

**RESOLUTION TO REVISE LANGUAGE ON ALUMNI DISTINGUISHED  
PROFESSORS AND UNIVERSITY DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS IN THE  
FACULTY HANDBOOK**

**WHEREAS**, Virginia Tech aims to be a global land-grant institution that strategically addresses the challenges and opportunities presented by the changing landscape of higher education; and

**WHEREAS**, the university has undertaken initiatives designed to grow enrollment, advance the curriculum, and expand its faculty to solidify its position as a 21st-century university; and

**WHEREAS**, as Virginia Tech's expands its faculty, the process for recognizing its most outstanding faculty, Alumni Distinguished Professor and University Distinguished Professors must accommodate further growth;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that section 3.2.2 of the Faculty Handbook be modified to state that the number of Alumni Distinguished Professors is determined by the provost, in consultation with the president, and Alumni Association (Attachment A); and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the language in section 3.2.3 of the Faculty Handbook that states that the professorship (i.e. University Distinguished Professor) is bestowed upon no more than one percent of the total full-time faculty at any time, be removed (Attachment B).

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the Board of Visitors approve the Resolution to Revise Language on Alumni Distinguished Professors and University Distinguished Professors in the Faculty Handbook.

April 3, 2017

## Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook Language Regarding Alumni Distinguished Professors and University Distinguished Professors

### Attachment A – Alumni Distinguished Professor

#### 3.2.2 Alumni Distinguished Professor

**General Conditions and Definitions:** The Alumni Distinguished Professorship (ADP) recognizes extraordinary academic citizenship and distinguished service within the Virginia Tech community. In recognition of the importance of alumni to the university, the Alumni Distinguished Professorship is a pre-eminent faculty appointment, reserved by the Board of Visitors for recognition of faculty members who, over time, have made outstanding contributions to the instructional program of the university and, in so doing, have touched the lives of generations of Virginia Tech alumni.

The Board of Visitors confers upon an individual an appointment as Alumni Distinguished Professor for a period of 10 years; the appointment may be renewed. ~~Currently, 10 Alumni Distinguished Professors may be appointed.~~ **The number of Alumni Distinguished Professors is determined by the provost, in consultation with the president and Alumni Association.** There is no quota by college or department.

**Eligibility and Criteria for Selection:** Since the hallmark of the Alumni Distinguished Professorship is distinguished contribution—over time—to Virginia Tech, newly arrived faculty are not eligible for nomination. And while there is no specified minimum number of years of service required for eligibility, the selection committee places strong emphasis on the magnitude and character of the candidate's impact on academic programs at Virginia Tech. Nominees should also have established outstanding personal records of accomplishment in creative scholarship.

**Nomination and Selection Procedures:** Each academic year the provost determines if there will be one or more appointments to the Alumni Distinguished Professor group and, if appropriate, issues a call to the academic deans for nominations. The deans, in turn, invite nominations from academic departments. Screening procedures at departmental and collegiate levels involve appropriate personnel or executive committees in place. Nominations are accompanied by a full dossier of relevant materials including current curriculum vita, letters of nomination from both the departmental and collegiate screening committees, letters of support, and other evidence attesting to the quality of the contributions of the nominee(s).

~~In developing recommendations,~~ **The provost appoints an Alumni Distinguished Professor Selection Committee that includes two current Alumni Distinguished Professors, one current University Distinguished Professor, and one faculty member recommended by them.** ~~relies primarily on the advice and counsel of the university Commission on Faculty Affairs. The commission, in turn, invites the evaluation of nominees by the incumbent distinguished professors. The Committee reviews the~~

nominations and makes a recommendation to the provost. The provost's subsequent recommendation~~(s) are~~ is sent through the president to the executive committee of the Board of Directors of the Virginia Tech Alumni Association for its review and recommendation. The president makes the final recommendation to the Board of Visitors for its approval.

**Perquisites and Responsibilities:** Each Alumni Distinguished Professor is provided a base salary supplement from the endowment established by the Alumni Association and matched by available funds, if available, from the eminent scholar program. The ADPs receive a salary supplement and operating allocation from the university comparable to that provided for other endowed professorships.

Each Alumni Distinguished Professor is expected to continue in service to the department, the college, and the university at the same high level evident at the time of appointment. But in particular, within whatever latitude the department head or chair and college dean can accommodate, the Alumni Distinguished Professor is encouraged to teach, when invited, in other departments of the university or in collegiate or university courses (e.g., honors colloquia). He or she may also elect, in a given term, to divert energies from the usual classroom responsibilities to other valued activities, such as substantive curriculum revision or textbook preparation.

Alumni Distinguished Professors are also called upon from time to time, individually and also as a group, to render special service or to offer particular advice to the university at large.

Given the high level of performance expected of this select group of faculty members, university and college administrators are cognizant of the particular needs of each individual Alumni Distinguished Professor for appropriate support personnel and sufficient space, within acknowledged fiscal and physical constraints.

## Resolution to Revise Faculty Handbook Language Regarding Alumni Distinguished Professors and University Distinguished Professors

### Attachment B – University Distinguished Professor

#### 3.2.3 University Distinguished Professor

**General Conditions and Definitions:** The University Distinguished Professorship (UDP) is a pre-eminent faculty rank bestowed by the university's Board of Visitors upon members of the university faculty whose scholarly attainments have attracted national and/or international recognition. ~~The professorship is bestowed upon no more than one percent of the total full-time faculty at any time.~~ **There is no quota by college or department.**

**Nomination and Selection Procedures:** Each academic year the **president and** provost **determines** if there will be one or more **appointments to vacancies in** the rank of University Distinguished Professor and, if appropriate, issues a call to the academic deans for nominations. The deans, in turn, invite nominations from academic departments.

Screening procedures at departmental and collegiate levels involve personnel or executive committees in place. Nominations are accompanied by a full dossier of relevant materials including current curriculum vita, letters of nomination from both the department and collegiate screening committees, and letters of support and other evidence attesting to the scholarly reputation of the nominee(s).

~~In developing recommendations, the~~ **The** provost ~~relies~~ **appoints a University Distinguished Professor Selection Committee which includes one current Alumni Distinguished Professor, two current University Distinguished Professors, and one faculty member recommended by the** ~~primarily on the advice and counsel of the university Commission on Faculty Affairs. The commission, in turn, invites the evaluation of nominees by the incumbent distinguished professors.~~ **The Committee reviews the nominations and makes a recommendation to the president.** The president makes the final judgment at the university level and, if that judgment so determines, takes the recommendation(s) to the Board of Visitors for approval.

**Perquisites and Responsibilities:** The rank of University Distinguished Professor is conferred by the university and is considered a university appointment (as distinct from a collegiate or departmental appointment). While the successful nominee is nominated by departmental and collegiate colleagues, and while he or she continues to serve in the discipline and department of origin, nonetheless the perquisites and responsibilities of each University Distinguished Professor are fixed by the university.

The president of the university annually adjusts the salary of University Distinguished Professors after consultation with the provost and dean of the relevant college.

The sole responsibility of the University Distinguished Professors is to continue their professional development at the same high level evident at the time of appointment. They are free to define the exact nature of their work after consultation with the dean of the college and the head or chair of the department. They are expected to engage fully with their colleagues in the governance of their departments.

At the same time they are encouraged to teach, when invited, in other departments of the university or in collegiate or university courses (e.g., honors colloquia). They may also elect, in a given term, to devote all of their energies to research, scholarship, or Extension activities. In shaping their plans of work, the University Distinguished Professors take full cognizance of departmental and collegiate needs and expectations. But their principal responsibility is to serve the university well by giving their talents to the development and sharing of their competencies where, in their judgments, they are most effectively employed.

It is the university's responsibility to provide such support as seems necessary to sustain the high level of performance expected of University Distinguished Professors.

**Tenure:** Incumbents carry the rank of University Distinguished Professor until resignation or retirement from the university, subject to the usual standard of continuous high performance. The rank is conferred only by the university Board of Visitors and is altered by that body alone, on the recommendation of the president of the university.