I. POLICY STATEMENT

A. The title "Distinguished Professor" is the highest honor that the University of Colorado bestows on its own faculty members. This title is extended to recognize the outstanding contributions of University of Colorado tenured faculty members to their academic disciplines. In addition to the honor and recognition, an annual stipend is provided by the home campus for Distinguished Professors who have active appointments.

B. Candidates recommended for a distinguished professorship must demonstrate accomplishments based on the following university-wide criteria:

1. A record of distinguished performance in research or scholarly/creative work;
2. In aggregate, a record of excellence in the promotion of learning and student attainment of knowledge and skills; and
3. A record of outstanding leadership and service to the profession and to CU and/or affiliate institutions.

C. A candidate must have served at least five years at the CU campus and/or affiliate institution making the nomination. This requirement may be waived with the approval of two-thirds of the campus review committee members and unanimous approval by the members of the president’s advisory committee. (See Section II for information on committee structure.)

C-D. The very nature of the title "distinguished" implies that there shall be a limited number of faculty holding this title. It is intended to signify a select group of faculty members who are leaders in their respective fields as attested to by national or international recognition and/or their significant public service achievements.
D. Explanation of Criteria

1. A record of distinguished performance in research or creative work. The professor's work has received national and (where appropriate) international recognition and the professor has had a major impact by changing, or greatly influencing the direction of his/her field. A significant amount of work has been done since the professor came to the respective CU campus.

The nomination letter should make clear to people in other disciplines the standards and measures of excellence used within this field. What constitutes a distinguished record, what indicates that the nominee is at the top of her/his field? This letter is especially important in professional, library, and performance-based fields.

If the nominee's record includes grants with multiple investigators or publications with multiple authors, the letter should explain his/her individual role. The letter may also clarify the forms or media through which scholars normally publish or present in this field, including the role of articles vs. books.

Ways to demonstrate merit may include:

a. Memberships, awards, prizes, and fellowships that indicate that the nominee is considered a leading member of the discipline by her/his peers. The nomination letter should explain the status of such honors within the field. Examples of honors at the national level are book awards, a Pulitzer Prize, or fellowships like a Guggenheim or MacArthur. In the natural sciences and engineering, a typical indicator of merit might include membership in the National Academy of Science or the National Academy of Engineering. Awards and prizes within a particular subfield may also be presented.

b. Publication in journals or presses rated at the top of that field and citations to those articles; for artists, exhibitions or performances in prestigious venues. When possible, a nomination should include a candidate’s “h-index” or another statistic that can assess their scholarly impact in terms of citations.

c. Selected reviews of major publications or performances as appropriate.

d. If applicable to the field, extramural funding or grants.

e. Required: letters from outstanding scholars or professionals in that field, normally senior people working at excellent institutions in this country and/or abroad. The letters should describe the nominee's standing in her/his area of specialization and in the broader field. Selection of external evaluators shall be undertaken by the department in consultation with the candidate. Candidates shall be given the opportunity to suggest possible evaluators and may also indicate specific scholars to exclude from consideration because their evaluations might be prejudiced against the candidate.

A maximum of 6 letters will usually be sufficient, but in the case of a nominee who has contributed to multiple fields, as many as 8 letters may be submitted.

The nomination file should include one-paragraph biographies of the authors of these letters but not full curricula vitae.

2. An aggregate record of excellence in the promotion of learning and student attainment of knowledge and skills. The latter may include direction of undergraduate research and independent study, graduate research, theses, dissertations, clinical education and mentoring.

Ways to demonstrate merit may include:

a. Awards or prizes for teaching achievements, or outstanding student evaluations.
b. Some or all of the following: development of new courses; development of new clinical techniques; curriculum revision; interdisciplinary teaching; or larger projects to improve pedagogy; innovative syllabi; websites; or other instructional materials, as summarized in the nomination file; education-related grants.

e. A description of the professional accomplishments of former undergraduate and/or graduate or professional students supervised by the nominee, including their current occupation and position. The nomination letter should explain if the nominee has not been able to train graduate students due to the nature of the field or program at a CU campus.

d. Required: letters from former undergraduate, professional or graduate students, describing the impact of the nominee's teaching/supervision/mentoring upon their own careers. A maximum of 6 letters may be submitted. One-paragraph biographies of those writing the letters may be submitted if necessary but not full curricula vitae.

e. Required: Summary results from Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs) and/or a similar campus-approved teaching evaluation system for all courses taught in the previous five years or other evaluations of student instruction appropriate to other forms of instruction. In addition, nominators may provide other campus or school/college accepted measures of teaching quality (see the APS 1009 - Multiple Means of Teaching Evaluation for example).

3. A record of outstanding service to the profession and to CU and/or affiliate institutions. Ways to demonstrate merit may include:

   a. Documentation of the impact of the nominee's leadership on the quality of the profession and the CU campus and/or affiliate institution's campus.

   Optional: up to 3 letters from colleagues in the profession or at the CU campus describing the nominee's contributions.

4. In Addition:

   The candidate must have served at least five years at the CU campus and/or affiliate institution making the nomination.

   Please note: Nomination files should contain the kinds of information and letters described above, including a complete curriculum vitae, but not additional materials, except under special circumstances.

II. PROCEDURES, FORMS, GUIDELINES, AND OTHER RESOURCES

A. Nomination Procedures

1. A call for nominations is issued each year by the President’s Office early in the fall term.

2. Recommendations must be submitted by the chancellors to President's Office by July 1 of the following calendar year.

A. Procedures

1. Each campus shall develop its own internal procedures for nominating individuals for distinguished professorships. Procedures shall require that nominations are reviewed by the dean of the appropriate school or college, and

   a. Must be reviewed by the dean of the appropriate school or college, and

   b. Must be screened by a committee of senior faculty peers-members, typically Distinguished Professors, who shall advise the chancellor on the merits of each proposal.

2. Following campus review and approval by the chancellor, recommendations and supporting documentation, consistent with this APS, shall be submitted to the President's Office.

3. Timelines for Nominations and Review

   a. Call for Nominations issued on September 15.
b. Campuses shall determine internal deadlines for submission of full nomination of materials to campus deans AND for submission to provost/vice chancellor for academic affairs.

e. Deadline for submission from chancellors to President's Office is July 1.

B. Explanation of Criteria Nomination Materials

1. Required Materials

Nomination materials submitted to the President’s Office must demonstrate how the nominee has met the criteria specified in Section I.B. The following items are required:

a. One paragraph executive summary that briefly explains the individual’s area(s) of expertise and professional accomplishments that warrant the title of Distinguished Professor.

b. Nomination letter that discusses (1) the nominee’s distinguished performance in scholarly/creative work; (2) promotion of learning and student attainment of knowledge and skills; and (3) leadership and service. In discussing the nominee’s record, the letter should clearly indicate the nominee’s area(s) of expertise and standing in the field, and identify national or international recognitions and significant public service achievements.

c. Letters from outstanding scholars or professionals in the field that address the nominee’s scholarly/creative work and describe the nominee’s standing in his/her area(s) of specialization and in the broader field.
   i. The letters are normally provided by highly regarded individuals from respected institutions. Selection of external evaluators shall be undertaken by the department in consultation with the candidate. Candidates shall be given the opportunity to suggest possible evaluators and may also indicate specific scholars to exclude from consideration because their evaluations might be biased against the candidate.
   ii. Generally, a maximum of six letters is accepted, but in the case of a nominee who has contributed to multiple fields, as many as eight letters may be submitted. The nomination file should include one-paragraph biographies of the letter writers.

d. Letters from former undergraduate, professional or graduate students, or fellows describing the impact of the nominee’s teaching/supervision/mentoring upon their own careers.
   i. A maximum of six letters may be submitted. One-paragraph biographies of those writing the letters may be submitted.

e. Summary results from Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs) and/or a similar campus-approved teaching evaluation process for all courses taught in the previous five years or other evaluations of student instruction appropriate to other forms of instruction. In addition, nominators may provide other campus or school/college accepted measures of teaching quality (see the APS 1009 - Multiple Means of Teaching Evaluation).

f. Documentation of the impact of the nominee’s service on the profession and CU campus and/or affiliate institution.

g. Complete curriculum vitae for the nominee.

h. Names of one or two subject matter experts, i.e. persons from the faculty member's discipline who are knowledgeable about his/her work, who shall be available to answer questions from the advisory committee about the candidate and his/her field. The subject matter experts may be from within or outside the university.

4.2 Guidelines for Preparing Nomination Materials

a. Demonstrating a record of distinguished performance in scholarly/creative work.
   i. The nomination materials should indicate that professor's work has received national and (where appropriate) international recognition and the professor has had a major impact on his/her field. It is expected that a significant amount of work has been done since the professor came to CU.
ii. The nomination materials should make clear to people in other disciplines the standards and measures of excellence used within the field. The materials should indicate what constitutes a distinguished record and what indicates that the nominee is a leader in her/his field. This is especially important in professional, library, and performance-based fields.

iii. If the nominee’s record includes grants with multiple investigators or publications with multiple authors, letters should explain his/her individual role. Letters may also clarify the forms or media through which scholars normally publish or present in their field, including the role of articles versus books.

iv. Merit may also be demonstrated by memberships, awards, prizes, and fellowships that indicate that the nominee is considered a leading member of the discipline by her/his peers. The nomination letter should explain the status of such honors within the field. Examples of honors at the national level include book awards, a Pulitzer Prize, or fellowships like a Guggenheim or MacArthur. In the natural sciences and engineering, a typical indicator of merit might include membership in the National Academy of Sciences or the National Academy of Engineering. Awards and prizes within a particular subfield may also be presented.

v. Merit may be demonstrated by publication in top tier journals or presses and citations to those articles; for artists, exhibitions or performances in prestigious venues. When possible, a nomination should include measures of the candidate’s scholarly impact, e.g., their “h-index” or another measure that can assess their scholarly impact in terms of citations.

vi. Selected reviews of major publications or performances may be provided as appropriate.

vii. If applicable to the field, information on extramural funding or grants can be provided.

b. Demonstrating excellence in the promotion of learning and student attainment of knowledge and skills. (This may include direction of undergraduate research and independent study, graduate research, theses, dissertations, clinical education and mentoring.)

In addition to the required letters from former students and results of teaching evaluations, nomination materials may address:

i. Awards or prizes for teaching achievements, or outstanding student evaluations.

ii. Development of new courses; development of new clinical techniques; curriculum revision; interdisciplinary teaching; or larger projects to improve pedagogy; innovative syllabi; websites; or other instructional materials, as summarized in the nomination file, education-related grants.

iii. Professional accomplishments of former undergraduate and/or graduate or professional students supervised by the nominee, including their current occupation and position. The nomination letter should explain if the nominee has not been able to train graduate students due to the nature of the field or program at CU or the affiliated institution.

c. Demonstrating a record of outstanding leadership and service to the profession and to CU and/or affiliate institutions.

Demonstration of merit may include:

i. Up to three letters from colleagues in the profession or at the CU campus describing the nominee’s contributions.

C. Office of the President Review Procedures

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2 The “h-index” measures both the productivity and impact of the published work of a scientist or scholar, based on the set of the scientist’s/scholar’s most cited papers and the number of citations that they have received in other publications.
5.1. Upon receipt of a recommendation for a distinguished professorship, the president or president’s delegate shall appoint an advisory committee to review the recommendation in light of the established university-wide criteria. The committee shall include:

a. The committee shall include four to six faculty members currently holding the title of distinguished professor, with no more than two representing a single campus.

b. In the nomination packet, the chancellor shall identify one or two subject matter expert(s) identified in the nomination packet, i.e., persons from the faculty member’s discipline who are knowledgeable about his/her work who shall be available to answer questions from the selection advisory committee about the candidate and his/her field. The specialist in the candidate’s academic discipline may be either from within or outside the university. The subject matter expert(s) shall not be a voting member(s) of the committee, may participate remotely, and shall be present only as long as the committee requires.

c. In order to assist the committee, the campus shall designate one or two person(s) to present the recommendation to the committee. Neither the specialist(s) nor the presenter(s) shall be a voting member(s) of the committee, may participate remotely, and shall be present only as long as the committee requires.

6.2. The committee shall subsequently submit its recommendation on the distinguished professorship to the president for his/her review and action.

7.3. Positive recommendations approved supported by the president shall be transmitted to the Board of Regents for action, accompanied by the appropriate documentation. If the president does not approve a campus a positive recommendation is not forwarded to the Board of Regents, he/she the president shall notify transmit his/her reasons to the campus chancellor and include the rationale for the decision.

III. HISTORY

On December 15, 1977, the Board of Regents established the designation "Distinguished Professor" at the University of Colorado Boulder. On October 17, 1980, the Board extended the title to all campuses of the university. On June 1, 2005, revisions were made to refine the criteria and guidelines for university-wide review of recommendations for distinguished professorships submitted by the campuses. On March 1, 2006, revisions were made to this policy statement to correct the order of the criteria and guidelines and to define the review committee membership in order to achieve broader university-wide representation.

Initial policy effective November 16, 1981

Revised: June 1, 2005
March 1, 2006
November 1, 2008
February 1, 2012
January 17, 2013
July 1, 2015
August 11, 2016 – Non-substantial edits implemented.
September 1, 2018 (PENDING)

IV. KEY WORDS

Distinguished, professorships, faculty, excellence, teaching, research, creative work, award