

Distinguished Librarian Guidelines

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
Distinguished Librarian Rank
Policies, Procedures, And Criteria
For Appointment To The Rank

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAM

Distinguished Librarian is a prestigious tenured University rank that is awarded to librarians whose contributions have been transformational in creating a new information environment by providing access to information, sharing or networking information resources, and fostering information literacy. In extending its "Distinguished" ranks to the library faculty, the State University of New York recognizes the accomplishments of all its faculty; it also assumes national leadership within the academy by becoming the first university system to so encourage and foster the full potential of the faculty status of librarians. The Distinguished Librarian rank honors and promotes the achievement of personal excellence, groundbreaking professional progress, and wide-ranging benefit to the academic community. This rank parallels the Distinguished Professor rank in terms of expected level of accomplishment and the rarity in awarding the rank. **The Distinguished Librarian rank is open to State-operated campuses of the State University.**

NATURE OF THE PROGRAM

Rank and Status - Distinguished Librarian is a rank above Full Librarian. It is expected that a person appointed to the rank shall be accorded such support as is appropriate to her or his endeavors consistent with the resources of the campus. The campus catalogue shall list Distinguished Professors, Distinguished Service Professors, Distinguished Teaching Professors, and Distinguished Librarians at the head of the faculty list. Such persons shall be placed again in the faculty list and their rank shall be indicated.

Salary - Appointment to Distinguished Librarian by the Trustees is regarded as a promotion and will carry a salary increase above the mean salary for Full Librarians, to be determined by the campus President and the Chancellor. The increase will be funded from the campus budget through the normal process for funding promotions; it shall be built into the salary base of the appointee and must be included in the campus budgets of ensuing years.

Responsibility - The Distinguished Librarian rank carries with it extraordinary responsibility. Those appointed are expected to function as role models and devote appropriate service to the home campus, to the State University, and to the profession. Distinguished Librarians are expected to provide service to the State University, both ceremonial and professional, on campuses other than their own when requested to do so by the Chancellor.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Campus Participation - Only State-operated campuses are eligible to make nominations. Campuses that cannot be included in this program may develop parallel programs for rewarding performance in librarianship similar to that described in the selection criteria for this rank.

Academic Rank - A candidate for Distinguished Librarian must have attained the rank of Full Librarian.

Length of Service - A candidate for appointment to the Distinguished Librarian rank must have completed at least five years of full-time service at the rank of Full Librarian on the campus that recommends the appointment and at least ten years of service within the State University of New York. Nominees should generally have had a longer career in librarianship than indicated by the minimum requirement. The Distinguished librarian rank should be awarded to librarians where there is reasonable expectation of continued activity. Posthumous nominations are ineligible for consideration.

Once a decision is made to submit a nomination, a nomination portfolio will be compiled. It will consist of the President's letter of endorsement, a nomination abstract, the candidate's *curriculum vita*, key campus nominating letters, and external letters of recommendation. The contents of these supporting documents are described below:-

- President's Endorsement/Transmittal Letter - This letter, signed by the President, should highlight the candidate's most outstanding accomplishments and describe the campus support for the nomination. [This letter may be the document used in the Board of Trustee resolution, should the nomination be recommended.] The letter should be addressed to Dr. David Lavalley, Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. A separate letter is to accompany each nomination.
- Nomination Abstract of 150 to 180 Words – Please provide a brief abstract of 150 to 180 words. This abstract should provide a clear, thematic picture that describes the candidate's main accomplishments. It should highlight why the candidate has been nominated to Distinguished Librarian and may be taken from other parts of the nomination package. If the candidate is an awardee, this abstract may be used for press releases or testimonials.
- *Curriculum vitae* - an up to date and moderately comprehensive *vita* that includes among other information, the candidate's educational background, academic/visiting appointments held, honors and awards received (and the significance of these awards), external funding garnered with dollar amounts, publications with clear authorship noted, research record, invited/keynote presentations, presentations at other conferences/symposia, service contributions to the profession (work with learned societies, editorial boards, conferences organized, etc.) and memberships in disciplinary organizations.
- Key Campus Nomination Letters -- Letters from the Provost (Chief Academic Officer) and candidate's Dean or Director are to provide detailed information and the specific rationale – preferably in laymen's terms – for the candidate's nomination and justification for appointment.

- External Letters of Recommendation (from outside of SUNY) -- at least five but no more than eight, from prominent, “disinterested” scholars (individuals who have not collaborated, co-authored, co-taught, or had professional relationship with the candidate) – to validate the stature of the candidate proposed for appointment.

In these letters, the recommenders should: corroborate the candidate’s merit for appointment, describe the candidate’s stature in the discipline, catalog the candidate’s most important achievements, speak to the influence and impact of the candidate’s contribution on the discipline, (in laymen’s terms where possible) and explain the significance of the candidate’s awards and honors.

Each external letter of recommendation should be accompanied either by the author’s *curriculum vitae* or a brief description of the author’s disciplinary stature to provide review panelists a context for the recommendation submitted.

PROCEDURES AT THE SYSTEM LEVEL

Nominations for appointment to the rank of Distinguished Librarian will be evaluated by an ad hoc panel constituted specifically by the Chancellor to review the nomination. This panel will consist of four individuals: at least two referees external to SUNY and two additional referees, either also external to the State University or current holders of the Distinguished Librarian rank from other SUNY campuses. If at any point a negative appraisal arises, the campus President will be contacted to determine how the campus wishes to proceed. The ad hoc panel shall make its report to the Chancellor for review. The Chancellor shall then make recommendations to the Board of Trustees who shall make appointments as deemed appropriate.

Criteria for Selection - The scope of librarianship extends beyond the library's physical walls to the opening of limitless electronic networks and to the fostering of information literacy and skills in navigating the information universe. Through such endeavors, librarians create a new place and new roles for themselves in the academy. Librarians demonstrate unique talents and skills as faculty who promote and facilitate access to information for the widest community and assist all sectors of the community to make informed judgments about the nature and quality of the information they seek, find, and use.

The pathways to the rank of Distinguished Librarian are many and diverse. To attain the rank of Distinguished Librarian, a candidate must exhibit all of the following qualities and levels of accomplishments.

- Candidates must have made contributions to the profession of librarianship that are of national or international significance.
- They must have achieved stature and distinction beyond their own library, beyond their own college or university, and indeed, beyond SUNY to offer leadership. They may achieve this stature and distinction through formal scholarship, research, and publications, but other paths include extended efforts toward forging alliances, networks, and cooperative programs that advance resource sharing and significantly improve access to information or enhance its usefulness to the community.

- In all cases, the impact of the contributions of candidates must be transformational. Candidates' achievements at this level must have contributed to transforming the profession of librarianship and the work of librarians to engender and stimulate the "age of information." Candidates must have broken boundaries, expanded potentials, and engendered positive change in academe.
- Candidates must have demonstrated leadership in realizing the potential for access to world-wide information resources, in changing the nature of information seeking, and/or designing or developing systems which facilitate navigation and effective use of the burgeoning information environment.
- Candidates will have performed with excellence and innovation in the traditional areas of librarianship, such as technical services, services to the public, system or facilities design, or administration.
- Candidates' careers will be models for librarians and will provide inspiration to their colleagues. They will have earned the respect of members of the information professions as well as their academic professorial counterparts by the quality, vigor, and innovative nature of their thinking, their standards of performance, and the effectiveness of their initiatives.