

The Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professorship

A substantial bequest from the estate of Dr. L. Douglas Meredith, a 1926 graduate of the College of Arts and Sciences, has enabled the University to create the Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professorships to recognize and reward outstanding faculty teaching at Syracuse University.

The goals of the Meredith Professorships are—

First, to recognize and reward excellence in teaching at all levels in a way that is seen as significant by faculty members, students, and the public at large;

Second, to encourage all faculty members to look upon the many dimensions of teaching as manifold opportunities for constant improvement, even for the best teachers;

Third, to emphasize the importance the University places upon teaching by investing heavily in this most student-centered activity;

Fourth, as a result of all of the above, to improve the teaching and learning environment on campus in ways that can be singled out and recognized as valuable.

Program Description

A Meredith Professorship may be awarded to any regular, tenured faculty member in any of the schools and colleges of Syracuse University.

Each recipient is designated Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professor for a period of three years. Typically, there are six active Meredith Professors in any given year, two appointed annually.

The Meredith Professors receive a \$20,000 supplementary salary award and an additional \$5,000 fund for professional development for each year of their appointment. Also, Meredith Professors each have available an annual expense account of \$5,000 to positively impact the instructional quality in academic units (department, program, school, or college) in a manner they judge to be most effective. Meredith Professors who would like support to develop programming for their academic units are strongly encouraged to contact the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE).

As an important part of the selection process, each nominee identifies a project attending to some aspect of teaching or learning that they intend to study during the term of appointment. This project could be described in such terms as the scholarship of teaching, classroom research in higher education, outcomes assessment, curriculum development, or innovative pedagogy, including face-to-face, mixed mode, hybrid, or fully online. Collaborating with colleagues, mentoring junior colleagues, or including other interested faculty members is especially encouraged.

The professional development fund may be used in support of this project or for a variety of other purposes in support of improving teaching at the University. For example, funds may support the hiring of student assistants, the purchase of teaching resources, the support of student research projects, the development of teaching materials, the purchase of library materials, travel for conferences, bringing guest lecturers to campus virtually or in person, or hosting departmental seminars, working groups, faculty learning communities, or communities of practice that focus on teaching and student learning.

During the three-year tenure, each Meredith Professor is expected to participate in teaching and learning events and activities on campus. As elite scholarly teachers, they are also expected to use findings and materials from the project they conduct during their tenure as Meredith Professors in improving teaching and learning across Syracuse University. They are expected to share their scholarly teaching work, funded by the professorship, in professional venues, including but not limited to a session at the end of their three-year term. These sessions will take different forms suited to their study, perhaps including learning activities in which their Meredith Professor colleagues can participate. Active Meredith Professors will meet periodically each year to discuss their respective projects and to plan other activities and submit annual progress reports.

Active and former Meredith Professors are enrolled for life in the Meredith Symposium to honor their contribution to students and to the University. The Symposium's program is planned by the active Meredith Professors.

Holders of the Meredith Professorships are expected not to be on leaves of absence from the University more than one semester during their three-year term. However, Meredith Professors who receive external funding from sources such as ACLS, NEH, or Guggenheim for a full year's leave may take leave from their Meredith Professorships for that year. In such cases, the Professorship's term is extended for a year, and funds are withheld during the year of leave and paid during a fourth year.

Selection Criteria

Meredith Professors are selected based on their overall excellence as teachers and on their potential to contribute to the improvement of the teaching and learning environment across Syracuse University and beyond. A prerequisite for consideration for the award is a record of significant scholarly or creative activity on the part of the candidate. More specifically, the selection committee will consider each nominee's

- overall approach to teaching as seen, for example, in teaching initiatives or innovations or in techniques for assessing or evaluating student learning;
- potential impact on the Syracuse University academic community as a Meredith Professor, as seen in the project proposal;
- potential for impact on teaching and learning by sharing insights or findings from the project;
- documentation of positive impact on student learning in the nominee's courses; and
- evidence of consideration of student diversity and strategies for inclusive pedagogy within the proposed project.

Selection Process

Eligible faculty members are nominated for a Meredith Professorship by the dean of the school or college in which they have their principal appointment. Deans may develop internal school-based procedures to identify and put forward their strongest candidates for this honor. Schools and colleges with:

- 50 or fewer full-time faculty members may nominate one candidate;
- 51 to 100 full-time faculty members may nominate two;
- 101 to 200 full-time faculty members may nominate three;
- 201 or more full-time faculty members may nominate four.

Nominations will be reviewed by a committee appointed by the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and composed of faculty members, together with a student representative. The Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs will convene the committee, and a designee will be appointed to support the committee's work. The terms of service will be staggered to allow continuity among committee members.

The selection process consists of two stages:

Stage One:

The committee first considers a letter of nomination from the dean (or designee, with concurrence of the dean) of **no more than three pages**, making the case for the individual's extraordinary teaching performance and potential for continued contributions to scholarly teaching and/or teaching innovation, given the support of the Laura J. and L. Douglas Meredith Professorship. Because teaching excellence may be demonstrated in many ways, the letter should detail how the nominee is singular in that respect. Concrete examples or illustrations are more effective than grand statements of praise. The letter should also describe the individual's regular teaching and advising responsibilities, as well as their other roles within the department, school, or college.

The Stage-One Nomination Checklist serves as a cover for the nomination letter.

Appended to the nomination letter should be:

1. a brief description of the nominee's intended project (no more than 500 words),
2. the nominee's teaching statement, of no more than 3 pages. The statement should articulate the nominee's (a) approach to teaching, including diversity, equity, and inclusion practices; (b) previous significant scholarly teaching innovations or initiatives; and (c) techniques for assessing or evaluating student learning,
3. the nominee's updated CV.

On the basis of the project description, teaching statement, nomination letter, and CV, the selection committee will make a preliminary selection from the pool of nominees to arrive at a group of finalists.

Stage Two:

The committee asks each finalist to provide a teaching portfolio, including:

1. A statement of no more than three pages describing the intended Meredith project, including scholarly methods of inquiry, planned methods for sharing project insights and findings, and plans to help others adopt similar effective practices. If the project requires review and approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) because of the kind of project planned, evidence that an IRB application is in process or that approval has been obtained is required.
2. Documentation of evidence-based, iterative pedagogical practice/s and/or pedagogical innovation/s from courses taught within the last four years (e.g., deliverables from a course-redesign project; evidence of implementation from a Summer Institute for Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning (SITETL) project; evidence of re-designed syllabi with corresponding assignments and assessments);
3. A peer observation review from a peer who meets the following qualifications: a) has worked with the CTLE for peer review and observation development, primarily through a three-session development series; b) is currently teaching; c) does not report to the person being observed; and d) will not, in the future, be reviewed by the faculty being observed; and

4. Letters from no more than two past students describing how the nominee stimulated or inspired their learning. Letters should appropriately reflect the balance of the nominee's teaching in undergraduate and graduate curricula.

A note regarding the peer observation requirement. Completing a peer observation prior to knowing if you will be selected to Stage Two has multiple benefits. It allows for easier scheduling, especially for those who may not teach every semester. Also, regardless of whether a candidate is moved forward to Stage Two, peer observation is a useful resource for guiding improvement in teaching effectiveness.

The full Stage-Two packet should include the Stage-Two Nomination Checklist as a cover and should not exceed 25 pages when printed. Included with the packet, but not available to the committee during the selection process, are a professional bio (up to 500 words) and a .jpg file of a recent headshot. The bio and headshot do not count toward the 25-page limit. Nominees do not need to resubmit any material already submitted in Stage One.

Following review of all submitted material, the committee submits its recommendations to the Chancellor, who makes the appointments. The Chancellor, in consultation with the Provost and Vice Chancellor, may make an appointment outside the committee process.

The Chancellor may modify the details of the Meredith Professorship program, as well as the nomination and selection process, to better achieve the program's goals.