



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
AND VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM

TO: Deans, Chairs, and Faculty Holding the Rank of Professor

FROM: Michael McPherson, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

DATE: May 5, 2025

RE: Nominations for University Distinguished Research Professorship Award (NEW)

I am pleased to announce the call for **the 2026 University Distinguished Research Professorship Award**. The award recognizes tenured faculty at the rank of professor who have achieved a truly exceptional record of creative activities or research productivity and who demonstrate a record of continued extraordinary productivity.

The recipient receives the designation of “University Distinguished Research Professor” and a one-time supplement of \$5,000 is added to their base salary. As per [UNT policy 06.015](#), up to five awards may be made per year with the restriction that no more than 5 percent of those at the rank of professor can hold the designation “University Distinguished Research Professor” at any one time. Only the most qualified individuals receive this designation, and thus the award may not be granted in a given review cycle.

To be eligible for this award, an individual must be a full-time tenured professor in rank; have a record of exceptionally distinguished research or creative activity; and demonstrate evidence of the potential for continued extraordinary productivity. A candidate’s nomination must be based on a record of sustained excellence throughout their career.

Please refer to the following page for specific nomination guidelines and requirements. Nominations will be reviewed by the University Distinguished Research Professor Selection and Review Committee.

Deans should submit nominations using the [Faculty Success InfoReady Portal](#) by **5:00 PM, October 9, 2025**. Please submit to the award titled “**Distinguished Research Professorship**”.

All awarded recipient titles and base adjustments will take effect on September 1, 2026. If you have any questions, please contact Faculty Success at faculty.success@unt.edu.

Guidelines and Requirements for Nominations of Faculty for University Distinguished Research Professorships (NEW)

A candidate's nomination is based upon a record of sustained excellence throughout their career. **The nomination packet should include the following documents.** Items 1–6 should be merged into a single PDF by the chair; item 7 should be uploaded as a separate file.

- 1) A table of contents.
- 2) Current vita.
- 3) A nomination letter from the candidate's chair, highlighting the nominee's qualifications for the position of University Distinguished Research Professor. The letter should describe in detail how the candidate meets the criteria of (a) having a record of exceptionally distinguished research or creative activity and (b) demonstrating evidence of the potential for continued extraordinary productivity.

The Selection Committee anticipates that successful candidates will have achieved a national or international reputation for excellence in their chosen field, and the chair's letter should comment on the extent to which the nominee has gained such recognition. The chair should direct the committee's attention to evidence in the nominee's CV and publication list that such recognition has, in fact, been achieved by describing the significance of awards and honors that the nominee has received.

Given that the selection committee comprises scholars from a wide variety of disciplines, it is incumbent on the chair to provide any discipline-specific context the committee may need to judge the quality of the scholarship. Letters from chairs should be no more than 1,000 words in length.

- 4) A letter from the department's Personnel Affairs Committee (or other unit-level committee, duly constituted for reviewing such nominations), endorsing the chair's nomination. Letters from departmental PACs should be no more than 1,000 words in length.
- 5) Three letters from individuals, not at UNT, describing the candidate's qualifications for the position of University Distinguished Research Professor. No more than three letters will be reviewed. To achieve as much uniformity as possible across the University in these supporting letters, the committee suggests that, in soliciting such letters, the chair use the following language:

The Department of _____ at the University of North Texas is nominating Professor _____ for the position of University Distinguished Research Professor. Professor _____ has indicated to me that you might be willing to write a letter supporting this nomination. If you are willing to write a letter supporting the nomination of Professor _____, please describe in some detail why Professor _____ meets the criteria for being named a UNT Distinguished Research Professor.

These criteria are (a) having a record of exceptionally distinguished research or creative activity and (b) demonstrating evidence of the potential for continued extraordinary productivity. Please also comment on (c) the extent to which Professor _____ has achieved a national or international reputation for excellence in her/his/their chosen field.

Please describe (d) the evidence in the CV and publication list of Professor _____ of her/his/their stature in this field. Your letter should also (e) state what, if any, professional relationship you have or have had to the candidate. Please limit the length of your letter to no more than 1,000 words.

- 6) A description, written by the chair, giving the qualifications of each of the three external letter writers and the evidence that each of the letter writers has achieved a national or international reputation for excellence in her/his chosen field. Each description should be no more than one paragraph long. These descriptions might contain phrases such as, “holds the _____ Chair of _____ at _____ University,” “edits a prestigious journal in the field of _____,” “is a nationally acclaimed art/music critic,” “has received the _____ National/International Prize for their work.”
- 7) Dean’s Letter (to be solicited by the chair)

Department chairs nominating **new candidates** for Distinguished Research Professor should work with the candidate to compile a nomination dossier in a single PDF to send to the dean of the school or college a week before the submission deadline. Deans should add their letter and submit nominations using the [Faculty Success InfoReady Portal](#) by **5:00 PM, October 9, 2025**. Please submit to the award titled **“Distinguished Research Professorship.”**

All awarded recipient titles and base adjustments will take effect on September 1, 2026. If you have any questions, please contact Faculty Success at faculty.success@unt.edu.

Note: [UNT Policy 06.015](#) states, “Faculty who hold a Regents Professorship shall not be eligible to hold the title of University Distinguished Research Professor or University Distinguished Teaching Professor simultaneously.”