



Policy Title: Policy on University Distinguished Professors at Baylor University

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Responsible Executive: Provost

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Responsible Office: Provost

Policy on University Distinguished Professors at Baylor University BU-PP 722

Policy Statement

The designation of “University Distinguished Professor” is the highest honor bestowed on faculty at Baylor University. Faculty holding this title are recognized for their advancement of Baylor’s mission through outstanding achievement in scholarship and/or creative activity as evidenced by exceptional national and international recognition in their respective disciplines or at the intersection of multiple disciplines.

Reason for the Policy

The policy describes the designation of “University Distinguished Professor,” setting forth criteria for selection of faculty to receive this designation, as well as the process for nominating and appointing them and the benefits that accompany the bestowal of this title.

Individuals/Entities Affected by this Policy

This policy applies to tenured faculty members (ordinarily those who hold the rank of Professor) at Baylor as well as those whom Baylor contemplates hiring who might be considered to receive this designation.

Exclusions

Staff and non-tenured faculty

Related Documents and Forms

University Policies and Documents

[Promotion for Tenured Faculty](#)

1. Policy on University Distinguished Professors at Baylor University (BU-PP 722)

Definitions

These definitions apply to terms as they are used in this policy.

Distinguished Professor	A title bestowed on some faculty members prior to the adoption of the current policy that designates a tenured Professor in a department or academic unit of the University whose outstanding scholarship and national reputation for excellence in his or her academic discipline greatly exceed the bounds of scholarship exemplified by most if not all other faculty members in that academic unit at Baylor.
University Professor	A title bestowed on some faculty members prior to the adoption of the current policy that designates a tenured Professor whose outstanding scholarship and national reputation for excellence in his or her academic areas of expertise transcend the bounds of traditional academic departments, often reflecting interdisciplinary concerns and having multidisciplinary implications.

Contacts

Subject	Contact	Telephone	Office email/web site
Policy Questions	Office of the Provost	254-710-3601	https://www.baylor.edu/provost/

Responsibilities

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs	Manages nomination and selection process
Academic Deans	Receive nominations for potential recipients of the honor and submit nominations to the Provost
Selection Committee	Reviews applications and submits recommendations to the Provost
Provost	Submits recommendations to the President and consults on final award decisions
President	Makes final award decision in consultation with the Provost

Principles

The designation of “University Distinguished Professor” is the highest honor bestowed on faculty at Baylor University. Faculty holding this title are recognized for their advancement of Baylor’s mission through outstanding achievement in scholarship and/or creative activity as evidenced by exceptional national and international recognition in their respective disciplines or at the intersection of multiple disciplines.

2. Policy on University Distinguished Professors at Baylor University (BU-PP 722)

(Note: This policy allows for those holding the title of Distinguished Professor or University Professor as of the date this policy is initially issued (August 8, 2022), to retain those titles.)

Selection Criteria

A faculty member at the rank of Professor may be nominated at the initiative of her or his dean for appointment as a University Distinguished Professor. Under normal circumstances, such a faculty member must have held the rank of Professor for at least five years before being nominated for such an appointment.

This title may also be used for recruitment or retention purposes if the candidate meets the following requirements: (a) in the case of recruitment of a faculty member to Baylor, the recommendation to the President for the appointment would be made at the discretion of the Provost in consultation with the appropriate dean and department chair, and with the consent of a majority of the tenured faculty in the department, rather than following the process outlined below; and (b) in the case of retention of a current faculty member, the consent of a majority of the tenured faculty in the department must be ascertained, and the essential elements of the procedure outlined below must be observed, but the process may be executed outside the usual biennial schedule, and the five-year expectation may be waived.

Candidates may hold administrative assignments, but administrative competency will not be considered as a basis for appointment. Designation of the title University Distinguished Professor will not be awarded by default, nor is such designation a contractual right that an individual can earn by merely fulfilling a specific list of achievements.

The following are conditions necessary for consideration:

1. Recognition as a national/international intellectual leader because of extraordinary accomplishments in scholarly research and/or creative activities, with nominees typically ranking in the top 5% of Professors within their discipline in the nominator's estimation; the nominator should address specific ways in which the nominee falls within this top tier of scholars with regard to intellectual leadership, mentorship, and accomplishments, among other factors.
2. Receipt of special awards and recognitions from national/international societies or associations for outstanding scholarly and/or creative accomplishments, and/or reshaping their disciplines in new directions;
3. Evidence that the nominee will likely continue to provide exemplary academic and intellectual leadership in her or his discipline; and
4. Contributions to the professional development of colleagues and service as a passionate mentor for colleagues and students.

Procedures

A faculty member may be nominated for appointment as a University Distinguished Professor by her or his dean. The dean may receive suggestions for such a nomination from any parties as he or she desires, and may collaborate with appropriate individuals (e.g., a nominee's department chair) in assembling a Nomination Dossier. A dean who wishes to make such a nomination will submit a Nomination Dossier to the Provost by December 1 of an even-numbered year. The Nomination Dossier will include the following materials:

1. The nominee's curriculum vitae and a memorandum from the nominee in which she or he agrees to be considered for the appointment;
2. A letter from the department chair (or dean in Schools or Colleges that are not divided into departments) addressing *all* of the selection criteria listed above;
3. Letters from at least six external reviewers from top-tier institutions as defined within the nominee's field of expertise, and each from a different institution (at the level of Professor or above, or equivalent positions in the case of research institutes or laboratories), evaluating the applicant's qualifications. The reviewers are to have received the candidate's curriculum vitae, selected publications for review (i.e. journal articles, books, other creative materials), and an explanation of the criteria (listed above) for this rank at Baylor University;
4. A letter from the dean addressing the applicant's qualifications for the position. (Note: If the dean in a School or College that is not divided into departments provides the letter listed in item #2 above, he or she would not provide an additional letter.)

Selection Committee Composition

The Selection Committee shall be comprised of:

1. Three faculty members holding the rank of Professor (appointed by the Provost);
2. The sitting Dean of the Graduate School and the Vice Provost for Research;
3. One academic dean other than from the Graduate School (appointed by the Provost in confidential consultation with the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate); and
4. One faculty member holding the rank of Professor appointed by the Faculty Senate.

The members of the committee will not be selected until the Provost receives all nominations for that nomination period, so as to maximize expertise for evaluating the nominees. These committee members (apart from those designated in #2) shall be newly appointed and convened for each two-year selection process, although they may be reappointed for subsequent years. If the Provost wishes to consider a faculty member within the five-year window and/or apart from the standard biennial process for

appointment as University Distinguished Professor for retention purposes, the sitting Selection Committee during that two-year cycle will serve as the evaluation committee.

At the first meeting of the Selection Committee, a simple majority of members present shall elect one of the faculty members as chair. Members of the Selection Committee shall be instructed by the chair that all information held, discussed, and evaluated during its deliberations should only be divulged to university officials who have a need to know it.

Selection Action by Committee, Provost, and President

1. The Selection Committee shall review all applications and identify any nominees whom it will include on a short list of no more than four candidates to be submitted to the Provost.
2. The Selection Committee shall evaluate and rank the short list of applicants by applying the "Selection Criteria" to each applicant. The rank-ordered short list will then be forwarded by February 28 of the selection year to the Provost for submission to the President.
3. The President, in consultation with the Provost, shall use this list as a basis for rendering the final decision(s) regarding University Distinguished Professor appointment(s), notifying all appointee(s) by a formal letter and the Selection Committee Chair by e-mail. There can be no more than two University Distinguished Professor appointments during the application period (e.g., two appointments every other year), and there is no expectation that any be designated during the nomination period. (Note: An exception to this limit may be made in the event that two appointments have been made within a nomination period and there is a desire to bestow this title on a faculty member who is being newly recruited to the University.)
4. Each newly appointed University Distinguished Professor will receive an increase in base pay of \$10,000, effective in the academic year following the appointment decision. However, if budgetary constraints make such an increase impracticable in any particular year, the newly appointed University Distinguished Professor will receive an increase in the next budget period when funds are available. No benefits will adhere to this designation other than the title and stated base pay increase.