

## **DISTINGUISHED STATUS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

### **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **I. DEFINITIONS**

##### **Distinguished status\*:**

An academic staff member at the Distinguished level performs at a level of proficiency typically requiring extensive experience and advanced knowledge and skills. The expertise of an academic staff member at this level is commonly recognized by their peers and through a reputation which extends beyond their work unit. A Distinguished academic staff member is expected to develop new approaches, methods or techniques to resolve or prevent problems with little or no expert guidance and to cope independently with new, unexpected or complex situations. At this level, an academic staff member can be expected to guide or train other staff or to oversee their work. All academic staff titles at all levels are eligible for Distinguished status.

##### **Work unit:**

For purposes of Distinguished status, a work unit is defined as the employee's school, college, or college-level division.

#### **II. ELIGIBILITY FOR NOMINATION**

Attainment of the Distinguished status is not the end result of normal career progression, and neither seniority nor longevity is sufficient for award of this designation. The conferral of Distinguished status is reserved for a small number of academic staff who:

- Demonstrate superlative accomplishments evidenced by peer recognition beyond the work unit
- Possess and demonstrate evidence of at least ten years of progressively more responsible experience in their field.

Candidates will be evaluated using the criteria described in Section III of this document entitled "Guidelines." Nominations may be initiated by the candidate's director, departmental chair or unit head or by the candidate. The candidate has the right to withdraw from the process at any point during the review.

### III. GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to help develop documentation for nomination for Distinguished status:

- A. Academic staff members on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus work in the areas of teaching, research, clinical activities, outreach, administration, student services, and professional services. A candidate nominated for the Distinguished status is expected to demonstrate exceptional performance, be recognized beyond the work unit as outstanding, and have a reputation of excellence in the profession. Documentation of a candidate's extensive experience and advanced knowledge and skills may include, but is not limited to:
- Serving in leadership positions within the candidate's field and its professional organizations that can influence the direction of the profession and the organization
  - Promoting the *Wisconsin Idea* through activities that expand the scope and sphere of influence of UW-Madison and sharing the expertise of UW-Madison faculty and staff with citizens of the world
  - Developing innovative methods, techniques or professional skills that are recognized or applied beyond the work unit
  - A strong record of obtaining intramural or extramural grants
  - Serving as a consultant for professional organizations, agencies, or other constituencies beyond the work unit
  - Receiving outstanding performance evaluations
  - Receiving an award for excellence in the field
  - Service to the University, e.g. advising student organizations, training others, chairing cross-campus committees, etc.
  - Providing expert advice or testimony in field of expertise
  - Being invited to moderate or participate in workshops, meetings, or collaborative projects outside the work unit
  - Serving as an author of or a reviewer for scholarly or professional publications
  - Serving as a reviewer for granting organizations
  - Service to the community (serving on local boards)
  - Service to a professional organization

To assist in documenting activities, the following additional examples are generally associated with the categories specified. The categories are meant to be suggestive rather than definitive, and applications should include any relevant activities regardless of where they are listed.

**Examples that may be specific to teaching:**

- Receiving outstanding teaching evaluations
- Writing articles, developing teaching materials or other tools that are recognized or used beyond the work unit
- Developing and teaching interdisciplinary, innovative course options
- Receiving teaching awards
- Providing extraordinary training and guidance to graduate assistants

**Examples that may be specific to research:**

- A strong record of receiving and managing exceptional, externally funded research programs
- Major management responsibility in a large research project
- A significant publishing record in peer-recognized periodicals
- Major contributions to other disseminated materials and media

- Developing innovative research methods, techniques, or professional skills that are recognized or applied beyond the work unit
- Presenting at national or international meetings

**Examples that may be specific to clinical activities/outreach/professional services:**

- Gaining recognition of outstanding performance by clients or other members of the public
- Presenting at national or international meetings
- Contributing expertise that affects policy
- Serving as an editor for a professional publication
- Juried awards or other award from a professional association

**Examples that may be specific to administration/student services:**

- Leadership on campus committees and projects
- Promoting administrative excellence within the department, division or across campus
- Demonstrating the ability to consistently exceed the expectations of faculty, staff, and students with innovative service delivery
- Developing new administrative processes that become recognized or utilized beyond the work unit
- Developing new or creative collaborative programs, e.g innovative efforts for underrepresented students, initiatives to improve the student experience

B. In addition to the assessment of the candidate's experience and expertise, qualities such as those listed below should be evaluated and this information incorporated into the document. These qualities are not listed in order of importance, nor will all of them necessarily apply to every candidate:

- Initiative
- Problem-solving ability
- Creativity
- Technical competence
- Productivity and quality of work
- Judgment
- Ability to communicate and interact effectively
- Leadership
- Management, supervisory, or organizational skills

#### **IV. REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

In order to facilitate the Distinguished Status Review Committee (DSRC) review of documentation for academic staff recommended for the Distinguished status, the following minimum materials are to be provided (electronically, as a PDF) as a single packet:

1. A one- or two-page personal statement by the candidate indicating why they are qualified for the Distinguished status.
2. A cover letter from the candidate's supervisor(s) or departmental chair(s), including an indication of the vote of the Executive Committee or equivalent, if applicable. Because the most important consideration for the nomination is the extraordinary qualities of the candidate, this letter should describe the distinctive capabilities, performance and contributions of the individual including the candidate's contributions to the department, unit or program.

3. The current job description and a copy of the latest rate and title change request.
4. A detailed, current résumé or curriculum vitae.
5. A minimum of three and a maximum of five letters of recommendation from those who can speak to the talents of the individual and evaluate their performance. At least two letters must come from individuals who work from outside the work unit as defined in Section I. The letters should be submitted to the designee in the candidate's department/unit who is compiling the packet of materials (department chair, unit head/supervisor, or department administrator). Confidential letters may be submitted electronically, but must be on letterhead and include a signature. If relevant, a limited number of past unsolicited letters of commendation from clients, patients, students, or outside agencies may be included.

## **V. ORGANIZATION OF THE PACKET**

The packet should be submitted electronically as a PDF to the candidate's divisional HR office and should include a Table of Contents with all pages numbered sequentially. The following order is suggested as optimum for preparation and presentation of the packet:

- |            |                                 |
|------------|---------------------------------|
| Section 1: | Personal statement              |
| Section 2: | Cover letter from supervisor(s) |
| Section 3: | Job description                 |
| Section 4: | Résumé or curriculum vitae      |
| Section 5: | Letters of recommendation       |

## **VI. SAMPLE PACKET**

*Exemplary sample packets are available for examination by contacting the Office of the Secretary of the Academic Staff, 270 Bascom Hall.*

## **VII. NOMINATION AND REVIEW PROCEDURE**

- A. The candidate's materials should be forwarded to the appropriate department or unit office. Packets may be submitted at any time during the year. However, candidates are asked to consult with the Office of the Secretary of the Academic Staff regarding specific deadlines to ensure a timely review.
- B. Following review by the candidate's supervisor(s), departmental chair or unit head, the packet, together with a cover letter from the supervisor, shall be forwarded electronically to the appropriate chief HR officer for the candidate's division.
- C. The chief HR officer for the candidate's division shall submit the complete packet electronically with a cover letter to the Secretary of the Academic Staff Office (SOAS) and ensure that a rate/title change request has been submitted. The SOAS will forward the packet electronically to the members of the Distinguished Status Review Committee (DSRC) and will notify the candidate that the packet has been forwarded to the committee.
- D. The DSRC will review the packet and send its recommendation to the chief HR officer with a copy to the Office of Human Resources (OHR) and the SOAS. The chief HR officer will notify the dean/division director.

- E. The dean or director will accept or reject the recommendation within 20 working days of receipt and will notify the candidate, with copies to the chief HR officer, OHR, SOAS, and the candidate's department(s) or unit(s) in writing.
1. If the DSRC finds that a **candidate meets the criteria** for Distinguished status and the dean or director agrees with the recommendation of the DSRC, the candidate receives Distinguished status.
  2. If the DSRC finds that a **candidate meets the criteria** for Distinguished status and the dean or director does **NOT** agree with the recommendation of the DSRC, the candidate does not receive Distinguished status, and the dean or director shall notify the candidate in writing of the reasons for the decision with copies to the chief HR officer, the chancellor, the OHR, the SOAS, the DSRC, and the candidate's department(s) or unit(s).
  3. If the DSRC finds that a **candidate does NOT meet the criteria** for Distinguished status, but the dean/director **affirms** that the candidate **does** meet the criteria, the candidate receives Distinguished status. The dean/director shall explain the reasons in writing to the chair of the DSRC with copies to the chancellor, the candidate, the chief HR officer, the OHR, the SOAS, and the candidate's department(s) or unit(s).
  4. If the DSRC finds that a **candidate does NOT meet the criteria** for Distinguished status and the dean or director agrees, the candidate does NOT receive Distinguished status. The dean/director shall notify the candidate in writing with copies to the chief HR officer, the OHR, the SOAS, and the candidate's department(s) or unit(s).

### VIII. APPEAL PROCESS

- A. If the DSRC finds that a **candidate meets the criteria** for Distinguished status and the dean or director does **NOT** agree and **does not grant the status**, the candidate may appeal under the grievance procedure outlined in ASPP Chapter 7, but the grievance commences at Step 2 (appeal to dean or director).
- B. If the DSRC finds that a **candidate does NOT meet the criteria** for Distinguished status and the dean or director agrees:
1. The candidate may ask the DSRC to reconsider the candidate's qualifications; the candidate must provide additional information to the DSRC; and the candidate may ask to make a 10-minute presentation to the Committee in defense of their qualifications.
  2. If the DSRC then finds that the candidate still does not meet the criteria, the candidate may then appeal only as follows to the Academic Staff Appeals Committee:
    - a. The scope of review is limited to the question of whether the DSRC's decision was based in any significant degree upon one or more of the following factors, with material prejudice to the individual candidate:
      - i. Factors proscribed by applicable state or federal law regarding unfair employment practices were present.
      - ii. The procedures required by the DSRC were not followed.
      - iii. Available information provided by the candidate bearing on the quality of the candidate's qualifications was not considered by the DSRC.
      - iv. Unfounded, arbitrary or irrelevant assumptions of fact were made by the DSRC about the candidate's qualifications.

- b. The burden of proof in such an appeal shall be on the candidate.
- c. The Academic Staff Appeals Committee shall present written findings of fact and recommendations to the chancellor or designee and copies to the appropriate dean or director, chief HR officer, the SOAS, the OHR, and to the candidate. The chancellor or designee shall implement the recommendation or give the candidate written reasons for modifying the recommendation. The chief HR officer, the dean/director, the OHR, the SOAS, and the candidate's department(s) or unit(s) will be copied on the modified recommendation. The decision of the chancellor or designee shall be final.

## **IX. COMMITTEE AND STRUCTURE**

- A. **Membership:** The Distinguished Status Review Committee shall consist of 12 members who have either served on an Area Review Committee for indefinite status or been granted Distinguished status. The committee shall be appointed by the chancellor or designee upon recommendations made by the Academic Staff Executive Committee with the advice of the Nominating Committee.
- B. **Term:** Each term shall be for three years and members may be reappointed. Appointments to complete the terms of members who resign shall be made by the chancellor or designee upon recommendation of the Academic Staff Executive Committee.

## **X. REPORTS**

The chair of the DRC shall provide an annual report to the Personnel Policies and Procedures Committee detailing the number of nominees reviewed, the Committee's recommendations and the number of Distinguished statuses awarded.

\*Clinical Professor or Professor (CHS) titles (Asst, Assoc, no prefix) will continue to have distinguished as a prefix for those title series, due to their exemption from the Title and Total Compensation Project. In these cases, the distinguished prefix will continue to be intended for those at the no prefix title (which continues how the distinguished prefix has worked historically.)