

MEMORANDUM

From: Sally Kornbluth, Provost and Jo Rae Wright University Professor
To: Academic Council
Date: September 9, 2019
Re: Clarification on Professorship titles at Duke

With this memo, I would like to clarify and propose changes to the criteria for Professorships at Duke. There are multiple categories of named Professorships at Duke, including:

- Distinguished Chairs
- Named Chairs
- Term-limited Chairs

Within these categories, there may be endowed chairs or eponymous chairs, school-restricted or university-wide chairs, Full Professor chairs or junior faculty chairs.

Although the faculty handbook (and appendices) lay out the methods for selecting and approving Distinguished Professors, several questions have been raised about naming and rules of occupancy of chairs.

I would like to propose the following, which have been approved by the President, Chancellor for Health Affairs and the VP of Alumni affairs and Development and has been seen by the Executive Committee of the Academic Council.

Distinguished Professorships: Distinguished Professorships (DP) will be consistently named as such (as in James B Duke Distinguished Professor of XXX) and require approval by either a school-based DP committee (for school-based professorships) or a Provostial committee (for University-wide professorships). Chair-holding faculty that were approved by the DP committees in the past will be referred to as Distinguished Professor of XXX.

Presidential Distinguished Chairs: We propose the establishment of a special category of DP called Presidential Distinguished Chairs. These can be either school-based or university-wide, depending on the source of funding, and hence approved via either the school-based committee or an ad hoc Provostial DP committee, following nomination by Deans. These will have a higher price point for philanthropy than traditional Distinguished Professorships.

Named Professorships: Not all Professorships are vetted by DP committees. These will be called Professorships, but will not have the “Distinguished” modifier. Named Professorships may be established at the Full, Associate or Assistant level, based on the intention of the donor and magnitude of the gift.

Other notes regarding criteria:

- Full Professorships (Distinguished or named) can be established through gifts.
- Junior chairs cannot be “Distinguished.”
- Junior chairs cannot be held after promotion of the faculty member beyond the rank named in the gift agreement.

Term-limited Professorships: There are named chairs that are term limited, such as Bass Chairs. Chair holders generally relinquish these chairs at the end of the term (though we have in particular instances renewed these for a second term). These will be referred to as “Chairs” and not preceded by the modifier “Distinguished.” Going forward, these will only be established as part of a larger program (eg. Bass chairs).

Eponymous chairs: These are unfunded chairs that are established infrequently via a process involving the board of trustees. Whether they are simply “named” rather than “Distinguished” will depend on whether the holder has been approved by a DP committee. These chairs are held only at the rank of Full Professor.