

## 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 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. Normally, there are six active Meredith Professors in any given year, two appointed annually.

The Meredith Professors receive a \$22,000 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 benefit their academic units (department, program, school, or college) in a manner they judge to be most effective.

As an important part of the selection process, each nominee identifies a project addressing some aspect of teaching or learning that he or she intends to pursue during the term of appointment. This project could variously be described in such terms as the scholarship of teaching, classroom research, outcomes assessment, curriculum development, or innovative pedagogy. Collaborating with colleagues, mentoring junior colleagues or other forms of outreach to include other interested members of the faculty are especially encouraged. The project may include the offering of a special course that normally would not be available to students.

The professional development fund may be used in support of this project or for a variety of other purposes in support of teaching at the University. For example, it may support the hiring of student assistants, the purchase of equipment or other 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, or hosting departmental seminars with a focus on teaching and student learning.

At some point during the three-year tenure, each Meredith Professor is expected to present a report on the project they are conducting during their tenure as Meredith Professors. The report may be in any format or on any occasion that fits the nature of the project. Active Meredith Professors will meet periodically each year to discuss their respective projects and to plan other activities.

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

Holders of the Meredith Professorships are normally expected not to be on leave 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 on the basis of their overall excellence as teachers and on their potential to contribute to the improvement of the teaching and learning environment on campus. 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

- impact on students as seen in the intellectual standards and intellectual excitement maintained in the nominee's courses;
- overall approach to teaching as seen, for example, in teaching initiatives or innovations or in techniques for assessing or evaluating student learning;
- and potential impact on the academic community as a Meredith Professor, as seen in the project proposal.

### **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 Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and composed of faculty members, together with a student representative. The Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs (or designee) will serve as staff to the committee. The terms of service will be staggered so as to allow continuity among members of the committee.

The selection process consists of two stages:

## Stage One

The committee first considers a letter of nomination from the dean (or designee) of **no more than three pages**, making the case for the individual's extraordinary teaching performance. The nominee's CV should be appended with the nomination letter. Since there are many ways in which teaching excellence may be demonstrated, the letter should describe in 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 his or her other roles within the department, school, or college. A brief description of the nominees' intended project should be included, as well. On the basis of this 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

For each of the finalists, the committee asks the nominating dean to provide a teaching portfolio for the nominee, including:

1. A statement of no more than 3 pages by the nominee describing his or her (a) approach to teaching, (b) significant teaching innovations or initiatives, and (c) techniques for assessing or evaluating students' learning.
2. A statement of no more than three pages describing in depth the project he or she intends to carry out while a Meredith Professor.
3. A portfolio of teaching activity and impact on student learning, which includes:
  - A brief summary or analysis of student evaluations for three of the nominee's courses together with a syllabus for each of those courses;
  - Letters from no more than four present or past students describing how the nominee stimulated or inspired their learning; and
  - Letters from no more than two faculty members who are familiar with the nominee's teaching and can attest to the intellectual quality of his or her courses and the academic standards adhered to by the nominee.
4. The full curriculum vitae for the nominee, together with a list of the courses taught during the past three years.

The full second-level packet should not exceed 25 pages when printed, not including the curriculum vitae and the requested course syllabi. A more detailed description of the portfolio and requirements for its submission will be provided for nominees advanced to the second level of consideration.

Following review of all submitted material, the committee submits its recommendations to the Chancellor who makes the appointments. In rare and unusual circumstances, the Chancellor may make an appointment outside the committee process.

On the basis of experience, the Chancellor may modify the details of the Meredith Professorship program as well as the nomination and selection process in order to better achieve the goals of the program.