

To: HHS Unit Heads

From: Marion Underwood, Dean

Cc: Thomas Berndt, Senior Associate Dean

Date: April 21, 2022

Subject: HHS Procedures for Nominations of Distinguished Professors

The Purdue University document, “Procedures for Awarding Distinguished and Named Professorships and Faculty Scholars,” which is available on the Provost Office website, begins by saying that a “primary committee and/or area committee reviews the candidate’s credentials . . . and votes on his or her suitability for a distinguished professorship.” However, the University document does not say how an individual might be nominated for a distinguished professorship and so receive such a review.

In the College of Health and Human Sciences (HHS), any HHS tenured or clinical/professional full professor may nominate another HHS professor for appointment as a distinguished professor by sending the dean a 1-page statement of the rationale for that appointment and a copy of the nominee’s curriculum vitae. According to the University document on procedures, the curriculum vitae “should highlight awards and Fellowship status in the candidate’s professional societies as well as other notable activities and accomplishments.”

After reading the nomination materials and consulting with one or more HHS professors not in the nominee’s department, the dean decides whether the nomination should be considered further. If so, the dean asks one or more HHS professors to work with the nominator to identify external experts who might provide letters of support of the nomination. The University document specifies that at least five letters of support are required from “esteemed colleagues from distinct, distinguished universities and programs outside of Purdue University (for example, AAU member universities, recognized top-10 programs in the field, leading international universities), or esteemed colleagues (e.g. Nobel laureates, National Academy members or holding similar distinctions) from other institutions.” Once the five or more experts are identified, the nominator requests letters of support of the nomination from them.

After the nominator receives all the letters and sends them to the dean, the dean decides whether the nomination should be forwarded to the HHS Area Committee for a discussion and vote on the distinguished professorship. If at this stage or any previous stage the dean decides that the nomination should not be considered further, the dean informs the nominator of the decision and the reasons for it.

If the dean decides that the nomination should move forward, the nominator then drafts a forceful and compelling nomination letter, making the affirmative case for the nomination and incorporating comments from the letters of support. This nomination letter will then be forwarded to the Area

Committee, along with the nominee's curriculum vitae and the five or more external letters.

When a nomination is reviewed by the HHS Area Committee, the nominator is normally invited to the meeting to present a summary of the nominee's credentials. A nominee who is an area committee member does not attend the meeting, but the alternate committee member from the same unit takes the nominee's place. After the presentation, the nominator answers questions from committee members. Then a nominator who is not an area committee member is excused from the meeting, and a general discussion of the nomination occurs. When the discussion ends, the committee members vote on the nomination by secret ballot. If a majority of the committee vote in favor of the candidate's appointment as a distinguished professor, the rest of the review follows the specified University procedures.