Transdisciplinary Challenges for 21st Century Studies

Overview: The UWM Center for 21st Century Studies (C21) announces a request for proposals to launch a multidisciplinary research initiative that addresses one or more of the transdisciplinary challenges of 21st century studies. A single 2-year award will be made to a promising collaborative research project which brings together UWM researchers from the Center’s traditional constituencies in the humanities, arts, and humanistic social sciences with researchers from natural, physical, and quantitative social sciences. This new initiative is designed to prompt researchers from any disciplinary background to think in unexpected and untried ways about working with researchers in disciplines whose methodology, content, and institutional practices are unfamiliar to them. Although this is not the kind of research with which most academics have experience, we are convinced that this kind of research will become increasingly prevalent and necessary in the 21st century. The aim of these awards is not only to generate new research approaches to the complex problems of the 21st century but also to provide models for how researchers from disciplines that do not have a history of collaboration can work together to meet the complex, heterogeneous challenges of the 21st century. The award will be made through an accelerated process and will target project start dates near July 1, 2011.

About C21: The Center leads the way in imagining, defining, and creating the burgeoning field of 21st century studies, focusing on the intersection of the humanities, arts, and sciences (social and natural) with issues of compelling concern. The Center organizes its research and public programs around themes that change periodically. Each year the Center constitutes a group of six to eight UWM faculty fellows, as well as two or three external fellows, whose research interests relate to the theme. Nationally and internationally known scholars are brought to campus to address the topic of the year’s research in seminars, lectures, and conferences.

Research Areas: Proposals may be submitted on any research problem of pressing concern. Proposals are especially solicited which develop new concepts, methodologies, or approaches to their research problems that transform traditional disciplinary practices. An exemplary, non-exhaustive, suggestive list of 21st century concerns includes:

- Conflict: war, security, terrorism, cyberwar, risk, finance
- Scarcity: energy, sustainability, drought, famine, poverty
- Mobility: immigration, migration, urbanization, globalization, flow
- Connectivity: transportation, rivers, communication, wireless, emergence
- Ethics: privacy, genetic engineering, medicine, nanotechnology
- Computation: data visualization, simulation, cloud computing, internet of things
- Representation: digital humanities, new media arts, participatory journalism
- Design: graphics, sound, visualization, place, interface, organization
- Spatiality: perspective, structure, pattern, morphology, virtuality, localism
- Temporality: data mining, future modeling, preemption, prediction, history
- Ecology: water, agriculture, climate change, waste, conservation
- Mind: neuroscience, affect, cognition, brain, AI, attention, distraction
- Body: aging, public health, disease, nutrition, sexuality, tactility

Award Amounts: Proposals are invited for 2-year research programs up to $150,000 per year. Additional GRA and undergraduate research support will be available as appropriate.

C21 Scholarly Presentation: To further the aims and mission of the Center for 21st Century Studies, the winning team will be asked to organize a public workshop, symposium, lecture series, or conference on their transdisciplinary topic at some time during the 2 year term of the grant, to be sponsored by C21. The timing and nature of these presentations will be determined in consultation with C21, which may solicit publication in its 21st Century Studies books series with Indiana University Press.
**Requirements:** All UWM faculty and research staff are eligible to propose a project. Because the award-winning project is meant to provide new models for how researchers from disciplines that do not have a history of collaboration can work together, proposals must meet the following criteria:

- Researchers from at least two different departments must be involved;
- At least one researcher must be from the humanities, arts, social sciences or other traditional C21 constituencies;
- At least one researcher must be from the sciences, engineering, professional schools, or other units not traditionally served by C21;
- Projects are expected to deploy graduate (or undergraduate) assistants from each participating discipline as appropriate.

**Initial Statement of Interest:** If you are interested in collaborating on a shared multidisciplinary project with others who bring approaches differing from yours, please submit a one-page statement of interest describing your initial sense of a project or projects on which you imagine working, along with a 2-page CV by 5:00 pm on December 17.

**Process:** Early in the spring 2011 semester, the Center will host a series of meetings as necessary to foster conversations among interested faculty as a means of generating collaborations among researchers from across the various parts of the campus. Faculty who form collaborative teams are encouraged to submit proposals. Each proposal must contain the following components in a single-spaced document, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins.

- Project Narrative – Five pages maximum
- Budget
- Budget Justification
- Two Page CVs of key project participants
- Names of outside evaluators from each discipline represented

**Evaluation Criteria:** Decisions on the award will be made by an ad hoc selection committee made up of faculty selected from the C21 advisory board as well as members drawn from a variety of disciplines and selected with substantial input from the faculty and academic staff governance committees. The C21 director and the associate dean of the humanities will be ex officio members of the selection committee. The primary criteria for selection of projects will include:

- strength of the proposal
- relevance to C21’s mission
- prospects for generating other similar collaborations
- level of true transdisciplinary partnership
- likelihood of sustaining the project beyond the award period

**Tentative Timeline**

- Letter of intent/CV: December 17, 2010
- C21 Meetings: January/February 2011
- Proposals Due: March 11, 2011
- Award Announced: May 16, 2011
- Program Kick-Off: July 1, 2011
- Project Completion: July 1, 2013
- Final Report Due: September 1, 2013

E-mail completed proposal applications in a single PDF document to: c21@uwm.edu no later than 5:00 PM, March 14, 2011. Late proposals will not be considered. For questions or further information please feel free to contact grusin@uwm.edu.