Date: August 20, 2015

To: Academic Deans and Directors

From: Sarah C. Mangelsdorf, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Subject: Vilas Awards and Professorships

Through the generosity of the Vilas Trust, the University of Wisconsin-Madison is able to provide an array of named professorships and awards to recognize the outstanding achievements of its faculty members. These awards not only provide very generous research funding to those who receive them, but they can – in cases of teacher-scholars who are being recruited or who are likely to be recruited by our competitors – serve as an inducement to stay at UW-Madison, because they are among the most prestigious awards granted by the University.

The Vilas Trustees have agreed to make available a significantly larger number of professorships in the 2015-16 academic year. We encourage you to begin working with your department chairs early in the academic year to solicit nominations; we are especially eager to provide support in cases where retention is or may be an issue.

What follows is a list of the Vilas professorships and awards, the criteria for the awards, and the process by which faculty members are to be nominated (and deadlines where applicable).

**Vilas Early Investigator Award** (up to 20 awards)
These awards provide $50,000 in flexible funding for one year, or $50,000 in flexible funding for two years ($100,000 total). The award is meant to recognize research and teaching excellence in faculty who are relatively early in their careers. Deans and Directors should encourage departments to make nominations as early in the academic year as is feasible, though departments and schools/colleges may wish to consider whether Early Investigator Awards may be useful as retention tools later in the academic year. No nominations will be accepted later than April 1, 2016.

**Vilas Mid-Career Investigator Award** (up to 30 awards)
These awards provide $50,000 in flexible funding for one year, or $50,000 in flexible funding for two years ($100,000 total). The award is meant to recognize research and teaching excellence in faculty who are at mid-career. Deans and Directors should encourage departments to make nominations as early in the academic year as is feasible, though departments and schools/colleges may wish to consider whether Mid-Career Investigator Awards may be useful as retention tools later in the academic year. No nominations will be accepted later than April 1, 2016.

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**Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professorship** (up to 46 awards)
The VDAP provides $75,000 in flexible funding as a one-time award. Of this amount, $50,000 is provided by the Vilas Trust, and should be expended in the first two years of the award (the year in which the professorship is awarded, and the year immediately after), with remaining funds reverting to the Trust; the other $25,000 is provided by the school/college, and can be paid out at the rate of $5,000 each year for five years. The faculty member receiving this award can keep the Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professorship title for the duration of her or his career. Because of the way the fund is to be expended, schools and colleges are encouraged to work with their chairs on nominations early in the year (ideally by October 15), though departments and schools/colleges should also consider the VDAP’s as useful retention tools. (The provost’s office intends to hold some VDAP’s back for this purpose.)

**Vilas Mid-Career Travel Awards** (50 awards)
These awards provide $1,500 for research-related travel for mid-career faculty. Faculty should apply to their departments for funding by the early fall of 2015; the department will forward its requests to the school/college with a ranked list of faculty. Schools and colleges will then send their nominations no later than November 1, 2015, to the Office of the Provost. Funds should be used by the end of the 2015-16 academic year.

**Vilas Research Investigator Award**
These awards, of up to $30,000 each, provide funding for faculty members who serve as mentors for graduate students working as research assistants or project assistants. Faculty can be nominated by their chairs for these awards; chairs should work with deans on the timing of nominations to the provost’s office, and on gaining the endorsement of the school/college. The nomination deadline for this award was August 15, 2015.

If you have any questions about any of these professorships or awards, or about the optimal timing of sending nominations to the provost’s office, please contact Michael Bernard-Donals, Vice Provost for Faculty and Staff (michael.bernarddonals@wisc.edu) or Yvonne Quamme (yvonne quamme@wisc.edu).

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