Guidelines on internal postdoc to faculty transitions  
5/19/23

To determine if a PhD postdoctoral trainee can be promoted to a faculty position and/or apply for a K award or other career development award that involves a faculty title, the department must be able to ensure that the new faculty member can be appropriately supported. Faculty status involves qualitative (e.g. mentorship) and quantitative (e.g. salary support, space, resources), commitments on the part of the department, and so requires a thoughtful, transparent and equitable approach. These written guidelines explain how the department makes these decisions and what PhD trainees and supporting mentors can expect.

There are two ways that postdoctoral PhDs can be promoted to faculty.

1) Through the advocacy and support of a principal investigator (could be the same as the current mentor or not). The PI must be willing to mentor and demonstrated availability of funds to cover 2 years of the individual’s salary, regardless of anticipated individual grant funding by the post-doc. To be considered, the postdoc must present their research at the institution and invite the Executive Council and Research committee members to attend. The PI should plan to work with their Division Director to schedule this presentation and advertise it to the Department through the weekly newsletter. The postdoc must also submit an application to the Division Director. The application should include:
   a. CV and Research Statement (2 pages describing their research focus and plans for grants)
   b. Letter from the sponsoring PI and mentor (if different) that states their enthusiasm for the postdoc and their ability to cover salary. If the postdoc is on T32 or F32, the letter should state the duration of that funding. If the postdoc has the ability to perform billable clinical hours, then the letter should include that information and also be co-signed by the director of the clinical service.

   *In consultation with the department Executive Council, the Division Director will then decide whether a promotion is possible.*

2) Through an open targeted faculty search initiated by Psychiatry. The internal candidate would be evaluated beside other candidates, and if they are considered the best of the interviewed candidates, they would receive an offer.

What about K award applications?

- If the individual wants to remain at WU, we recommend that they apply for a 5-year K awards (e.g. K23, K01, K08) or an internal KL2, if eligible. These awards require the Chair to provide a strong letter of institutional support stating that a faculty promotion will occur regardless of the outcome of the K, which the preceding process will help with.
- The K99/R00 award, which requires going on the open job market, may be a good option for individuals, but the department cannot guarantee a faculty position at the R00 phase.
- Before applying for a K award, please consult with your funding agencies guidelines for salary caps covered by the K award. Effort/salary not covered by the K award may be covered by the PI (typically using a non-federal source) and/or the department, depending on K mechanism, specific NIH agency, and department resources. Salaries are set based on outside benchmarks, productivity, department comparisons, etc to maintain equity and are not based on what a grant can cover.