


September 20, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: College Deans, Nobel Laureates, Members of the National Academy of Science, National Academy of Engineering, Institute of Medicine, American Academy of Arts and Science, and Distinguished Professors

FROM: John L. Junkins 
Director, Texas A&M University Institute for Advanced Study

SUBJECT: Call for Nominations for Faculty Fellows for the 2017-2018 Academic Year

Later today, at a reception in the Jack K. Williams Administration Building, we will announce the ten new Faculty Fellows of the Texas A&M University Institute for Advanced Study for the 2016-2017 Academic Year. Counting the thirty-five scholars from the prior four years, this brings us to forty-five Faculty Fellows attracted to date, and their credentials are outstanding. Among these are two Nobel laureates (economics and physics); a Wolf Prize recipient; a National Medal of Science recipient; an Awardee of the Hubbell Medal in Literature for Lifetime Achievement; a National Medal of Technology and Innovation recipient, a recipient of the highest honor by the American Association of Architects; a two-time recipient of the State Prize of Russia; as well as members of the National Academies of Science, Engineering, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and comparable international academies. These individuals represent the intellectual strengths and ambitions of Texas A&M broadly and have made significant contributions in collaboration with our faculty and students. Six have chosen to join our permanent faculty after experiencing the opportunities for outstanding scholarship offered by our resources and collaborations with our faculty and students. These six new faculty members have already made a transformative impact on several departments and colleges.

On behalf of the Institute's Internal Advisory Board, I am delighted to issue this invitation for you to nominate accomplished scholars for the 2017-18 cohort of Faculty Fellows. We encourage you to solicit prospective nominees of the caliber sought by this institute from your "rising star" junior faculty as well as senior faculty. Faculty Fellows of the Institute for Advanced Study will be recruited for visiting appointments that will typically last from three months to one year, but their visits may be spread over multiple years. Note that two \$30K/year graduate student Fellowships will be awarded by the Institute to students studying under the direction of Texas A&M faculty collaborating with each of the Institute's Faculty Fellows. Office space and access to research facilities are provided to the Faculty Fellows by the colleges that put forth their nominations. The two page nomination form can be downloaded from this [link](#) and should be completed and returned to me on or before **November 11, 2016**. Please note the following three ground rules:

1. **The nominators should not make contact with the nominees.** We anticipate having more qualified nominees than we can recruit at any point in the process. It is important to not raise expectations until an initial screening is done by the Institute's Advisory Board in order to avoid unnecessary bruises on very distinguished people. The first contact with each nominee should be made when we are certain that he or she will be offered the appointment. Your nomination should therefore be as confidential as possible. Contacts with the approved nominees will be made by the Institute's Director, John Junkins, or individuals designated by Junkins, following a positive recommendation by the Advisory Board. The deans and senior faculty involved in the nomination will be asked to participate in, and possibly lead, the recruitment of the Faculty Fellows. Our experience thus far indicates approximately 60 percent success for recruitment of selected candidates. This success rate indicates that the approach adopted is working well, considering the challenges we should anticipate in attracting very high-quality nominees.
2. **All nominations should be coordinated with one or more deans.** The dean(s) of one or more colleges will need to agree to support 30 percent of the Faculty Fellow's salary as well as provide a housing allowance, office space, administrative support, and some discretionary funds for the nominee in the event that he or she is successfully recruited. In the event more than one college is involved in a given nomination, the nomination form should be co-signed by the two or more deans and the fractional split of the cost share agreed upon, indicated in "Deans' remarks" section at the bottom of the second page.
3. **The nominator should complete the nomination form.** The nomination form offers space for concise descriptions of the following: (i) the nominee's credentials, accomplishments, and recognitions; (ii) a summary of planned activities while the Faculty Fellow is in residence; and (iii) a statement about "why it would be great" to bring this Faculty Fellow to campus. *It is important to highlight potential collaborations that will accelerate career development of one or more "rising star" faculty members and their students.* This nomination form should be considered as a "preliminary proposal," with the anticipation that the information on the form will be used as a basis for further inquiry by the Institute's Internal Advisory Board. Collaborations can be refined in consultation with the nominee when the individual is recruited.

Please note the following four important points regarding the nominations:

- Each college, the Law School, and the Galveston Campus, will be limited to two Faculty Fellow nominations. These are due November 11, 2016.
- Each college, the Law School, and the Galveston Campus, will have the option of jointly submitting one additional nomination that crosses the boundaries of two or more colleges (endorsed by the deans who participate in cost sharing).
- The Provost has approved three institutes established as an outcome of the Academic Master Plan to submit one nomination each with the concurrence of a college dean.
- All nominees should be of a "national academy level of distinction" as appropriate for their particular discipline.

A few examples provide the benchmark of excellence that is our primary aim. Fewer than 70 academics are annually elected to the National Academy of Science (NAS). The National Academy of Engineering (NAE), the Institute of Medicine (IOM), and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences elect a similarly small number of academics annually. These data can be brought into focus by noting that only 15 percent of the Distinguished Professors in Texas A&M's College of Science are NAS members. The national academies apply more selective criteria than we use to select Distinguished Professors. The Advisory Board and I both realize that there are comparable recognitions for the fields not represented by these congressionally mandated academies. The Advisory Board is charged to develop the requisite insight to make informed judgments on the diverse set of nominations received. Major international prizes (Nobel Prize, Wolf Prize, Draper Prize, Pulitzer Prize, Fields Medal, the National Humanities Medal, and so on) represent even more selective criteria than the national academy-level recognitions. My sense of the Provost's charge is that that the Institute's Internal Advisory Board should ensure that successful nominations represent levels of accomplishment, visibility, and selectivity comparable to, or more selective than, those implicit in election to the three congressionally mandated national

academies. The first five classes of nominees were excellent and provide examples of the levels of accomplishment and scholarship diversity associated with successful nominations.

The Institute's budget indicates that we will be able to make 10 to 12 appointments of Faculty Fellows during the sixth recruiting cycle. The final number will depend on the negotiated salaries and other costs associated with the appointments. After the Internal Advisory Board evaluates the approximately 20 to 25 nominees anticipated in this nomination cycle, it will establish a priority order for recruiting, and the Director will request that the nominators and deans help in recruitment of all approved nominees. When a nominee declines or delays the starting date of a Faculty Fellow appointment by more than one year, the next highest priority nominee will be considered, and upon approval, the nominator and dean will be notified so recruitment can begin. This usually occurs each spring during early to mid-March.

The Texas A&M University Institute for Advanced Study represents a wonderful, unique opportunity to move the University forward. **The Institute will continue to succeed if we continue generating a stream of high quality nominations and work hard to recruit them.** This is a truly exciting opportunity. Together we can elevate the faculty and greatly enhance both the quality and reputation of Texas A&M University.

Thank you for your effort. I will be pleased to offer any needed clarifications.

cc: J. Sharp
M.K. Young
K.L. Watson
G.A. Laine