To: Transdisciplinary Research Initiative Steering Committees

From: Jane Knodell, Interim Provost and Senior Vice President
Domenico Grasso, Vice President for Research & Dean of the Graduate College

Subject: TRI Steering Committee Information

Thank you for agreeing to serve on the inaugural Steering Committees for the Transdisciplinary Research Initiative. This is truly a unique opportunity to shape the research and scholarly future of the University and to advance the ideas of the former TRI Working Groups. We are delighted to embark on this implementation phase where the vision, talent and ingenuity of our faculty will propel the initiative.

In addition to the Charge document you receive today, as you move forward you should be guided by the Proposal submitted by the Working Group. Each Steering Committee member brings a unique and valuable perspective to the task, but your work must advance the collective vision set forth by your respective Working Group.

The following information should prove useful as you begin your work.

CAMPUS INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION
We need to communicate regularly with campus to maintain the interest and engagement of faculty members who are already connected to a Spire as well as to help identify points of entry for other members of our community. To that end:

The Steering Committee should hold periodic open meetings.

The group should issue brief, periodic updates on its progress, to be posted on the TRI website.

Graduate students are particularly interested in TRI. Please work with the Graduate College to find ways to keep them informed of and, as appropriate, included in your work.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORT
Budget - Your committee will have a budget of up to $5,000 to support its initial work. This funding may be used to support events, to provide weekend or evening meals for the committee, to assist with proposal development, etc. It is not intended as a source of compensation for individuals; but we can discuss in advance unique circumstances that might dictate its use in this way (all relevant University compensation policies will apply). We will hold this funding centrally and will provide you with detailed information on how to access it.
Liaisons - The Transdisciplinary Research Initiative is a joint endeavor of the faculty and the administration. A liaison has been assigned to each Steering Committee (Complex Systems: Melody Burkins, Food Systems: Rachel Johnson, NBH: Cindy Forehand). These individuals are not staffing the committees. Their role is to chart the progress of the group; to help identify areas where we can offer additional support; to help identify possible efficiencies or redundancies; and to offer practical advice.

Administrative Support – In January, we hope to have completed a re-organization that will allow for administrative support to be provided to the Steering Committees via a staff person in the Office of the Provost. This individual will help schedule meetings, book rooms, assist with communications, etc. Please understand, though, that only a portion of this individual’s effort will be allocated to the three TRI SCs.

Faculty Colleagues - Our vision is that the Steering Committees will function as small executive cores within a broad and inclusive band of faculty activity. We encourage you to draw heavily on your colleagues to support your work.

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We are extremely grateful to you for this profoundly important service to the University. We’re available to assist you in every way possible.