Teaching Chairs at the College of William and Mary

Description and Objectives

In the Fall of 1995, The College of William and Mary initiated a teaching chairs program. The goal is to recognize and reward excellence in teaching, and to encourage faculty exchange on topics associated with teaching development. Holders of these chairs will have the title of University Professor for Teaching Excellence.

Three faculty members will be appointed to three-year, non-renewable terms. Each will be compensated with a stipend of $5,000 per year and provided with a fund of $2,000 per year to be used for professional development. All faculty who have received tenure but do not already hold a chair will be eligible for consideration.

Teaching chairs will be responsible for devising and organizing at least one teaching development event each year. At the individual’s discretion, this may take the form of a seminar, workshop, or series of informal discussions; it might focus primarily on presentations by the chair him- or herself, or the chair might coordinate a series of presentations by others; and, finally, it could be targeted for faculty from a single discipline or school, from a specific interdisciplinary field that may, but need not, cross departments or schools (e.g., Public Policy or American Studies), or from the university as a whole.

Selection Criteria and Process

The primary selection criterion will be demonstrated and sustained excellence in teaching. More specifically, nominees will be expected to:

1. be successful at instilling in students an intense interest in and appreciation for the value of the subject matter;

2. demonstrate extraordinary commitment to students and their welfare, as evidenced by factors such as availability to students outside of class, advising, and inclusion of students in research projects;

3. challenge the student’s intellect and apply rigorous standards to the evaluation of student performance; and

4. play an active role in the improvement of education, for instance by making an unusual contribution to curriculum development, teaching development, or advising activities at the department, school, or university levels, or in the broader professional community.
Selection Process

1. Nominations

The process will begin with a call for nomination. Chairs and deans will be asked to make sure that appropriate candidates are nominated, but nominations, including self-nominations, will be encouraged from all faculty members.

2. Application Dossier

Each nominee will be asked if they wish to be considered for a chair. Nominees who wish to be considered will prepare an application dossier, the submission of which shall be understood to constitute an agreement to perform the duty described above. The application dossier shall include:

a. a two-page curriculum vitae and a two-page personal statement indicating the applicant’s teaching objectives and any other information that is relevant to the selection criteria enumerated above;

b. at least one syllabus from each course taught by the applicant in the past three years, as well as representative examples of course assignments and examinations;

c. student course evaluation data (at least one set for each course taught by the applicant in the last three years);

d. up to three letters of reference, at least one of which must come from a faculty colleague and one of which must come from a student.

3. Classroom Visitations

After reducing the list of applicants to a short-list of finalists, representatives of the selection committee will visit the classrooms of finalists at times that are mutually agreeable to the representatives and the candidate. These visitations will be useful to the selection committee in part as an opportunity to see the applicant’s teaching philosophy, as enunciated, for example, in the two-page statement, put into practice.

4. The search committee will make its recommendations to the Provost. Appointments will be effective at the beginning of the 2011-12 academic year.

9/10/10