

Bridging Barriers Next Steps

October 27, 2017

Dear faculty colleagues,

Last week, Dan Jaffe [announced](#) Planet Texas 2050, the first interdisciplinary research challenge to launch from the Bridging Barriers initiative. Led by 55 faculty and staff researchers across 14 colleges, schools, and units, this coordinated effort aims to leverage their exceptional talents and areas of expertise to better understand critical issues facing the state, the nation, and the world.

As we prepare for their work to begin in early 2018, I want to encourage interested faculty not already involved in [Bridging Barriers](#) to consider doing so. For those of you who would like to get involved with Planet Texas 2050, please [complete this short form](#).

Four more research themes are in development. You can learn more about them and the Bridging Barriers timeline [here](#).

- **Good Systems** aims to explore how modern society's complex web of technological systems can be designed for the well-being of individuals and society.
- **Community Engaged Texas Research Alliance** focuses on factors to increase health and well-being, identifying stressors, and promoting factors that ameliorate harms linked to stressors.
- **An Adaptive Intelligent Health System** aims to improve health by developing a multidisciplinary system integrating the social, cultural, and biological determinants of health interventions.
- **Equity through Social Change** aims to facilitate and enact social change and reduce educational and health disparities among marginalized and disenfranchised groups in central Texas.

[Complete this form](#) (same as the link above) to learn more about any of the Bridging Barriers themes, or to be notified of events or seminars related to the themes.

Why should I consider getting involved?

This is an obvious and understandable question I know some faculty have. First, getting involved in a Bridging Barriers theme provides an unmatched opportunity to meet faculty across campus whose diverse perspectives could benefit your ongoing research efforts. Second, there is ample opportunity to contribute intellectually to the focus and direction of the developing themes. Finally, the university, through the Office of the Vice President for Research, is funding and coordinating the organization of these groups to enable our faculty and researchers to secure major external funding that likely would not be accessible to individual investigators proposing only their individual ideas.

We know there is already great interdisciplinary research happening, and we want to make these efforts more accessible to more faculty, exposing your talents and backgrounds to more opportunities.

I would like to thank everyone who is already involved. Bridging Barriers was designed to be a faculty-led initiative, taking your great ideas for research and providing support for you to do great work across disciplines.

I will continue to support this work, and I look forward to watching your efforts progress.

Sincerely,

Maurie McInnis

Executive Vice President and Provost
The University of Texas at Austin