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To: Faculty Colleagues
From: Strom Thacker
Re: Nichols Fellowship
Date: November 7, 2017

I am pleased to announce the fifth opportunity for faculty support made possible by the Byron A. Nichols Endowed Fellowship for Faculty Development at Union College. This fellowship is supported through the generosity of alumni and friends of the College. Its objective is to support Union College faculty in developing programs and skills that enhance intellectual, social, and personal interactions with students by, for instance:

- creating classroom environments that support students in intellectual risk-taking, that encourage students to be curious and to ask meaningful questions, and that encourage civility in discourse and self-expression such that students are able to defend their own positions and effectively question those of others,
- developing and teaching courses that address ethical issues important to both individuals and societies, or
- mentoring and advising students by providing independent studies designed for the specific intellectual and developmental needs of individual students, by engaging with students in significant ways outside the classroom, by fostering personal accountability and moral responsibility, by facilitating student contributions to the intellectual environment of the college, and by introducing students to opportunities beyond college.

One fellowship will be awarded for the next two or three years, with a total value of approximately \$20,000 - \$30,000, depending on the length of the fellowship (two vs. three years.) Funds may be used for any relevant faculty development activity. Any course releases (these can be fractions of a course) will be assessed at one-sixth of salary. Eligibility is limited to tenured professors, with priority given to recently-tenured associate professors. Successful applicants will demonstrate commitment to the intellectual, social, and personal development of individual students, to promoting a sense of community among faculty and students, and to fostering positive change at Union.

Our four previous Nichols Fellows have been engaged in a variety of exciting initiatives, including some novel course development. The first Nichols Fellowship was awarded to Professor Stephen Schmidt of the Department of Economics in the spring of 2009. Steve used the fellowship to develop a new course entitled, "Norms, Values and Economic Justice." Professor Carol Weisse of the Department of Psychology received the second

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Nichols Fellowship in the spring of 2011. Carol used the fellowship to develop a “Humanism in Medicine” practicum course that encourages and supports professional formation among students interested in healthcare. The third Nichols Fellowship went to Engineering’s Professor Ashraf Ghaly in the spring of 2013. Ashraf used the fellowship to design “Environmental Forensics,” a new interdisciplinary course to engage students in discussion and consideration of environmental mishaps and damaging disasters resulting from emissions, pollution, contamination or waste disposal. In spring 2016, Professor Jillmarie Murphy of the Department of English was named the fourth Nichols Fellow. Jillmarie has used the fellowship to design a new course. “The Theory of Things: Objects, Emotions, Ideas,” which examines humanity’s interest in material culture and the emotional connections that can be made between people and physical objects. This course explores both material and immaterial “things” and how “things” affect people, predominantly marginalized individuals and groups.

Applications should consist of a letter detailing activities that would be undertaken with fellowship support, along with a budget and indication of plans to continue offering any new course(s) after the fellowship period.

Please inform me of your intent to apply by December 4, 2017. Applications should be sent to me, electronically, by January 16, 2018. The awarded fellowship will be announced by the end of February. I will determine awards, in consultation with an advisory group of deans and alumni.

Please review carefully information about the fellowship, including past fellowship recipients and how to apply, on the Nichols Fellowship website at <http://muse.union.edu/nicholsfellowship>.