THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO

TO: UNM Albuquerque and Health Sciences Center Faculty

FROM: Joanna Fair, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Health Sciences;
Rebecca Sánchez, Senior Vice Provost

DATE: October 26, 2026

CC: Barbara Rodríguez, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Michael Richards, Executive Vice President, Health Sciences

RE: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR

The Offices of Academic Affairs (Health Sciences and main campus) encourage departments/programs to nominate their most outstanding candidates for the honor of promotion to the rank of Distinguished Professor. Nominees must hold tenured appointments at the rank of Professor, demonstrate extraordinary research or creative achievements, and be nationally and internationally renowned as scholars or artists. They should also exhibit dedication to the University by serving as examples of the best qualities of the professoriate, demonstrating intellectual leadership in the University and larger scholarly community. The University especially encourages the nomination of candidates from groups currently underrepresented at the Distinguished Professor rank. Distinguished Professor rank and title information can be found in the UNM Faculty Handbook, section B 2.2.5.

Nominations originate at the department level and may be initiated in writing by one or more tenured faculty members of the nominee's academic home department. The nomination should be submitted to the department chair. When a nomination is received, the following steps should be followed:

- The department chair will solicit written evaluations (votes) from the tenured faculty members of the nominee's academic home department (see the faculty recommendation form on the Distinguished Professor website).
    - The following applies to Health Sciences: Center directors may serve in the chair's role. For large departments in Health Sciences, the chair may choose to consult faculty in the appropriate division. In the case of small divisions (<7 tenured faculty) within large departments, the chair should obtain additional written votes/recommendations from adjacent divisions whose faculty have substantial knowledge of the candidate's work and contributions.
- The department chair will then prepare a nomination package to submit to their college Dean. The nomination package should include:
    - The signed written nomination from one or more of the tenured faculty members in the nominee's academic home department.
    - A letter from the department chair making a recommendation regarding the nomination. The department chair letter must include:
        - the faculty vote tally, with an explanation of specifically what group of faculty members were consulted, it should note abstentions;
        - the department chair's recommendation;
    - Written evaluations from the voting faculty members.
- The department chair will send initial nomination packets (nomination, chair's letter, and faculty written ballots) to their Deans no later than **November 30, 2026.**

The Dean reviews the department chair's recommendation, and if the Dean approves the nomination, the department may proceed to obtain external review letters as described below. Please note that the Dean should not provide a substantive letter evaluating Distinguished Professor nominations (except for schools/colleges without chairs). The Dean's role is to determine whether the department may seek external review letters. A brief memo from the Dean confirming permission for the department to proceed

should be included in the file (see Dean's memo template). Deans should return to departments any nominations that are not accompanied by a Chair's letter clarifying who was invited to vote from among the UNM faculty, or that do not include written ballots from department faculty. In the absence of these elements, departments may not proceed to request external evaluation letters.

If permission is received from the Dean to proceed, departments are responsible for obtaining external reviews. For non-departmental colleges, the Dean drafts the primary letter in support of the nomination and coordinates the requests for external letters. For departments, the primary letter of support and requests for external letters come from the chair; for centers, from the center director.

Required Contents of Final Nomination Packets:

- Written and signed nomination by department faculty nominator(s)
- Letter of endorsement from the Chair (for departmentalized units), Director (for centers), or Dean (only for non-departmentalized units), addressing the candidates' qualifications as well as who was invited to vote, the vote tally, and abstentions.
- Department/division faculty written evaluations.
- Nominee's current CV
- A brief memo from the Dean confirming permission for the department to seek external reviews. The Dean **should not** submit a detailed letter of support, with the exception of non-departmentalized colleges as noted above. A template is available on the DP website.
- A minimum of six (6) external review letters *(to be solicited after approval from Dean)* are required. The candidate and their department should identify an equal number of reviewers.
    - External reviewers are expected to be senior scholars at their institutions and to be affiliated with highly regarded institutions, primarily Carnegie R1 universities and international equivalents. International reviewers are encouraged if seeking to establish international standing.
    - Departments must ensure that external reviewers do not have any conflicts of interest (relatives, former students, frequent collaborators, former close colleagues, etc.) in evaluating nominees.
    - Departments should avoid obtaining more than one external review from the same institution.
- A table listing the names of external reviewers invited, their institution, R1 or other institutional status, rationale for inviting this reviewer, and invited reviewer response. The external reviewer table is available on the Distinguished Professor website.
- Supplementary materials, such as samples of publications or creative works and successful research proposals

Once the external review letters are received, departments should assemble them into a single .pdf file with a clickable table of contents. All Health Sciences nomination packets should be submitted to the Health Sciences Office of Academic Affairs at rrholmes@salud.unm.edu for procedural review **no later than March 19, 2027.** The Health Sciences Office of Academic Affairs will then convey the packets to the (UNM Albuquerque) Office of Academic Affairs. Main campus departments should email the complete nomination packet to the Office of the Provost at jenlov22@unm.edu **no later than March 19, 2027.** Incomplete nomination packets will be returned without review.

In accordance with the University-wide distinction this rank conveys, the final nomination will be reviewed by a committee of senior faculty appointed in consultation with the Faculty Senate Operations Committee per the FHB B 2.2.5. The distinguished professor advisory review committee will submit recommendations to the Provost, who makes the appointments. Questions about the process or criteria can be sent to Rebecca Sánchez at svp@unm.edu (Albuquerque main campus) or Joanna Fair at rrholmes@salud.unm.edu (Health Sciences).