

# VCU Commonwealth and University Professorships

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## POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE<sup>1</sup>

The Board of Visitors may designate the rank of commonwealth professor, University professor or emeritus professor as deemed appropriate. The appointment of a faculty member to one of these distinguished professorships at Virginia Commonwealth University constitutes one of the highest honors that can be granted to a university member.

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## WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

All faculty, staff and students should read this policy.

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## RELATED DOCUMENTS

VCU Faculty Handbook

VCU Promotion and Tenure Policy

VCU University Policies – Private Support for Endowed Chairs and Professorships –

(Note: This policy specifically addresses Endowed Chairs and Professorships.)

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## CONTACTS

The Office of the Provost officially interprets this policy and shall revise or eliminate any or all parts as necessary to meet the changing needs of Virginia Commonwealth University. Please direct policy questions to the Office of the Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Affairs.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from University of Pittsburgh, “Policy and Procedure Governing Appointments to Distinguished Professorships,” available at <http://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty-affairs/distinguished.html>.

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## DEFINITIONS

### **Commonwealth Professor:**

Candidates being nominated for Commonwealth Professor must have an established prominence through extraordinary scholarly attainment, educational advancement, or leadership in an academic discipline or field of study, with national or international distinction.

### **University Professor:**

Candidates being nominated for University Professor must either teach or conduct research that crosses discipline boundaries. These individuals must have an established prominence in multiple fields of study, with national or international recognition in at least one field of study.

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## PROCEDURES

Commonwealth/University Professors are appointed by VCU's Board of Visitors upon recommendation of the President. The President considers the previous levels of review and recommendation when making the final recommendation. The recommendations are initiated typically at the dean or departmental level, with the nominator assembling a recommendation packet that includes the information listed below.

The availability of Commonwealth/University Professors is infrequent, determined in individual cases, and dependent solely upon the information included in the dossier. All appointments are made with the expectation that professional performance will be maintained at a level appropriate for the distinguished appointment.

**Recommendation Packets are submitted to the Provost and include:**

1. Cover sheet with the following information:
  - a. Name of Faculty Member
  - b. School/College and Department
  - c. Rank and Tenure Status
  - d. Title to be Approved
2. A recommendation letter from the appropriate dean that sets forth the candidate's record of achievement.
3. Faculty consultation regarding the appointment should be included in the nomination letter.
4. The nominee's current Curriculum Vitae.
5. Support letters highlighting the candidate's record of achievement from University faculty and other colleagues both within and outside Virginia Commonwealth University. (No more than 5 letters should be included).

**Steps in the Review Process:**

1. The recommendation packet is forwarded by the Provost to the Committee on Endowed Chair/Professorships. They review the material and make a recommendation to the Provost.
2. The Provost and Vice President of Health Sciences (when appropriate) provide a recommendation to the President.
3. The President makes a recommendation to the Board of Visitors.
4. Board of Visitors considers the recommendation at the next scheduled BOV meeting.
5. Candidate is notified of the appointment.
6. The Committee on Endowed Chair/Professorships reviews such appointments every five years.