University of Southern Maine
Distinguished Professor

Introduction

The title “USM Distinguished Professor” is among the highest honors accorded tenured full professors at the University of Southern Maine. Such professors will have achieved national and international recognition for their scholarship, teaching, and service. Selection as a USM Distinguished Professor rewards sustained individual excellence over a period of time and serves as a metric for an engaged professorate serving the people of Maine. The USM Distinguished Professors will have demonstrated exceptional scholarly and instructional leadership, especially across a wide disciplinary or interdisciplinary range as evidenced in their scholarship and instruction. The University will support up to a maximum of four (4) active Distinguished Professors at any given time.

Selection Criteria

The title “Distinguished Professor” is reserved for USM faculty members who have already achieved the rank of Professor. Individuals selected to serve as Distinguished Professors will have demonstrated exceptional scholarly or creative work and instructional leadership across a broad disciplinary or interdisciplinary range. In this context, leadership may refer to such observable qualities as:

- Extensive publication in scholarly and/or other peer reviewed venues;
- Extensive body of creative work bringing national recognition;
- Peer and professional recognition of scholarship through the bestowal of awards and grants;
- Frequent citation of scholarly work by others directly in the disciplinary field (or related fields);
- Noteworthy service to a professional organization or publication;
- Peer recognition of excellence and innovation in teaching;
- A documented record of mentoring emerging teachers or scholars at USM or elsewhere and
- Outstanding public service clearly aligned with and growing out of a professional base of knowledge.

Rewards and Expectations

A USM Distinguished Professor receives an annual stipend of $2500. The appointment is without term. The status of Distinguished Professor emeritus/a, but not the stipend, is carried into retirement. Distinguished Professors are not expected to undertake additional University work in exchange for the stipend, which is understood to recognized excellence already achieved. However, the President, Provost, or Dean may invite the Distinguished Professor to participate in selected high profile events or
activities that demonstrate the University’s commitment to scholarly and creative excellence.

**Selection Process**

1. The Provost issues a call for nominations when USM has capacity to honor a faculty member in this manner.
2. Nominations are generated by peers and begin at the department. The nomination packet should be equivalent to the post-tenure-review and include at least two external letters of recommendation. The nomination packets are forwarded to the Dean of their respective College by December 31.
3. The Colleges, with committees that are “representative of the college,” evaluate the nominations using the selection criteria. The committee forwards their recommendation for the top two candidates along with the nomination packet of those candidates to the Provost by February 28.
4. As there are five Colleges at USM, the maximum number of candidates is ten (10).
5. The Distinguished Professors and Distinguished Professors Emeriti receive the full list of candidates and nomination packets from the Office of the Provost. They consider the candidates and provide their recommendation to the Provost.
6. With the concurrence of the President, the Provost appoints the Distinguished Professor.
7. The Provost notifies the newly appointed Distinguished Professor.
8. Distinguished Professor announced at Opening Breakfast and in local news media.