Dear Colleagues,

As the academic year begins, I write to describe two programs to which faculty may apply this year. I hope you will find the programs to be of interest and that you will consider participating in one or both of them.

I. Provost’s Initiative on Building Intellectual Community

The first program, which is new, is the Provost’s Initiative on Building Intellectual Community. Notre Dame is blessed with an engaging and talented faculty whose members have tremendous expertise in their own disciplines but who also have wide-ranging intellectual interests beyond their fields. In part, the beauty of being at the University is being embedded in a community with such intelligent and thoughtful colleagues. Despite the intellectual richness of the community, sometimes meeting one’s normal teaching, research, and service obligations can make it difficult to recognize or identify opportunities for engaging colleagues in serious conversation on topics beyond one’s own discipline, particularly colleagues from other colleges and schools. Yet, it is through precisely such conversations that new connections are formed, creative ideas are born, and natural bases for collaboration are discovered.

The Provost’s Initiative on Building Intellectual Community is intended to be a catalyst for bringing together faculty from different colleges and schools to explore and engage each other on topics of mutual interest by providing modest funding to support such exchanges, with the hope that—through these interactions—new connections are formed and the University’s intellectual community is strengthened. The process for participating in the initiative and obtaining this funding is competitive. Anyone interested in developing and hosting a faculty group with the purpose of fostering greater intellectual community should submit a written proposal to the Provost’s Office by Monday, November 16, 2009, following the guidelines available at: https://www3.nd.edu/~provost/for-current-faculty/current-initiatives/intellectual-community/index.shtml. Proposals must involve at least five faculty from two or more colleges and schools. Funding will be available to support such expenses as acquiring books and written materials for those participating in the faculty group, enabling participating faculty to host as
guest of the University an expert on a topic they have selected for discussion, and supporting modest meal expenses for convening faculty.

II. Provost’s Initiative on Team Teaching

Since 2006, the Provost’s Initiative on Team Teaching has offered funding to promote interdisciplinary team teaching at Notre Dame, which can add an important dimension to the overall University curriculum by providing students with unique opportunities to study topics that fall between or transverse traditional disciplinary lines. Funding will again be available through this program to support interdisciplinary team-taught courses during Fall 2010.

As in the past, the Provost’s Initiative on Team Teaching will fund faculty from two or more different colleges/schools to develop and teach collaboratively a new interdisciplinary course. It is anticipated that up to five course proposals will be funded for the Fall 2010 semester. The funding provided by the initiative will cover two different types of expenses. First, up to $2500 will be made available directly to the faculty to cover costs associated with creating the new course, such as student assistance in obtaining relevant readings and materials, supplies, and other items deemed essential to the development and implementation of the new course. Second, I will work with the deans of the relevant colleges/schools to ensure that each faculty member teaching the course receives full course credit the first two times the course is offered. This may require providing funds to cover courses that the faculty members would have otherwise taught. These decisions will be worked out with the appropriate department chairs. After the course is offered the first two times, the faculty teaching the course will each receive partial credit for the course or must agree to rotate which faculty member receives full credit in future years.

In order to compete for Fall 2010 funding through the initiative, interested faculty should submit by Monday, November 16, 2009, a proposal complying with the guidelines available at the following link: https://www3.nd.edu/~provost/for-current-faculty/current-initiatives/team-teaching/index.shtml.

I am excited by the opportunities that these initiatives create and look forward to your participation. Best wishes for a successful and rewarding semester.

Yours truly,

Thomas G. Burish

cc: Rev. John I. Jenkins, C.S.C.