

Dear Colleagues,

I write to inform you that, after consultation with the Committee of Six and the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), I have decided to revive the President's Initiative Fund (PIF) for curricular projects and will welcome your proposals this spring. While funding for this program is being made available to support initiatives that would take place in 2010-2011, it has not yet been decided whether proposals will be renewed or solicited in the years to come.

Beginning in 2004, (PIF) enabled cross-departmental groups of faculty to explore new curricular directions. Almost half of the faculty participated in self-formed PIF groups. Subjects of their work included the environment, global sound, human rights, law and science, the American founding, education and social justice, film and video arts, and the urban imagination.

These efforts resulted in visiting appointments in new areas, well-received courses, and, in the case of environmental studies and film and media studies, contributed to the creation of new majors. One of the program's purposes was to inform the planning process of the Committee on Academic Priorities (CAP). Once the recommendations of the CAP began to move forward, the initiatives that evolved through the PIF shifted into the next phase of consideration by the Committee on Educational Policy and the Faculty as a whole.

President Initiative Fund support will now be offered to continue to stimulate curricular innovation at Amherst and to meet existing needs within departments. Of particular note is the possibility of using PIF funds to bring visiting faculty to campus. Visiting appointments were one part of the overall success of the PIF program, and I thought that it would be helpful to provide additional funds to support visitors during a time when the budget for visiting faculty has been reduced as part of overall budget reductions necessitated by the economic downturn. As you may recall, we also recently began providing funding through the Croxton, McCloy, and Simpson Funds to support visitors.

Support from the PIF may be requested either for departmental or cross-disciplinary projects. The PIF will especially welcome proposals to help inform the College's deliberations about new curricular programs and scholarship. It is the goal of the initiative to involve as many faculty members as possible; individuals should, as a rule, focus their efforts on one project. Preference may be given to projects that involve faculty members from multiple disciplines. Proposals from departments are also welcome. Projects should hold some promise for producing viable enhancements to the education that Amherst provides. President's Initiative Fund groups may explore areas that would be new to the curriculum or that are underrepresented in it, although projects need not be conceived as permanent additions to the College's offerings. Undertakings that focus exclusively on lectures or symposia, might more appropriately be accomplished through existing structures and/or other College funding sources.

PIF proposals may include an array of activities. For example, visitors may be used to cover teaching in established fields, freeing College faculty members to teach PIF-related courses. They should, whenever possible, be affiliated with an Amherst department, and faculty members making proposals for visitors will find it advantageous to work with departments.

Ten copies of a brief (one to two pages) proposal are due in my office by **March 21, 2010**, for this first round of proposals. All proposals are reviewed by the Committee of Six, which offers its recommendations to me. When applying for funding for a visiting faculty member, please provide a specific rationale for that request.

I look forward to discussing your ideas with you and to reading your proposals.

Yours,
Anthony W. Marx