Date: 13 January 2014

To: Deans, Directors, Department Chairs (please forward to your faculty)

From: Paul M. DeLuca, Jr.
Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Re: Andrew W. Mellon John E. Sawyer Seminars

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has invited the University of Wisconsin-Madison to submit a proposal for the John E. Sawyer Seminars program. We have a good track record in this competition. The Sawyer Seminars program provides support for collaborative research on historical and contemporary topics of major scholarly significance. The program emphasizes mainly, but not exclusively, scholars from the fields of the arts, humanities and interpretive social sciences. The program aims to engage productive scholars in multi-disciplinary and comparative inquiry. Preference will be given to those proposals that include concrete plans for engaging participants with diverse institutional and disciplinary affiliations.

Each seminar normally meets for one year, and provides support for one postdoctoral fellow and for the dissertation research of two graduate students. The maximum grant award for each seminar is $175,000. Mellon will select approximately ten (10) Sawyer seminars by June 2014.

The proposals should describe: 1) the rationale for raising the central questions to be addressed and the potential significance of the inquiry to be pursued; 2) the cases to be studied (e.g., nations, regions, time periods, cultural trends, social tensions) and the perspectives to be brought to bear on them; 3) the thematic “threads” that will run through the seminar; 4) the institution’s resources and suitability for the proposed seminar; and 5) the procedures to be used in selecting graduate and postdoctoral fellows. Texts of the proposals covering these five components typically range from 3,000 to 6,000 words, but no more than 8,000 words.

In addition, the proposals should be supplemented by three appendices: (1) budget; (2) a well-developed preliminary plan for the seminar that outlines the specific topics to be addressed in each session and provides the names and qualifications of the scholars who would ideally participate; and (3) short CVs (1-2 pages) for the principal seminar organizers. If other participants are identified, the organizers are asked to limit information about them to a few lines of text. Note that the Mellon Foundation recognizes that it can take a year or more to organize the seminars. Meetings need not be scheduled for the coming academic year.
If you would like your proposal considered, please send your proposal information to Laurie Mayberry, Assistant Vice Provost, via e-mail at mayberry@wisc.edu. Nomination materials are due by Wednesday, February 12, 2014. (Proposals must be submitted in Microsoft Word.)

A committee of senior faculty will review the proposals.

Please see the attached document for further information. If you have any questions, please contact Laurie Mayberry at mayberry@wisc.edu.

Attachment: 1

cc: Steve Stern, Vice Provost for Faculty & Staff
    Laurie Mayberry, Assistant Vice Provost