



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY STATEMENT

Policy Title: Procedures for Implementing Regent Actions on Distinguished Professorships

APS Number: 1017

APS Functional Area: **ACADEMIC/RESEARCH**

Brief Description: This policy establishes criteria and procedures for nominating and recommending faculty for the title of Distinguished Professor at the University of Colorado.

Effective: [July 1, 2020](#)~~TBD~~

Approved by: President ~~Bruce D. Benson~~ [Todd Saliman \(Pending\)](#)

Responsible University Officer: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: ~~Office of the~~ Vice President for Academic Affairs

Policy Contact: ~~Office of the~~ Vice President for Academic Affairs, ~~303-860-5623~~

Supersedes: Procedures for Implementing Regent Actions on Distinguished Professorships, September 1, 2018

Last Reviewed/Updated: ~~September 1, 2018~~ [TBD \(Pending\)](#)

Applies to: All campuses

Reason for Policy: This policy establishes criteria and procedures for nominating and recommending faculty for the title of Distinguished Professor at the University of Colorado.

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 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 with active appointments.
- B. As stated in [Regent Policy 5.C.2 – Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty Appointments](#), candidates recommended for a distinguished professorship must demonstrate accomplishments based on the following criteria:
 1. Distinguished performance in scholarly/creative work;
 2. Excellence in the promotion of learning and student attainment of knowledge and skills; and
 3. 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.)
- 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.

II. PROCEDURES

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 the president's office by August 1 of the following calendar year.
3. Each campus shall develop its ~~own~~ internal procedures for nominating individuals for distinguished professorships. Procedures shall require that nominations are:
 - a. Reviewed by the dean of the appropriate school or college, and
 - b. Screened by a committee of distinguished professors and, if absolutely necessary, accomplished senior faculty members, ~~typically distinguished professors~~, who shall advise the chancellor on the merits of each proposal. The committee should be no larger than needed to adequately evaluate the candidates nominated in that year.
4. Following campus review and approval by the chancellor, recommendations and supporting documentation, consistent with this APS, shall be submitted to the president's office.

B. 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-page executive summary that briefly explains the individual's area(s) of expertise and professional accomplishments that warrant the title of Distinguished Professor. This should be written with the non-specialist in mind.
- 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 their 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 their work, who shall be available to answer questions from the advisory committee about the candidate and their field. The subject matter experts must be from outside the university.
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 their field. Where awards or recognitions are cited, their importance and impact should be explained. 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 their field. This is especially important in professional, library, humanities, and performance-based fields.
 - iii. If the nominee's record includes grants with multiple investigators or publications with multiple authors, letters should explain their 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 their 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"¹ 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.) Excellence in teaching and mentorship is a critical [criterion](#) for a distinguished professorship. The dossier must clearly address how the nominee has achieved excellence in this area.

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

¹ 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.

- 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; larger projects to improve pedagogy; innovative syllabi, websites, or other instructional materials, as summarized in the nomination file; or 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

1. Upon receipt of a recommendation for a distinguished professorship, the president or president's delegate shall appoint an advisory committee to review and evaluate the recommendation ~~in light of~~ using the established universitywideuniversity wide criteria.
 - 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. An individual who voted on a case at the campus level cannot participate in discussion and voting on the case at the system level.
 - b. The subject matter expert(s) identified in the nomination packet shall be available to answer questions from the advisory committee about the candidate and their field. 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~~ To assist the committee, the campus shall designate one or two person(s) to present the recommendation to the committee. The presenter(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.
2. The committee shall subsequently submit its recommendation on the distinguished professorship to the president for review and action.
3. Positive recommendations supported by the president shall be transmitted to the Board of Regents for action, accompanied by the appropriate documentation. If a positive recommendation is not forwarded to the Board of Regents, the president shall notify 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 universitywide 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 universitywide representation.

- Adopted: 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-substantive edits implemented); September 1, 2018; September 30, 2019 (Non-substantive edits implemented); July 1, 2020 - Updates contain only the minimal changes needed to implement the Regent-

approved changes to Article 5: Faculty and Policy 5: Faculty; June 19, 2026 (Non-substantive edits implemented);
[TBD \(Pending\)](#).

- Last Reviewed: ~~September 1, 2018~~[TBD. \(Pending\)](#)

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