

FACULTY EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST
COMMUNICATION NO. 4

Overview

The University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is committed to building and maintaining a faculty that is excellent in many dimensions. The Office of the Provost supports three programs in which partial or total central financial support for academic positions may be provided: the Faculty Excellence Program, described here; the Targets of Opportunity Program (see Communication No. 7) and the Dual Career Program (see Communication No. 8).

We require all appointees to faculty and academic staff positions to meet the highest standards in teaching, research and service. Normally, faculty and academic staff members meeting these criteria are best identified through the regular recruitment and search processes, funded through departmental and college procedures. In special circumstances, however, the Provost may provide funding (as described below) for a position and/or authorize a waiver of search when a special recruitment will contribute to the university's excellence through attraction of highly qualified individuals whose recruitment supports strategic objectives and institutional priorities.

Except in rare circumstances as noted below, financial support and waivers are not available through these programs when a candidate is identified through a search that has been approved, funded and initiated at the school or college level.

The overriding criterion for granting financial support and/or a waiver of search is whether the request contributes to academic excellence in the unit, as measured by usual standards for hiring and as outlined in the strategic goals of the unit, college, and campus.

Further criteria for different categories of requests are described below. Decisions on requests for financial support and/or waivers of search under this policy are made by the Provost in the best interests of the University. Decisions of the Provost are final.

Faculty Excellence Program

The primary purpose of this program is to recruit individuals who will contribute to transformation and positive change, within their units and across the institution. Individuals recruited through the Faculty Excellence program will have an outstanding record of accomplishment and will be able to provide scholarly leadership from the outset of their appointment at Illinois. Faculty Excellence hires should clearly enhance our capacity to achieve strategic objectives and promote interdisciplinary research activities; these individuals may also strengthen undergraduate teaching capacity in critical areas, promote the University's engagement and outreach missions, and meet other objectives of the University and its academic units. The focus is on experienced faculty with established records of excellence in their area of scholarly or research inquiry. The majority of individuals hired through the faculty excellence program will be at the professor level. In exceptional cases, associate professors will be considered.

Faculty Excellence positions will be targeted to units that show potential for transformational change and advancement. Thus, these positions will be dedicated to areas with clear plans for

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advancement and well-articulated rationale for how a specific excellence hire will promote such plans, including areas where Illinois can establish or build on comparative advantage. Units that are approved to recruit faculty through this program should be able to demonstrate increased capacity to participate in interdisciplinary research or scholarship and enhanced capacity to advance the goals of the unit and campus.

The Faculty Excellence Program is not designed to expand the faculty, nor should it be used to recruit strong faculty members who could be hired through typical search mechanisms. Candidates for this program must be truly exceptional individuals who will contribute to transformational change in the institution, in their own unit and across the campus. Thus, the criteria for review and approval of candidates is stringent and automatic approval should not be anticipated.

Beginning in Fall 2008, Stage 1 (permission to recruit, see below) nominations for the Faculty Excellence Program will be reviewed by a team of senior scholars, nominated by the Council of Deans to include the breadth of the campus (i.e., the Faculty Excellence Review Committee). The Faculty Excellence Review Committee includes 12-15 members; for each faculty excellence nominee, approximately 4 committee members with relevant expertise will be called upon to review the Stage 1 request, based on the criteria outlined here, and will provide their advice to the Provost, who will approve, deny or defer the Stage 1 request, as informed by the input of the Review Committee.

In summary, as faculty excellence candidates are considered, they will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- ∞ Ability to contribute toward transformation and positive change, within the unit and across the campus
- ∞ Ability to advance strategic initiatives, at the campus and/or unit levels
- ∞ Established excellence in research and scholarship, with the preponderance of appointments at the professor level
- ∞ Capacity to enhance interdisciplinary scholarship or research

GENERAL GUIDELINES

The identification and recruitment process is intended to be flexible and responsive to opportunities, guided by the following principles:

- * Deans may bring forward faculty excellence nominations at any time throughout the year;
- * Colleges may request up to 100% of salary for Faculty Excellence hires; salary contribution from the college may enhance the likelihood of support and expand

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the capacity of the program. If a faculty member hired through the excellence program leaves the campus or retires, the salary provided by the Provost's office, plus salary increments contributed by the Provost's office that have accrued to the line, will revert to the campus if and when the position is vacated.

- * Pre-authorization by the Provost (see Stage 1, below) is required for any level of financial support from this program;
- * Final approval by the Provost is required (see Stage 2, below), based on complete curriculum vitae, external letters, teaching evaluations, and P&T clearance at the unit and college levels, as required; and based on the criteria presented above.

APPROVAL PROCESS

Stage 1: Typically, the process begins when a unit identifies a potential candidate for the Faculty Excellence program through a strategic recruiting effort. In this case, the credentials of the candidate must be screened and pre-approved by the Office of the Provost before contact is made with the candidate. This process normally involves a department or college nominating individuals for these positions without their knowledge, much like the process used when filling endowed appointments. The attached transmittal form includes a checklist of materials needed for the Stage 1 screening process. The following materials are critical:

- ∞ cover memo summarizing the strategic nature of the hire, and the potential contributions of the hire to the transformation and advancement of the unit, as well as the merits of the case, with endorsement of both the unit head and the dean
- ∞ the candidate's CV

Occasionally, outstanding candidates may be identified through the normal search process, through searches for administrative positions or through focused recruiting efforts designed to meet the goals of this program. In such cases, a unit may be requesting additional funds beyond those attached to the line to attract the senior leader, or it may ask for approval to appoint more than one appointment from the same search.

As mentioned above, beginning in Fall 2008, the Faculty Excellence Review Committee will be constituted and called on to advise the Provost in the Stage 1 approval process. Every effort will be made to ensure timely processing of Stage 1 requests; it is anticipated that the review at this initial stage will require approximately 2-3 weeks to complete once received by the Office of the Provost.

Stage 2: When a unit is prepared to finalize an offer to an excellence candidate, a full review of the case is conducted at the campus level, with a decision made by the Provost. The Provost may seek consultation from the Chancellor, the Vice Chancellor for Research, and/or the Dean of the Graduate College. If tenure is involved, all of these parties are consulted, as is the Chair of the

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Campus Committee on Promotion and Tenure. For the final review, external letters regarding the candidate are required, in addition to the candidate's CV and cover memos from unit head and dean. The attached transmittal form provides a checklist for materials needed for the final (Stage 2) review.

Colleges may request up to 100% of salary for hires of experienced faculty leaders. Colleges may wish to contribute a portion of the salary to (a) increase the likelihood of approval, and (b) expand the capacity of available resources. The campus share of the salary will revert to the campus when the position is vacated through the resignation, termination, or retirement of the faculty member, plus any salary increments provided by the campus that have accrued in conjunction with the line.

Questions about the Faculty Excellence program should be directed to the Office of the Provost at 333-6677.

Attachments

Transmittals for:

Stage 1 Approval for Faculty Excellence (Attachment 1)

Stage 2 Approval for Faculty Excellence (Attachment 2)