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The Billiken Boost Program for Supporting Equitable Faculty Scholarly Achievement

Background
The COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020 in the U.S. impacted the lives and careers of the SLU community in a variety of ways; for example, increased caregiving to young children, increased health needs and fears, loss of time and energy to devote to scholarship, and many more. Previously, the Provost extended tenure and promotion clocks by a year, and it is clear that more is needed to offer practical support to faculty and prevent inequity in faculty advancement. The reverberation of the pandemic will likely be longstanding and, for many faculty, the consequences of the pandemic created barriers to advancement of their professional careers. Current research suggests faculty whose scholarship was affected by the pandemic are female caregivers to young children and Black/Indigenous/People of Color (BIPOC) women; people often already experiencing bias and barriers in academia. Many other faculty were likely affected as well but are not yet captured in the research. In an effort to define the impact here at SLU and empower faculty achievement that is equitable and specific to the needs of individual faculty, the Provost's office created the *Billiken Boost Program for Supporting Equitable Faculty Scholarly Achievement.*

The program is sponsored and funded by the Provost's Office in collaboration with the Gender Equity Committee, Faculty Fellow for Equity Issues, and the Office of Diversity and Community Engagement.

Note: Scholarly endeavors take many forms in different disciplines. For the sake of brevity, the term "scholarship" is used, here forward, to refer to research, scholarship, teaching, and/or creative activity.

Aims of the program:
1) Define the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on faculty scholarship.
2) Empower increased achievement for faculty whose scholarship was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic through a one-time stipend for needed academic resources.
3) Eliminate the gap in the timely advancement (i.e. promotion, tenure, merit raises) of faculty whose scholarship was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To accomplish these aims the program is designed to support tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track assistant and associate professors whose record of scholarship were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and who propose feasible plans for resuming their scholarly achievement. The program will offer a one-time stipend (up to $5,000) to be used over 1 or 2 semesters for a needed academic resource (e.g., course buyout, hire teaching assistant, hire graduate research assistant, summer salary support for research or other scholarship time, training/conference for professional growth, materials/technology to advance teaching pedagogy, release from service/admin time). *Recipients will be required to report back on the impact of the stipend on their scholarly work and personal/professional development.*

Faculty who request less than $5,000, will be considered on par with all other applicants. *We aim to support as many individual faculty as possible, so please only ask for the budget you need.*

Potential number of faculty: We anticipate this program running for two years with approximately 20 faculty being supported each year, though it may be possible to support more faculty members, depending on the requested amounts in applications and depending on the amount awarded. We will reevaluate the program during the second year to assess for demand and impact.

Cost:
5k per faculty X 20 faculty = $100,000

Due Dates for 2021-22 Academic Year:
- July 1, 5pm CST: Applications close (round 1)
- July 15, 2021: Decision notifications for Fall 2021 stipend
- October 1, 5 pm CST: Applications close (round 2)
- October 15, 2021: Decision notifications for Spring 2022 stipend
- March 15, 5 pm CST: Applications close (round 3)
- March 31, 2022: Decision notifications for Fall 2022 stipend

Due Date for 2022-23 Academic Year:
- September 2, 5 pm CST: Applications close (round 4)
- September 16, 2022: Decision notifications; funds spent by 6/30/23

Eligibility:
- Tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track assistant or associate professors
  - Full professors, regardless of track status, are not eligible.
  - Must be full time faculty member.
  - Clinical time for SLUCare cannot be bought out with the funds.
- St. Louis Campus
  - Tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure track assistant or associate professors
  - Full professors, regardless of track status, are not eligible.
- Madrid Campus Faculty
  - If ranked, assistant or associate professors
  - If not ranked, completed assigned teaching at SLU-Madrid for fewer than 11 years.
- Support of program director and/or department chair for application.
- Meet expectations in each merit review category (e.g., for each of research, teaching, service, advising, etc.) for the most recent two full-time academic years of annual review prior to AY2019-20.
- The funds must be used between fall 2021 and the end of the summer 2023 during the year prior to promotion/tenure review.

- o For example, if an applicant's case is considered for promotion in 2023-2024 (for promotion effective fall, 2024), then the applicant must utilize the stipend no later than summer, 2023.

Criteria:

The following universal criteria will be used to select recipients.

- Evidence of a strong record of scholarly accomplishments prior to COVID-19.
- Feasible plan for use of funds to restart the faculty member's scholarship.
  - o **Research-focused plans** are encouraged to reach out to the Office of VP for Research (OVPR) about programs and other workshops for supporting successful use of the Boost funds. The office offers expert coaching, support, and accountability for research and grant-related scholarship. To learn more contact Dr. David Borgmeyer - david.borgmeyer@slu.edu. *Please make it clear in your plan and how OVPR will support your efforts.*
  - o **Writing-focused applications** can choose to opt into the Faculty Writing Fellows Program with Dr. Mark Ruff (Department of History) for expert coaching, support, and accountability. This would assist the Billiken Boost Program by providing interdisciplinary writing groups in the humanities that meet bi-weekly. It would focus on grant writing, book writing and article writing in the disciplines of history, English, theology, philosophy, modern and classical languages and American Studies. It will assist assistant and associate professors looking to complete monographs and articles to meet standards for tenure and promotion. Participants will work not only to refine prose and ideas but to overcome stumbling blocks common to many large projects such as procrastination and writer's block. The groups will establish timetables for completing individual portions of the projects. *Please make it clear in your plan if you want to take part in the fellowship and how it will support your efforts.*
- Clear description of the significant professional disruption resulting from COVID-19 pandemic.
  - o "*Significant disruption*" is defined as evidence of reductions or slowing down of pace in scholarly endeavors. For example, reduction in number of peer-reviewed papers or grant applications submitted or 3-month delay in scholarly project.
- Clear description of how this program will support a boost for getting back on track towards professional advancement.
- The program is not restricted by gender or race or any other identity or group membership.
- *Additional questions can be sent to Katie Heiden-Rootes – katie.heidenrootes@health.slu.edu*

Stipend Award Description:

- Faculty will receive funding for use over 1 semester.
  - o In academic year (AY) 2021-22 or AY22-23.

Program Review Process:

Applications will be reviewed by faculty and administrative members of the Gender Equity Committee and Office of Diversity and Community Engagement to determine awards. Each applicant will be reviewed by 2 reviewers and a third reader in the event of a significant discrepancy between the 2 reviewers. Group discussion will be used for creating a cut off score and discussion of scoring.

Effort will be made to support tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty and faculty whose application focusses on research and non-research professional activities.

Application Materials:
Submit all application materials to provost@slu.edu *with the subject line: Billiken Boost Program Application.*

1. Letter of support from program director/department chair for application and that applicant has met expectations in each merit review category (e.g., for each of research, teaching, service, advising, etc.) for the most recent two full-time academic years of annual review prior to AY2019-20.
2. Current Curriculum Vitae
3. Professional Narrative:
   a) Identify your rank, number of years at your rank, tenure or non-tenure status, how far out from next eligible promotion/tenure.
   b) Describe your scholarly accomplishments and trajectory prior to the global COVID-19 pandemic (250 words).
   c) Describe how your scholarly work was significantly disrupted (i.e., evidence of reductions or slowing down of pace in scholarly endeavors) your faculty work (100-250 words).
   d) Description of how funds will be used to boost your scholarship and advancement (250-500 words).
4. Budget & Budget justification including a timeline with explanation for how funds will be used (1 page max).