

MEMORANDUM

TO: Marc Heft
FROM: SCORS
DATE: April 25, 2014
SUBJECT: Distinguished Professor process improvement suggestions

SCORS believes that the distinguished professor awards are an essential part of UF's Top 10 initiative because they recognize and promote excellence and pre-eminent scholarship on campus. These awards can also help with the retention of nationally and internationally recognized scholars, as well improve the university's overall visibility.

Prior to making these recommendations SCORS carried out a review of various current materials and some previously created materials. For example, Angel Kwolek-Folland provided us with a DRAFT MEMO from the Distinguished Professors suggesting improvements to the process and "Comparisons of Procedures for distinguished professors" from other universities (October 15, 2008)). Members of SCORS also carried out a review of processes at eight peer public institutions as well as UF colleges/units. SCORS also sent questionnaires to the deans of UF colleges querying perceptions of the UF review process, the college processes, the colleges' histories with candidates, primary qualifications each candidate should possess, etc.

As a result of the review of these documents we found the selection process limiting and the number of professorship awarded small and not representative of the range and diversity of excellent scholarship existing on the UF campus. More specifically, incumbent distinguished professors representation does not reflect the breadth of academic disciplines of UF Faculty (almost 50% of the distinguished professors are from CLAS and Engineering and five colleges do not have faculty of that distinction). In addition, the pre-selection process at the college level appears to not be favorable and/or equitable to all qualified candidates. Based on the dean's survey responses there might also be gaps in the ways in which processes and purposes of the distinguished professor award are being understood and applied at the college level.

In the light of these limitations we would like to put forward some suggestions to improve the process and award both distinguished research professorships and distinguished service professorships. We suggest that recognition of both distinguished performance in research and service is appropriate and that having both designations may be preferable to a single award. In short, the goals and mechanisms of awarding distinction to individual faculty should be reviewed.

Financial consideration

- Distinguished professor awards should be funded centrally- not from the college budgets

- We recommend the award to include \$ 5000 increase in base salary, not a percentage

Process consideration

- Process could be similar to the standard promotion process including the department and college votes and external letters
- Nominations would be reviewed by APB
- Each college could be awarded up to 1% of their tenure acquiring faculty
- No limit on the number of nominations and self-nominations would be accepted
- Awards due in the fall to avoid overlap with T & P
- Diminish biases and misconceptions associated with the process through education and information sharing (e.g., college quota, weak candidates prohibiting future awards, eligibility criteria)

Future considerations

- Awarded faculty members could serve as UF ambassadors of excellence who are expected to share their scholarship within and outside the university including possible consultation with other higher education institutions