



SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

TO: Senate

FROM Joy Johnson
Chair – Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

DATE: August 23, 2024

SUBJECT: Amendment of Policy A32.03 - Distinguished SFU Professor

On June 19, 2024 a Board committee (GRCC) met to discuss the proposed changes to A32.03. Several issues were raised and further discussion of the policy changes was deferred to a Board meeting in the Fall. Since these issues involve potential changes to the version of the policy approved by Senate, they were brought back to Senate for further discussion at the July Senate meeting and are now being brought back to Senate for approval.

Motion:

“That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the Amendment of Policy A32.03 - Distinguished SFU Professor.”



MEMORANDUM

ATTENTION Senate Committee on Agenda and Rules (SCAR)

FROM Dugan O’Neil
Vice President, Research & Innovation

RE: Amendment of Policy A32.03 Distinguished SFU Professor for approval

DATE July 23, 2024

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BACKGROUND

The Distinguished SFU Professor program is a joint initiative of the Provost and Vice-President, Academic (VPA) and the Vice President, Research and Innovation (VPRI). Policy A32.03, sets out the criteria and terms for the appointments of Distinguished SFU Professors, which recognize SFU faculty members of distinction who have achieved exceptional performance and distinguished accomplishments. An amendment was proposed to the policy to allow Distinguished SFU Professors to keep the title permanently (beyond the 5-year funding term), with a caveat that the VPA and VPRI have the authority to revoke the title under exceptional circumstances. These proposed changes were posted for community consultation on the Policy Gazette for a three-week period. Additionally, they were submitted to Senate, Faculty Relations, SFUFA, Faculty Deans, Equity office and the advisory committee for SFU Distinguished Professors for feedback. At the June Senate meeting, a new version of the policy was approved (including some amendments made on the floor of Senate) and the policy was passed to the Board of Governors for final approval.

On June 19, 2024 a Board committee (GRCC) met to discuss the proposed changes to A32.03. Several issues were raised and further discussion of the policy changes was deferred to a Board meeting in the Fall. Since these issues involve potential changes to the version of the policy approved by Senate, they were brought back to Senate for further discussion at the July Senate meeting and are now being brought back to Senate for approval.

CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

The consultation process with GRCC resulted in the following changes:

- The text “while also aligning with the University’s strategic objectives and/or emerging priorities” was removed from section 4.1.3 to make clear that the award is to recognize a lifetime of research achievement rather than alignment with current (or emerging) university priorities;
- The purpose of the program was clarified further in section 1.1;
- Additional wording was added to section 4.2 to clarify what happens to the title when a Distinguished University Professor retires from the university; and
- Wording was updated in section 4.4 to limit the number of people who receive the title (excluding Professor Emeritus) to not normally exceed 4% of the SFU professoriate at any one time; this is the same percentage that was used for limiting the salary stipend so reference to the salary stipend limit was removed. The limit was added to address the concern that the prestige associated with this title may diminish over time if there isn’t a limit. Having a limit of some kind is consistent with other universities that have a similar program. A limit of 4% applied to 1200 professors is 48 but this number will change as the number of professors change.

NEXT STEPS

After Senate approval, the updated DUP policy will be submitted to the GRCC Board committee to recommend and for the full Board to approve. Once the proposed amendments are approved by the Board of Governors, revised policy A32.03 will go into effect immediately and an announcement will be sent to the SFU community.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Revised Policy A32.03 Distinguished SFU Professor - with amendments since June Senate meeting marked
2. Summary of feedback received from GRCC and responses to feedback

Feedback and responses to proposed changes to policy A32.03 from GRCC:

Feedback Item	Response
<p>The Board questioned whether the policy should include “while also aligning with the University’s strategic objectives and/or emerging priorities” in section 4.1.3. If this is an award to recognize a lifetime of research achievement, is it relevant to consider whether those achievements align with current (or emerging) university priorities?</p>	<p>The text “while also aligning with the University’s strategic objectives and/or emerging priorities” has been removed from section 4.1.3 to make clear that the award is to recognize a lifetime of research achievement rather than alignment with current (or emerging) university priorities.</p>
<p>The Board requested clarification on the primary purpose of the policy. Is it, for example, focused on retention, recognition of lifetime achievement, career advancement, or something else? This influences the eligibility criteria “tenured research faculty”. Depending on the purpose, it may be wise to limit this award to full professors and to be clear about what happens to the designation when a full professor retires from the university. This can then be spelled out in the policy.</p>	<p>The primary and secondary purpose of this program was clarified in section 1.1:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">A joint initiative of the Provost and Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, the primary purpose of the Distinguished SFU Professor program is to recognize SFU faculty members of distinction who have achieved exceptional scholarly performance and distinguished accomplishments relative to their rank and years of service. A secondary purpose is to retain excellent research faculty members at the University.</p> <p>Additional wording was added to section 4.2 to clarify what happens to the title when a Distinguished University Professor retires from the university:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The title of “Distinguished SFU Professor of [Specialty Subject Area]” will change to “Distinguished SFU Professor Emeritus of [Specialty Subject Area]” after retirement from SFU.</p>
<p>The Board notes that clause 4.4 limits the number of faculty members receiving a stipend to “not normally exceed 4% of the SFU professoriate at any one time”. This does not place any limit on the fraction of the SFU professoriate that holds the title. Concern was expressed that, without a limit or a</p>	<p>Wording was updated in section 4.4 to limit the number of people who receive the title (excluding Professor Emeritus) to not normally exceed 4% of the SFU professoriate at any one time; this is the same percentage that was used for limiting the salary stipend so reference to the salary stipend limit was removed:</p>

<p>guideline, the prestige associated with this title may diminish over time. The Board asked management to report on limits placed on similar policies at other universities when this item comes back for their consideration.</p>	<p>The cohort of Distinguished SFU Professors (including Associate Professors and excluding Professor Emeritus) receiving a salary stipend, will not normally exceed 4% of the SFU professoriate at any one time. Appointments are phased to ensure appointment opportunities every year. Normally, at least two Distinguished SFU Professors are available for each Faculty. It is recognized that larger Faculties may receive more.</p>
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Environmental scan of limits applied with similar programs at other universities:

University	Limits
Western University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total number of 'active' Distinguished University Professorships at any given time is capped at 3% of the full-time, tenured or probationary faculty members at Western (it can be less than 3%) Title of "Distinguished University Professor" while employed at Western Title changes to "Distinguished University Professor Emeritus" at retirement from Western
University of Ottawa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awards capped at 25 regular tenured faculty members, not including persons who retain the title after retirement
University of Alberta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mention of a limit 3-year term but the title can be used in perpetuity
UBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 10 new Distinguished University Scholars awarded every 2 years Title continues as long as a tenured member of UBC faculty or UBC Professor Emeritus; for grant-tenured faculty members, the title is carried for the duration of their position at UBC
McMaster University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of Distinguished University Professors shall be restricted to no more than 2% of all full-time members of faculty, including tenure-stream, teaching-stream, CAWAR and Special (with the latter stream counted using a weighting factor of 0.2). The maximum number of positions will be re-evaluated every three years. No more than five new titles will be conferred in any given year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vacancy among the Distinguished University Professors shall occur when any retires. • The title of Distinguished University Professor will continue to be held after retirement.
University of Saskatchewan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not more than 30 individuals hold the title; Distinguished Professors Emeriti will not be included in this quota • On retirement the awardee will bear the title of "Distinguished Professor Emerita/us" • Appointment will be for life

Distinguished SFU Professor

Date

Number

A 32.03

**Date of Last
Review/Revision**

TBA

**Mandated
Review**

TBA

Policy Authority: Provost and Vice-President Academic and Vice-President, Research and Innovation

Associated Procedure(s): Distinguished SFU Professor Procedure

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Distinguished SFU Professor program is to recognize and celebrate Simon Fraser University members of distinction who have achieved exceptional performance and distinguished accomplishment in their scholarly or creative work/or innovation such that their accomplishments are nationally and internationally recognized. This policy sets out the criteria and terms for the appointments of Distinguished SFU Professors. The procedure and related documents establish the process to be followed by the Provost and Vice-President Academic and Vice-President, Research and Innovation in the nomination, adjudication and appointment of SFU Distinguished Professors.

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1.0 PREAMBLE

- 1.1 A joint initiative of the Provost and Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, the primary purpose of the Distinguished SFU Professor program is to recognize SFU faculty members of distinction who have achieved exceptional scholarly performance and distinguished accomplishments. A secondary purpose is to retain excellent research faculty members at the University.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to set the criteria and terms for the appointment of Distinguished SFU Professors and set parameters for such appointments.

3.0 SCOPE AND JURISDICTION

- 3.1 This policy applies to tenured research faculty members.

4.0 POLICY

- 4.1 The title of Distinguished SFU Professor recognizes and rewards tenured research faculty members who meet the following criteria:
- 4.1.1 Have a demonstrated and sustained record of distinguished, exemplary accomplishments in their scholarly or creative work and/or innovation;
 - 4.1.2 Have a national and international reputation;
 - 4.1.3 Have achieved pre-eminence in their field; and
 - 4.1.4 Have a demonstrated commitment to collegial leadership and to engagement.
- 4.2 Distinguished SFU Professors will bear the title “Distinguished SFU Professor of [Specialty Subject Area]”, or “Distinguished SFU Associate Professor of [Specialty Subject Area]”. There is no expiry date to the title of “Distinguished SFU Professor of [Specialty Subject Area]” although it can be revoked at the discretion of the Provost and Vice-President Academic and VP Research & Innovation should exceptional circumstances arise, such as contravention of any SFU policies. The title of “Distinguished SFU Professor of [Specialty Subject Area]” will change to “Distinguished SFU Professor Emeritus of [Specialty Subject Area]” after retirement from SFU. The title “Distinguished SFU Associate Professor of [Specialty Subject Area]” will expire 5 years after the date of the appointment. All areas of scholarship will be considered with nominations whose scholarly activities align with and advance SFU’s strategic priorities encouraged.
- 4.3 Faculty members who hold internal or external named awards, such as endowed chairs and professorships, Canada Research Chairs or major salary awards from granting agencies are not eligible to be nominated for a Distinguished SFU Professorship.
- 4.4 The cohort of Distinguished SFU Professors (including Associate Professors and excluding Professor Emeritus) will not normally exceed 4% of the SFU professoriate at any one time. Appointments are phased to ensure appointment opportunities every year. Normally, two Distinguished SFU Professors are available for each Faculty. It is recognized that larger Faculties may receive more.
- 4.5 Distinguished SFU Professorships come with a salary stipend of \$20,000 per annum over and above the holder’s regular academic salary for a 5-year term. The holder may request that the

stipend be provided as a research grant instead of salary. A faculty member who holds a Distinguished SFU Professorship and then receives an internal or external named award, such as endowed chairs and professorships, Canada Research Chairs or major salary awards from granting agencies, must relinquish any future stipends related to the Distinguished SFU Professorship. A faculty member who accepts a senior administrative role at the university would normally forego any stipends related to the Distinguished SFU Professorship for their duration of their senior administrative role. For certainty, a Distinguished SFU Professor who holds the title “Distinguished SFU Professor of [Specialty Subject Area]” will retain that title (unless otherwise revoked in accordance with Section 4.2 above) even after no salary stipend is available to that Distinguished SFU Professor.

- 4.6 Equity considerations will be upheld in the evaluation of nominees and selection of awardees, in accordance with the SFU/SFUFA Collective Agreement and as described in SFU policy GP19. The principles of academic freedom will be upheld in the evaluation of nominees and selection of awardees, in accordance with the SFU/SFUFA Collective Agreement.

5.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The responsibilities of Distinguished SFU Professor will include giving public lectures and participating in other public events as requested by the Provost and Vice-President Academic and/or the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, as well as participating in mentorship and tutoring of junior faculty or other duties helping advance careers and excellence.

6.0 RELATED LEGAL, POLICY AUTHORITIES AND AGREEMENTS

- 6.1 The legal and other University Policy authorities and agreements that may bear on the administration of this policy and may be consulted as needed include but are not limited to:

6.1.1 *University Act*, RSBC 1996, c 468

6.1.2 *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, RSBC 1996, c 165

6.1.3 *SFU/SFUFA collective agreement*

7.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY

- 7.1 The information and records made and received to administer this policy are subject to the access to information and protection of privacy provisions of British Columbia’s *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and the University’s Information Policy series.

8.0 RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF RECORDS

- 8.1 Information and records made and received to administer this policy are evidence of the University’s actions to administer the Distinguished SFU Professor program. Information and records must be retained and disposed of in accordance with a records retention schedule approved by the University Archivist.

9.0 POLICY REVIEW

- 9.1 This policy must be reviewed every three years and may always be reviewed as needed.

10.0 POLICY AUTHORITY

- 10.1 This policy is jointly administered under the authority of the Provost and Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation.

11.0 INTERPRETATION

- 11.1 Questions of interpretation or application of this policy or its procedures shall be referred to the Provost and Vice-President Academic and the Vice-President, Research and Innovation, whose decision shall be final.

12.0 PROCEDURES AND OTHER ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 12.1 The procedures for this policy are: Distinguished SFU Professor Procedure

