PROV-031 Appointment of University Professors

Effective Date Monday, April 1, 2019

Status Final

Last Revised Tuesday, July 1, 2025

Policy Type Executive Vice President & Provost

Contact Office Executive Vice President and Provost (Office of the)

Oversight Executive
Executive Vice President and Provost

Applies To Academic Division.

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Reason for Policy

Explains the eligibility, nomination, election, and review procedure for a faculty member's appointment to a University professorship.

Definition of Terms

Enabling Language

Description

The terms that establish and define the use of endowment earnings for an endowed professorship, as stated in documentation such as the gift agreement.

Endowed Professorship

Description

Named professorships funded with the interest earned by invested funds. Minimum funding levels and other details are described in the policy EXT-009: Establishment of Funds from Gifts.

University Professorship

Description

A distinguished professorship at the University of Virginia established to facilitate cross-University collaboration and recognize excellence in a broad field of study.

Policy Statement

The University has established distinguished University professorships for faculty holding the rank of professor who teach and conduct research that crosses school boundaries. University professors are eminent in their respective disciplines, hold the same or higher qualifications of any faculty holding an endowed professorship, and are held in the highest regard by their national and international academic peers. University professors also hold underlying appointments as professors in department(s) and school(s) and may retain any (other) endowed professorships they may hold in addition to the title of University professor.

University professors report to the president but remain accountable to the dean(s) of their appointed school(s). They are expected to engage in educational and scholarly activities across school boundaries. The base salaries of faculty appointed to University professorships remain the responsibility of their primary academic homes; however, a University professorship may be established or supported by an endowment, with endowment income used to provide some or all of the University professor's salary and/or provide research funds. The University professor appointment is subject to review and contingent on continued superior performance.

Eligibility:
In addition to having achieved national eminence, a nominee must be a full-time faculty member at the University of Virginia and hold the rank of professor, or, in the case of a new hire, be under consideration for a position of similar stature.

An appointment to a University professorship established or supported by an endowment must comply with the enabling language of the professorship, including any additional procedural requirements. University professorships will normally be endowed; faculty may be appointed to an unendowed University professorship, but only in exceptional circumstances.

Procedures

Procedure for Nominating and Electing Faculty to a University Professorship:
Appointments to University professorships may be initiated by a school, the provost, or the president.

1. The president or provost may appoint an existing member of the faculty to a University professorship, conduct a search, or request that a school(s) conduct a search for a new University professor.
2. If the dean of a school wishes to nominate an existing member of the faculty to a University professorship or conduct a search for a University professor, they must first consult with the provost.
3. A three-person committee selected by the provost, consisting of faculty members with relevant disciplinary expertise, will evaluate a nominee for University professor.
4. The committee will secure three to five letters of peer review from distinguished outside scholars. If letters recently solicited for other purposes (such as distinguished professorship in the school, an award, etc.) exist, then the committee may opt to use these in lieu of seeking new letters.
5. Following an evaluation by the committee, the dean of the school will submit a nomination for University professor to the provost, who may then recommend them to the president.
6. Nominations must include:
    - A nomination letter. The letter should evidence the candidate's excellence in a broad field of study as well as describe how this appointment is expected to contribute broadly to the University in scholarship and teaching.
    - The faculty committee's report.
    - A curriculum vitae.
    - The external letters.

7. If an appointment to a University professorship is recommended by the president, regardless of whether it was initiated by a school, the provost, or the president, the formal election to University professorships shall be presented to the Board of Visitors for approval.
8. If the faculty appointment is to be a tenured appointment, the standard procedures described in PROV-017 apply.

Review and Renewal of University Professors:

1. University professors submit their annual performance report to the president, as well as their dean(s). Deans provide input on annual merit-based salary increases which are then decided by the president.
2. If a University professor's underlying faculty appointment is termed, the University professor appointment is also termed and runs concurrently.
3. Renewal of a termed University professor appointment requires presidential approval whether the faculty member is tenured or not.
4. If a University professorship is tied to an endowed professorship that is a positional professorship, as defined in PROV-034: Appointment of Faculty to Endowed Professorships, the University professor appointment will end upon termination of the associated position or affiliation, regardless of reason.

Related Information

PROV-029: Faculty Appointment Types and Titles
PROV-034: Appointment of Faculty to Endowed Professorships

Major Category Executive Vice President & Provost Policies

Next Scheduled Review Saturday, July 1, 2028

Revision History

Revised procedures 7/1/25; Revised 10/31/22.

Approved By Executive Vice President and Provost

Approved Date Friday, March 29, 2019