

Guidelines for Faculty Retention
Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost
Office of the Vice President for Research
Iowa State University

General Philosophy

Hiring and retaining outstanding faculty are institutional priorities which support our efforts to provide a high quality student learning experience, to promote scholarly excellence, and to engage in impactful outreach and engagement. At times, the university becomes aware that a high performing faculty member is at risk of leaving for a position or opportunity elsewhere. In those cases, when a faculty member is being recruited away, or is in danger of being recruited away, the college and department may choose to make a retention effort.

Because the university shares significantly in the cost of retention, the standards for making a retention offer must be high.

- The faculty member must have both an outstanding scholarly record and a major impact on university programs and colleagues consistent with rank and experience. These faculty may be those who are in the top 10-20% of their department; those playing a vital role with regard to institutional mission; or those who the department chair or dean believe are not being adequately compensated for their role and are therefore at risk of being recruited away.
- The individual must have a record of above-average performance evaluations.
- If a competitive offer is in play, it must come from a peer or more prestigious institution or department. A retention effort is unlikely to occur in response to offers from institutions of significantly lesser reputation, even if the offered salary is higher. In some cases, a retention effort may be made when the offer is from industry or non-academic employers.
- Consideration is given to the length of time since a previous retention offer was made.
- The department must follow departmental and college-level guidelines when extending a retention offer.

While most retention efforts include a request for increased salary, there are many other components that can be considered as part of a retention effort, for example:

- An increase in base salary
- A named professorship or named chair
- Summer salary support
- Funding in support of the faculty member's research/creative activity, e.g., support for a post doc, graduate assistant, or staff member
- Funding to support professional development or travel
- Seed funding for research
- Instrumentation

- Space, new or remodeled
- A change in the faculty member's PRS or workload
- A effort to support a dual career partner accommodation

Types of retentions

A preemptive retention is an effort to identify high-performing faculty who are critical to the strategic initiatives of their department or college, and who are highly accomplished, broadly recognized, and potentially at risk of being recruited by another institution. These faculty members should be targeted as retention priorities and requests can be made at any time to help preempt their interest in other institutions. Departments and colleges are encouraged to develop a practice of identifying and investing in high-performing faculty members before they seek other job opportunities or are actively recruited by others.

Retention is an effort to induce a high performing and valued faculty member to remain at ISU when the faculty member is being recruited away by another institution. A formal job offer is NOT required in order to engage in the retention process. In return for accepting a retention offer, the faculty member agrees to withdraw from consideration for the external position.

Roles in the retention process

Faculty retention is an institutional priority and therefore it is a collaborative effort of department, college, and central administration in which each play different roles:

Department Chair: The department chair is the first point of contact in a retention effort. The department chair alerts the dean immediately when they become aware that a faculty member is actively being recruited or is in danger of being recruited away. It is the role of the department chair to discern what type(s) of additional support the faculty member may need to remain at ISU. In some cases, the department chair may determine that a retention is not warranted. The department chair works closely with the dean to determine whether a retention effort is warranted.

Dean: The dean (or designee) works with the department chair to determine the nature and scope of the retention or preemptive retention effort. In some cases, the dean may determine that a retention is not warranted. When a retention is pursued, the dean should be in personal contact with the faculty member to be retained. The dean should alert the Provost's Office and Office of the Vice President for Research (VPR) on the developing retention. The dean can contact the VPR to request a review of the faculty member's research portfolio. After talking with the faculty member and department chair, and determining the nature of the retention, the dean will bring the retention package forward to the SVPP and, when appropriate, to the VPR for support.

Office of the Senior Vice President and Provost (SVPP): The SVPP supports faculty retention through partial salary support (1/3 the retention salary increment plus benefits). It

should be noted that at the time of the faculty member's resignation or retirement, these funds return to the SVPP.

Office of the Vice President for Research: The Office of the VPR can provide a review of the faculty member's research portfolio to the department chair or dean if requested. The VPR supports faculty retention through partial support for instrumentation.

Process Guidelines

There are multiple ways in which a department chair may become aware of the need for a retention discussion with a high performing faculty member:

- the faculty member may contact the chair about an active offer from another institution
- the faculty member may inform the chair that they are being contacted, pursued, or recruited by another institution
- individuals inside or outside of the department may alert the chair to the potential recruitment of a faculty member by another institution
- the faculty member has become so visible nationally that the chair believes the likelihood of a recruitment by another institution is very high

Each college will determine the protocol to be used in assessing and supporting departmental retention efforts. At the department level, faculty equal or senior in rank to the candidate being recruited are routinely asked to provide input to the chair on whether or not a retention is warranted. Chairs are expected to inform their dean promptly of all retention cases in their departments.

Department chairs are asked to provide the following information when contacting the college to request support for a retention:

- Why does the faculty member have a high probability of being recruited away? (for preemptive effort), OR Why is the faculty member attracted to the other institution?
- If another institution is involved, how does it compare with Iowa State in terms of prestige, productivity, and ranking in the profession?
- What is the faculty member's salary? What is the recent history of annual evaluations and salary increases? Are there any salary equity issues in the department?
- What research support is currently available to the faculty member? Please include research funds, course releases, internal and external leaves and grants, as well as any remaining balance in the faculty member's incentive account.
- How would the loss of the faculty member diminish the reputation, productivity, and mission-focused efforts of the department?
- What is the level of faculty support in the department for a proposed retention effort?

The department chair is expected to propose specific terms (i.e., salary, research funds, etc.) for the retention offer. The college will consider the information provided by the chair and, if it

supports a retention, it may seek partial funding support from the SVPP or VPR in accordance with the protocols established by these administrative units.

When accepting a retention offer, the faculty member agrees to withdraw from consideration for positions elsewhere.

Expectations for faculty who receive a retention package

When a faculty member accepts a retention package, they are expected to use the funding to continue to make an impact in their scholarship or other identified position responsibilities. Chairs must be clear about expectations related to the retention, specifically what the faculty member will do with the retention support. Chairs may request that the faculty member provide a report describing how they have used the retention funds. Those faculty who are seeking a second or third retention package will be asked by the chair and dean to provide a report that includes data demonstrating the effective use of the previous funds.

(Guidelines adapted from Purdue University and University of Minnesota CLAS Faculty Retention Policies)