

## Policy on Chaired Professor Positions Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

The following guidelines apply to the appointment, evaluation, and reappointment of faculty to endowed positions. In all instances, selection and operational criteria for appointments to endowed faculty positions will reflect the stated priorities and restrictions established when the donor agreement was signed and the position created. The original priorities and restrictions cannot be revised without written approval by the Provost and President.

### Criteria for Chair Holders

The Rensselaer *Handbook for Academic Staff* provides the following description for the position of chaired professors: *"Chaired Professor appointments are made by the Provost with the approval of the President. The Chaired Professors Committee, consisting of the university's senior chaired professors, serves the Provost in an advisory capacity and is consulted in this matter. Appointments of new faculty to chaired professorships must be reviewed by the Joint Committee on Promotion and Tenure [JCPT] for purposes of granting tenure only."*

Appointment to an endowed chair is one of the academic highest honors that can be bestowed on a faculty member by the University. International recognition of the highest level of accomplishment and performance is the implicit criterion for appointment of a chair holder. Excellence in scholarship must be documented with accompanying strengths in all the professional performance dimensions of research, education, and service, in addition to any specific selection criteria associated with a particular endowed position. The appointment to an endowed chair may recognize a current member of the faculty or it may be associated with recruitment of a new faculty member, but in all cases excellence should be evidenced by a history and continued demonstration of outstanding scholarship and/or academic performance, based on national and international standards. In almost all cases, only tenure and tenure track faculty can be appointed to an endowed chair. Exceptions to this rule would be cases where the endowed chair was specifically targeted to a visiting appointment, or if the terms of the donor agreement specifically allowed for the appointment of a non-tenure track or tenured faculty member.

### Selection and Appointment

The selection process for chaired positions will be initiated by the Academic Dean with the approval of the Provost and President. In every instance, this selection process shall include advice and counsel from an appropriate faculty committee and for cases where the appointment includes tenure, must be reviewed by the Joint Committee on Promotion and Tenure [JCPT]. Each case is to be reviewed by the Senior Chaired Faculty who will vote on the case. In the event further discussion is desired, either the Provost or the Committee of Chaired Professors can request a meeting to discuss the case.

Once a candidate has been identified, the Academic Dean shall initiate a request for appointment, which includes sufficient information and justification for review and evaluation. The initial term of appointment for all new endowed chair appointments will be five years, or as negotiated between the chair candidate and the university, with the exception of Faculty Development Chairs, which will be for three years. The recommendations of the faculty committee, and/or the Department Chair where appropriate, should accompany the request for approval at subsequent steps in the approval process. Wherever possible, the faculty search

committee should contain faculty presently holding endowed chair positions as Rensselaer. The Provost will make the appointment following approval by the President. While some chaired positions are assigned to various schools, the majority are assigned at the University level. Regardless of the type of Chair or where it is assigned, chair holders are typically tenured in a specific department and, accordingly, have a specific responsibility to contribute to that department. Senior Endowed Chairs and Faculty Development Chairs will report through the Department Chair to the Dean, or directly to the Dean for the situations where no Department Chair exists, (e.g. Architecture, Management). Because of the broader institutional role and responsibilities of Institute Professors, and the Multidisciplinary Nature of Constellation Professors, individuals holding these positions will report through the Department Chair and Dean, to the Provost. It is important that the unique nature of all of these appointments and their importance to the University be recognized.

#### Chair Holder Stewardship Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the chair holder to maintain a level of academic standards and performance consistent with the criteria for awarding the chair. A component of this responsibility is a level of performance and stewardship to the university (and, where appropriate, to the benefactor) commensurate with the position of an endowed chair. Specific performance and stewardship responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Demonstrated intellectual leadership consistent with the definition of the chair agreement and campus standards as monitored through the yearly review process.
- Accomplishments commensurate with an endowed chair as documented in an annual performance and stewardship report, typically derived from the contents of the yearly review material, which summarizes the activities of the chair holder's accomplishments over the past year.
- Responsible use of the chair funds consistent with the chair agreement and university policy. The majority of chairs provide a nominal level of discretionary funds that represents a small percentage of the chair holder's funding portfolio. In these cases the funds may be used in a discretionary manner for support of the Chair's scholarly and professional development within the specific guidelines of the chair holder's agreement with periodic review. In instances where the discretionary funds available to the chair are equal to or greater than the chair holder's salary plus fringes, the chair holder and the university have the joint responsibility to ensure the funds are used in a manner consistent with the advancement not only of the chair, but also of the university. Expenditure of these funds will be reviewed annually by the Dean, and, as necessary, by the Provost.
- Provide mentorship to Rensselaer faculty, research staff and students in relevant disciplines and units.

#### Chair Holder Evaluation

As with all Rensselaer faculty, chaired faculty will provide input on their academic activities on a yearly basis. This material will be provided for evaluation, and yearly salary action, to the appropriate academic Dean or the Provost or as prescribed in the chair holder's agreement. In all cases a copy of the chair holder's yearly academic activities should be provided to the Chairperson of the academic department in which the chair is tenured. The yearly evaluation process should represent the primary evaluation process for all chairs.

The expectation at the time of the award of a senior chair is that the level of productivity and the national and international distinction of the chair holder will be maintained or enhanced, and that for these cases, the award will continue for the duration of the holder's full time academic career. Reappointment of those senior chairs with five-year terms will begin with an evaluation by the appropriate Dean or Provost of the yearly reports. If the evaluation, which

should be in writing, clearly demonstrates continued performance commensurate with the level expected of a senior chair and consistent with the specific chair agreement, the appointment will be renewed.

In the rare case that a chair holder's academic performance no longer meets the standards of a senior chair, the university should take corrective actions, possibly leading to a change of chair holder (so long as such a change is not in direct conflict with the specific chair agreement). The process begins with the yearly chair evaluations. As part of the yearly evaluation process, the academic Dean or Provost will make an initial determination of the chair holder's performance in relation to the defined criteria of the chair. In the unlikely event that performance falls below the expected level, the Dean and Provost will jointly review and document the case in consultation with the chair holder. If the Dean and Provost agree there is a chronic performance problem, a formal notice of substandard performance will be provided to the chair holder by the Dean and placed on record. The chair holder will be asked to prepare a formal plan of action for submission to the Dean that identifies and defines specific corrective actions to be taken.

If the combination of yearly salary actions and plans of action fail to correct the performance short-fall as evaluated over a period of five years, a formal review process shall be undertaken. A review committee chaired by the Provost, and including the appropriate Dean and three other senior chaired professors, shall perform this review, focusing upon a performance window of at least five years and incorporating all available annual review information and any other information necessary to reach an informed decision. The review committee will make a recommendation, in writing, as to whether the appointment should be continued. If this recommendation is negative, the chair holder will be consulted to see if he or she wishes to appeal the finding. In which case the chair holder will have an opportunity to prepare additional information for submission to the committee. In the case of an appeal, final determination regarding continuation of the chair appointment rests with the President, and will be made following a recommendation by the Provost.