



**AOP 13.02: SELECTION OF WILLIAM L. GILES  
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS**

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Academic Operating Policy and Procedure (AOP) is to define the policy on the selection of William L. Giles Distinguished Professors.

**POLICY/PROCEDURE**

One of the highest honors the University can bestow upon a faculty member is that of Giles Distinguished Professor. It is not a faculty rank but an honorary distinction. This recognition is based on distinguished scholarship as evidenced by a record of outstanding teaching, research, and service, and is conferred only on a faculty member at Mississippi State University who has attained national or international status. This distinction is designed to recognize a continuing commitment to establishing career recognition and faculty excellence at Mississippi State University. In that context, a minimum of ten years of service at MSU with a minimum of five years at the rank of Professor with tenure is necessary for consideration.

It is expected that the successful candidate will have an exemplary record in all three areas of the university's mission: teaching, research, and service. The criteria for selection, which are available in the Office of Academic Affairs, will be rigorously applied. Criteria include a distinguished record as a scholar, demonstrated research achievements, and national or international prominence as verified by external reviewers from the candidate's specific field. Outstanding performance in teaching and service, and motivating colleagues and students toward their best professional career goals and objectives are also to be considered in the appraisal of a nominee. Appropriate documentation must be provided to support the case for excellence in all three of the areas of teaching, research, and service, as well as in the area of motivating others. Such documentation will include a cover letter, a current vita, and letters from both internal and external sources providing support for the nominee. Additionally, examples of nomination packets from previous successful nominees will be made available in the Mitchell Memorial Library to provide clear guidance on the quantity and quality of documentation that should be contained in the nomination packet. No administrator at the level of dean or above is eligible for consideration as a Giles Distinguished Professor.

Nomination of a professor for designation as a "William L. Giles Distinguished Professor" will be submitted with appropriate documentation by the college/school in which the nominee holds the rank of professor. If the nomination originates with the nominee's department or school, it must be approved by the dean prior to submission to the Provost for review and further consideration. A University Giles Distinguished Professor Review Committee, all of which shall hold the rank of professor, will serve as advisors to the Provost in the consideration of the nominations for Giles Distinguished Professor. The committee will consist of seven members: Vice President for Research and Economic Development (Chair), two current Giles

Distinguished Professors designated by the Provost, two members designated by the President, and the President and Vice President of the Faculty Senate or designees. The committee members designated by the President will serve staggered two-year terms. The two Giles Distinguished Professors will be appointed on an *ad-hoc* basis to avoid any potential conflict of interest with faculty applicants, and they should not hold an administrative appointment.

The committee will consider all nominations and advise the Provost accordingly. The Provost will then make recommendations to the President, who will grant final approval and announce the new Giles Distinguished Professors. The Chair of the University Giles Distinguished Professor Review Committee will write a letter to each nominator informing them of the overall recommendation of the Review Committee for that nominee.

The total number of Giles Distinguished Professors will constitute a small percentage of the faculty. No stipulation is made concerning the number of Giles Distinguished Professors that may be named in any one year. There may be years in which no Giles Distinguished Professors will be designated.

Giles Distinguished Professors will be appointed during the Spring Semester of each academic year. The Office of Academic Affairs will issue a call for nominations each year in September. The deadline for submission of nominations to the Provost is January 31.

### **REVIEW**

This AOP will be reviewed every four years (or whenever circumstances require an earlier review) by the Executive Vice Provost for Academic Affairs with recommendations for revision presented to the Provost and Executive Vice President.

**REVIEWED**

/s/ Peter Ryan 11/10/2021  
Executive Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate School Date

/s/ Jason Barrett 10/07/2022  
President, Robert Holland Faculty Senate Date

/s/ David Shaw 10/21/2022  
Provost and Executive Vice President Date

/s/ Tracey N. Baham 10/21/2022  
Assistant Vice President, Institutional Strategy & Effectiveness Date

/s/ Joan Lucas 11/02/2022  
General Counsel Date

**APPROVED:**

/s/ Mark E. Keenum 11/28/2022  
President Date