice

Released: January 10, 2023

Washington State University (WSU) is continuing the faculty cluster hire in the scholarship of racism and social inequality in the Americas; the next round of hires will have a specific focus on Food and Environmental Justice. With the focus on Food and Environmental Justice, WSU is seeking to highlight the intersections of race and racism with varied issues around the environment, including the physical, built, and/or social environment, food production and consumption, health, and education. Scholars sought in this search may be focused primarily on food or environmental justice, or on the ways food and environment overlap. Some examples of potential scholarly focuses are: environmental racism; food deserts/swamps; farm labor/food industry labor; indigenous approaches to environmental and food sustainability; long-term health impacts on minoritized communities who face food and/or environmental inequities; food or environmental initiatives focused on minoritized communities. The goal is to seek scholars who will contribute to work in this larger area of scholarship and help lead institutional transformation.

WSU seeks to build a network of scholars 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.

The faculty hired as part of this year's program will begin Fall 2024, as the fourth cohort of the cluster hire initiative. Priority will be given to proposals that clearly demonstrate how this position will complement existing strengths across the system and promote interdisciplinary collaboration. Additionally, applications from units that demonstrate clear and specific goals and priorities regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion within their departments will be given priority. **Start-up costs will be covered by the hiring college or campus. Hires are expected to be at the assistant professor rank.**

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 VCAs.
- 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, and engagement with local, regional, and national communities of minoritized populations. 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 included below.)

Proposals will be evaluated on the following dimensions:

- Articulation of connection to both the guiding topic and the subtopic
- Department plan and justification for position including how the position will complement existing departmental and institutional strengths
- Description of collaboration opportunities
- Advertising and Marketing plan

*Please note: If your proposal was chosen to be a part of the last year's cohort, you are not eligible for consideration for this year's cohort. You will be eligible to submit a proposal again for the **2025-2026** cohort.

Position proposals should be submitted by **March 10, 2023** to provost@wsu.edu. For questions, please contact Lisa Guerrero (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)