Policy Name: Faculty Honorary Titles

Scope: Applies to full-time faculty as defined in the sections below.

I. Policy Statement

The honorary titles of emeritus, distinguished, and endowed professorship are conferred based on criteria described in this policy.

II. Emeritus Faculty

Emeritus is an honorary title designating a retired full-time faculty member as having demonstrated notable contributions during their professional career at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). Tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty are eligible for this honorary title. Details regarding retirement eligibility, status, etc. are as defined by the Department of Human Resources.

A. Candidacy Criteria

Emeritus is an honorary title designating a retired full-time faculty member as having demonstrated a record of contributions and achievements during their professional career at Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT). The title is determined by the faculty rank at the time of retirement. The term “Emeritus” will follow the rank of the faculty member upon retirement, such as Professor Emeritus or Lecturer Emeritus.

B. Privileges

In addition to retirement benefits, the privileges associated with having been granted the honorary title of Emeritus are as follows:

1. Lifetime listing indicating the honorary title of Emeritus in university catalogs and directories.

2. Participation in university public ceremonies.

3. With permission of the department head, authorization to serve on or chair a thesis and dissertation committee or engage in other research or educational activities within the university.

4. Based on availability and the recommendations of the department head and the dean and with the concurrence of the provost, use of office and/or lab space, equipment, and other campus facilities to support scholarly work and/or educational activities.

C. Procedure

The process of awarding Emeritus status may be initiated by the active or retired faculty member, the faculty member’s supervisor, or a faculty colleague on his/her behalf by sending a nomination to the department head of the unit where retirement occurs/occurred. Documentation shall include a letter of nomination, a brief synopsis of contributions and achievements as a faculty member at RIT, and may include an optional letter of support from one colleague. The department head shall forward a recommendation for or against granting of the honorary title along with the original submitted materials.
to the dean. The dean shall forward a recommendation along with all previous documentation and the department head’s recommendation to the provost for final decision. A written notification of the decision shall be sent to the candidate.

Under unusual circumstances, the provost, in consultation with the chair of Academic Senate, can revoke the Emeritus honorary title.

III. Distinguished Professor

This title is awarded very selectively to tenured Professors whose accomplishments bring special recognition to RIT. These individuals have made special contributions to the advancement of the mission of the university as a whole.

A. Candidacy Criteria

Successful candidates for consideration of the honorary title of Distinguished Professor will have a consistent record of quality performance which has resulted in significant, positive impact on or recognition to the university on a national or international scale as demonstrated by one or more of the following:

- A substantive record of scholarly achievement commensurate with national and international standards within the specific discipline
- A recognized record of exemplary teaching and innovative pedagogy, or lasting educational contributions
- A clear record of service beyond normal expectations.

B. Procedure

Nomination for Distinguished Professor status is initiated by the candidate’s dean or by an RIT Professor. Self-nominations are disallowed. The nominator assembles the nomination packet. The documentation shall include:

- a letter of nomination;
- the candidate’s current, comprehensive Curriculum Vitae;
- two internal letters of support; and
- two external letters of support.

Materials shall be forwarded to the dean or completed by the dean (if he or she is the nominator). The dean then notifies the provost in writing that the process has been initiated. The dean forwards her or his recommendation, with the supporting materials, to the provost. The provost shall then forward the nomination and all supporting materials to the Distinguished Professor Award Committee.
C. Distinguished Professor Award Committee

1. Composition: The provost maintains the Distinguished Professor Award Committee (hereafter referred to as the Committee) and convenes the Committee as needed. The Committee shall include a Professor elected from each college (serving staggered three-year terms). Each year, the Committee shall elect the chair from among its members. Vacancies in the membership of this committee shall be filled according to the procedures of the constituent element in which a vacancy occurs.

2. Responsibility: The Committee shall review the candidate based on the criteria outlined in this policy; the candidate’s documentation; and all internal and external letters of support.

3. Voting: A two-thirds majority vote is needed for an overall recommendation for award. There shall be no abstentions or avoidances of voting by absence.

The Committee shall deliberate and deliver its written recommendations, including the vote and any dissenting opinions, to the provost, who shall make the final decision.

Candidates whose honorary title of Distinguished Professor has been approved will be recognized in a prominent manner at the University.

Under unusual circumstances, the provost, in consultation with the chair of Academic Senate, can revoke the honorary Distinguished Professor title.

IV. Endowed Chair

Endowed positions are conferred for a variety of reasons and in accordance with the funding parameters. Endowed chairs are appointed by the provost.

Each endowed chair position shall have published written guidelines for appointment of a faculty member that stipulate at a minimum: term length (including renewability) and review criteria for reappointment if appropriate.

Responsible Office: Academic Senate and the Office of the Provost.

Inquiries can be directed to:

Academic Senate:

Staff Assistant
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Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs:

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Effective Date:

Policy History