

Townhall FAQs

1. Can we recruit BDPs at the associate professor level?
 - a. Except for the School of Medicine, BDPs can be recruited at the associate professor level. We have hired four incredible associate professor BDPs to date, all of whom have now been promoted to full professor. We suggest considering more senior associate professors with a strong track record and demonstrable trajectory.
2. When will the hiring of tenure track faculty start?
 - a. As soon as the clusters are chosen.
3. Will clusters be chosen this academic year?
 - a. The expectation is they will launch over the summer. We plan to host a kickoff in July with the selected cluster co-leads.
4. Are the AI-X and AI & Society BDP clusters separate from the 30 DS/AI BDPs?
 - a. Yes. The three AI-X BDPs and two AI & Society BDPs are included in the 50 BDPs from the second gift. The 30 DS/AI BDPs are part of the third gift.
5. How will the status of hiring be tracked?
 - a. The BDP office maintains a dashboard with all planned and ongoing recruitments. We will coordinate and collaborate closely with the data science and AI institute to avoid duplicative efforts in recruitment.
6. Are clusters encouraged to focus on real world applications?
 - a. Yes. We encourage looking at everything from the very fundamental aspects of machine learning, data science and AI applications, to how they are applied academically and commercially, along with any medical, national security and policy applications.
7. Are there educational aspects to the institute?
 - a. Yes, there will be an expansion to what is already offered at WSE, including a master's in data science and courses on machine learning, and AI and data science at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Whiting is also exploring the creation of a minor in AI. More to come.
8. What is the lifespan/tenure of each cluster?
 - a. There is no end date for the clusters. We envision each cluster becoming an ever-growing community. The BDP office will support clusters in helping to build and foster these communities.
9. Who should be a co-lead of the clusters?
 - a. We encourage co-leads that are represented from all divisions. Each co-lead should be able to demonstrate that they can think cross-divisionally, recruit well and bring groups of people together.
10. Can there be internal BDPs?
 - a. None of the 30 BDPs will be internal. Of the entire cohort, there are 10 internal BDPs. If any of those leave the position or retire, the position can be transferred to another internal BDP or repurposed to an external BDP. That will be at the discretion of the President and Provost.
11. What is the role of APL and their implication in cluster development?
 - a. APL is a very important partner and we welcome joint appointments. Four BDPs currently have joint appointments with APL.
12. Will clusters include at least one social science member, especially ethics-related?

- a. While it is up to the co-leads that propose clusters, we encourage participation by the social sciences and humanities.
13. Are there restrictions/limits to the number of proposals by a department/institute/center?
- a. No, but all proposals should be thoughtful and compelling.
14. Are junior faculty part of the BDP clusters?
- a. No, but during recruitment of a BDP candidate, they may request access to WSE's 80 tenure-track positions as part of their offer package. This will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
15. Can an appointment be across three divisions?
- a. There are existing BDPs that are appointed across three divisions. However, we have learned that commitments to service and/or teaching requirements can stretch one very thin. If there is an appointment across three divisions, we would recommend all responsibilities be discussed during recruitment and defined in offer letters.
16. Does data science include modeling and simulation or is it assumed that large data sets are essential to the programs of recruited BDPs?
- a. We will refrain from defining data science as it is an ever-developing area. Instead as academics/colleagues, we will assemble to assess proposals and determine if ideas can fall under the umbrella of the data science and AI institute.
17. Do the 30 BDPs need to have an engineering background or degree?
- a. No. While the institute is anchored in WSE and we expect most BDPs will have an appointment in WSE, the BDPs can have appointments across any schools. All 30 BDPs will have an affiliation with the institute.
18. Do BDPs have to hold tenure in their appointed divisions?
- a. If it is a tenure-granting division, the BDP needs to hold tenure there. For example, if it is a joint appointment in WSE and KSAS, then they need tenure in both. If a joint appointment is between the Berman Institute - a non-tenure granting entity - and WSE, they need to have tenure in WSE. BDPs cannot have a joint appointment in two divisions that are non-tenure-granting.
19. What is the hiring process for BDPs that are not part of the clusters?
- a. If there is a highly urgent need to recruit someone now, please discuss the potential candidate with the chairs of the departments of their likely appointments. If the chairs are interested in exploring the recruitment, the candidate's materials (CV and any available supporting documents) can be sent to [the BDP team](#) for assessment by the institute's interim leadership, KT Ramesh and Rama Chellappa, who will evaluate the potential candidate's dossier to determine alignment with the institute's goals and strategic vision. All potential candidates are then reviewed by the President and Provost for their approval as an official BDP candidate.
20. How many clusters will be chosen?
- a. There is no set number of clusters to be chosen. After assessing the proposals that are submitted, clusters will be selected. It is also possible that not all clusters will be selected in this first round of proposals as there may be various reasons to invest in new areas as the institute evolves.
21. Do you expect proposals to focus on disciplines such as a few departments/schools or on more specific themes?

- a. There are no limitations. We encourage all creative and exciting ideas for these proposals. Please keep in mind that the scope should align with the recruitment of 3-4 faculty.
22. Is it possible that these clusters could facilitate establishing a new division?
- a. This is an administrative matter but it is possible that we'll have proposals that move Hopkins in a direction credibly and at a scale that we can have impact. However, if three people are working on a brand-new area that's completely disjointed from anything in our portfolio, it's unclear how we move to such an area but on the other hand, it could be that moving in a certain direction launches us into a new area where we have nascent strength and critical mass to establish ourselves as a leader. Administratively, that could be a new division or a department changes its name. We will see how things evolve.
23. Where can we find more information about the existing BDP clusters?
- a. You can find more information [at this link](#).
24. Are there any considerations for the exemplar recruits in the LOI?
- a. While any potential candidates named are only illustrative at this stage, they should reflect the diversity and inclusion policy of the institution and the aims of the overall BDP cohort.