

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE POLICY FOR DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR SELECTION

The selection process for the award of Distinguished Professorships is updated periodically. This document reflects the policies and procedures in effect as of the latest revision date, indicated below:

Revision Date: January 9, 2024

Approved by: Mary E. Klotman, MD, Dean, School of Medicine

Distinguished Professorship – Process Governance

A Distinguished Professorship is the highest honor Duke University may bestow upon a faculty member. The School of Medicine process for selecting candidates for Distinguished Professorships is guided by the Duke Faculty Handbook, Chapter 4, [Professional Affairs of the Faculty](#), approved May 2023, and the document entitled “Rules for Revised Distinguished Professor Selection Process,” approved December 2018, available from the [Faculty Procedures Manual](#) (first inset on the Distinguished Professorships page).

School of Medicine Distinguished Professor Committee

The purpose of the School of Medicine Distinguished Professor Committee (SMDPC) is to solicit nominations and evaluate nominees from the School of Medicine faculty for eligibility to be Distinguished Professors. Faculty approved by the SMDPC form a pool of candidates who are then eligible for a Distinguished Professorship. It is from this pool of eligible faculty that the Provost, in consultation with the Dean, will identify individuals to recommend to the Board of Trustees for Distinguished Professorships.

Period of Eligibility

Faculty deemed eligible for a Distinguished Professorship shall remain so for four years and may be appointed to a Distinguished Professorship during the period of eligibility without reconsideration by the SMDPC. If the eligible candidate is unmatched after four years, eligibility may be maintained by having the faculty member’s department chair provide the SMDPC a letter every four years documenting 1) continued productivity in the subject area that warranted eligibility for a Distinguished Professorship and 2) the absence of professionalism issues. If concerns are identified or a letter is not provided, an updated nomination and dossier must be submitted through the normal nomination process.

Distinguished Professorships Applicable to School of Medicine Faculty

School of Medicine faculty are eligible for the following Distinguished Professorships:

1. Distinguished Professorships designated for faculty of the School of Medicine
2. Distinguished Professorships that are joint honors between the School of Medicine and other Duke University schools
3. Distinguished Professorships of Duke University not designated for a specific school
4. Distinguished Service Professorships of Duke University

Structure of the SMDPC

The voting members of the SMDPC will consist of twelve (12) members who are themselves holders of Distinguished Professorships. Voting members of the SMDPC will be limited to Professors with tenure with a primary appointment in the School of Medicine. The Dean of the School of Medicine, in consultation with the Clinical Science Faculty Council and Basic Sciences Faculty Steering Committee, will select and appoint faculty to the SMDPC. The term of voting members of the SMDPC will be three years with the possibility of reappointment, to a maximum of six years. Member terms will be staggered.

SMDPC Chair

The SMDPC members will nominate one of themselves to be Chair and submit the selection for approval by the Dean of the School of Medicine. Nomination of the Chair will be by vote, with an absolute majority of the voting members of the SMDPC required. The term of the Chair will be three years with the possibility of reappointment, to a maximum of six years as Chair.

Candidate Nomination Process

The SMDPC will solicit nominations for Distinguished Professorships (except for Distinguished Service Professorships) by notification sent to all tenured and tenure track faculty of the School of Medicine. Candidate diversity, demonstrated through work and/or life experiences, is encouraged and highly valued, and this shall be stated as such in the notification soliciting nominations. Nominees must be current Professors with tenure with primary or joint (as opposed to secondary) appointments in the School of Medicine or external candidates with proposed primary or joint appointments in the School of Medicine at the rank of Professor with tenure pending approval by the School of Medicine Clinical Sciences Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee (CSAPT) for clinical science department appointments, the Provost APT Committee for basic science department appointments, and the Board of Trustees. Nominations will be reviewed by the SMDPC in a timely matter. The SMDPC will meet at least annually and may convene to review or vote on candidates at any date convenient. Faculty determined to be eligible for a Distinguished Professorship will be referred to the Dean and the Provost in December to be matched and appointed to a Distinguished Professorship as of July 1 of the following year (with Board of Trustees approval). Under special circumstances, referrals to the Dean can also be made throughout the year for off-cycle Distinguished Professorship nominees.

For Distinguished Service Professorships, the SMDPC will solicit nominations by notification sent to all faculty of the School of Medicine. These professorships recognize faculty who have demonstrated exceptional service to the university (typically in an administrative role) beyond achievements in the nominee's own discipline. Any regular rank faculty member (Tenure Track or Career Track) who meets this criterion may be nominated. The review and appointment process is otherwise the same as that followed for the other Distinguished Professorship categories.

Candidate Evaluation Process

Candidates shall be evaluated by the SMDPC based on the letter of nomination, curriculum vitae (CV), supporting publications, books, and manuscripts, and by at least four letters from qualified scholars external to Duke who do not have and have not had a collaborative or mentor relationship (or any other conflict of interest) with the candidate within the prior seven (7) years. The SMDPC Chair may assign individual voting members of the SMDPC to closely review individual candidates and report to the

greater SMDPC Committee. In rare instances, the SMDPC Chair may ask the Dean to refer a candidate to the Provost for consideration by the University Distinguished Professorship Committee, e.g., a case that is so broadly interdisciplinary that the SMDPC determines it is not competent to evaluate all the disparate disciplines, or a case with an unusually high recusal rate among the SMDPC members.

Selection of Candidates

Selection of faculty eligible for a Distinguished Professorship will be by secret ballot. An absolute majority of SMDPC members must vote favorably for a candidate to be declared eligible. The SMDPC Chair will forward the names, in writing, of faculty declared eligible to the Dean.

Criteria for Selection

Candidates must have a substantial record of intellectual achievement in the advancement of knowledge and/or clinical care to warrant a Distinguished Professorship. The SMDPC will consider the quality and the impact of the intellectual or clinical contributions of the candidate as recognized by distinguished scholars and respected clinicians in the discipline. It will evaluate the ways in which the candidate's work has reshaped thinking in the discipline. SMDPC approval of a candidate requires that the candidate has made significant contributions beyond those required for promotion to the rank of Professor with tenure.

Candidates for Distinguished Service Professorships must have demonstrated exceptional service to the university (typically in an administrative role) in addition to achievements in the nominee's own discipline.

In addition, excellence in professionalism is expected of all successful candidates, as is behavior that upholds the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Statement of Support and Professionalism

If the nominator is not the department chair, the application should include a brief letter of support from the candidate's department chair confirming support of the nomination. A statement from the department chair is required affirming that the candidate consistently adheres to the standards of professional conduct, including the *Duke School of Medicine Statement on Faculty Professionalism*, *Duke Values*, and the *Duke Code of Conduct*. If the nominator is the department chair, the nomination letter should include a statement that confirms professional conduct.

Responsibilities of the Dean

The Dean (or designee) will attend meetings of the SMDPC at which votes are taken on candidates. The SMDPC Chair will meet with the Dean to review the recommendations of the SMDPC. The Dean of the School of Medicine will advise the Provost on recommendations to the Board of Trustees and the specific Distinguished Professorship to be awarded.

Revocation of Distinguished Professorship

Substantiated concerns about unprofessional behavior or other misconduct may be grounds for revocation of a Distinguished Professorship. The Dean of the School of Medicine will be responsible for evaluation of such concerns. With findings sufficient to consider revocation, the Dean of the School of

Medicine will escalate the concerns to the Provost and the Board of Trustees for consideration of revocation of the Distinguished Professorship.