

Information Concerning Eminent Scholar Chairs

- History: The Legislature in 1979 created the concept of “Eminent Scholar Chairs” in the State University System, recognizing that the system “would be greatly strengthened by the addition of distinguished scholars.” This legislation established a matching gift program that leveraged a donor’s gift of \$600,000 with a 70% match of \$420,000; as the gift amount increased the match increased up to a 100% match for a gift in excess of \$2,000,000. The statute also authorized the Board of Regents (the predecessor of the current Board of Governors) to create special search and appointment rules for eminent scholars. This statute was repealed as of July 1, 1994. Under current Florida Statutes §1011.94, which created the Major Gifts Trust Fund Matching Grant Program, the concept of an eminent scholar was incorporated as follows: “A donation of at least \$600,000 and associated state matching funds may be designated as an Eminent Scholar Endowed Chair pursuant to procedures specified by the Board of Regents.”
- University of Florida Requirements: Currently the “Endowed Funds and Related Naming Opportunities Policy” (www.uff.ufl.edu/intranet, click on Library then Policies) requires a minimum endowment gift of \$1,500,000 to create an eminent scholar chair. Individual colleges and units may set higher minimums. A chair must be occupied by an individual in the senior rank of associate or full professor.
- Search Procedures: Originally the Board of Regents created extensive search requirements for Eminent Scholar Chairs. These have subsequently been revoked. The current standards, which are contained in Chancellor’s Memorandum CMD-13.02-06/01, require that “The University President is responsible for the approval of the chair holder selection process.” The UF search procedures may be found at www.admin.ufl.edu/DDD/.
- Donor Restrictions on the Chair: Each Eminent Scholar Chair is to be documented by written agreement with the Donor. The originals of these documents are maintained at the Foundation in the offices of the Associate Vice President, Leslie D. Bram. Each Vice President, Dean or Director should ensure that a new eminent scholar is familiar with the donor restrictions on his or her eminent scholar chair.
- Expenditures from the Eminent Scholar Fund: The statutory standards are: “Proceeds of the endowment may be used as salaries, or a supplement for salaries for the holder of the chair and for those individuals directly associated with the holder of the chair’s scholarly work and for other expenses directly related to the chair’s scholarly work.” The Board of Governors has interpreted the statutory restrictions on expenditures fairly broadly. Spendable income may be used, for example, to recruit a scholar, renovate his or her office or laboratory, pay for his or her travel, subscriptions, equipment or secretary, support graduate students who are working directly with the scholar or make grants to other faculty

members for scholarly work directly associated with the eminent scholar's scholarly work. Other than for search expenses, spendable income may **not** be expended if the chair is unfilled.

Each eminent scholar chair endowment must have a unique account in UF's PeopleSoft system for transfers to UF for expenditure.

For questions concerning eminent scholar chairs, please contact Leslie D. Bram, Associate Vice President, UF Foundation, 392-5499 or lbram@uff.ufl.edu.