Students choose Penn State for the opportunity to work with faculty members who can stimulate their own potential to succeed, and our reputation as an institution depends upon the achievements of our faculty and their commitment to both creating and sharing the knowledge that shapes our world. Academic institutions compete not only with each other but also with business, industry, and government for this kind of leader, and endowed funds can make the difference.

A named position or fellowship is a prestigious honor, and the resources that are made available to the recipient are even more important. By providing additional funds for research projects and course development, faculty endowments allow academic stars to take their scholarship to the next level and integrate discovery and teaching.

The University is currently able to offer endowed positions to just 9 percent of our tenured and tenure-track faculty members, however, and faculty support is a top priority of For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students. To ensure that our University can compete for the scientists, scholars, and educators with the greatest potential to contribute to our institution and our nation, Penn State is partnering with our alumni and friends to create new funds for faculty during the critical first ten years of their careers.

Matching Funds, Enduring Support

Through the Faculty Endowment Challenge, private donors can leverage a 1:2 match from the University for commitments that establish Early Career Professorships. These endowments typically require a minimum commitment of $500,000, but beginning July 1, 2009, private donors may establish new Early Career Professorships in any of Penn State’s academic units with a commitment of $334,000, equivalent to approximately 2/3 of the minimum level required. The University will commit the remaining 1/3 of the necessary funds, approximately $166,000, from unrestricted endowment resources. Donors may fulfill their commitment with cash payments over a period of up to five years. When the donor’s commitment has been fulfilled, Penn State will transfer its matching support to the endowment fund, and the position can then be awarded to a faculty member in the designated unit, as illustrated in the diagram on the following page.

“Great faculty members played a vital role in my own educational experience, and every day, I hear from Penn Staters who remember the professors who shaped their own lives. Through the Penn State Faculty Endowment Challenge, the University’s alumni and friends can leverage their support for the educators, scholars, and scientists at the heart of our academic community. The recipients of the Early Career Professorships created through the program will not only be rising stars in their fields; they will also be mentors and leaders who can help our students and our University to achieve new levels of success.”

–President Rodney A. Erickson
Other Important Facts about the Faculty Endowment Challenge

- Only new Early Career Professorships are eligible to receive the University match. Contributions to existing endowments, or gifts to endow other types of faculty positions, will be critical to meeting our faculty support goals, but they are not eligible for this program.
- Donors may designate their endowments for a specific department, college, or campus.
- Deferred gifts, including bequests, are not eligible to receive the University match.
- A total pool of $5 million in University matching funds will be available through this program.
- The program will end on June 30, 2014 or when all the matching funds have been fully designated to specific endowments, whichever occurs first.
- Up to five new endowed Early Career Professorships per academic unit (i.e. college or campus) may be created through the challenge program, dependent upon availability of matching funds.

The Faculty Endowment Challenge represents an unprecedented opportunity for Penn State’s alumni and friends to join with the University in supporting extraordinary faculty, and gifts made through the program will help to create important momentum toward the goals of For the Future: The Campaign for Penn State Students. The Early Career Professorships established through the Faculty Endowment Challenge will be vital to ensuring that Penn State students continue to study with the finest educators and researchers.

Contact

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The Penn State Faculty Endowment Challenge: How it works

Commitment from John and Jane Donor to create the John and Jane Donor Early Career Professorship in the college or at the campus of their choice ➞ Payments over five or fewer years from John and Jane Donor ➞ When payments from John and Jane Donor total $334,000, transfer of $166,000 from University funds to John and Jane Donor Early Career Professorship Endowment ➞ Endowment activated at the $500,000 level, and the John and Jane Donor Early Career Professorship available to award to a faculty member

Early Career Professorships are a critical tool in recruiting the most promising young faculty and jump-starting their professional achievements. These awards rotate every three years to a new recipient who has completed his or her terminal degree within the last decade. The most innovative research initiatives must often secure initial results before funding from government and other outside sources becomes available, and Early Career Professorships provide seed money for investigations that may have a tremendous potential payoff and form the foundation of a successful academic career. Such awards also provide the kind of flexible funding for curricular development that enables recipients to be better teachers and members of their departments as well. The recipients of Early Career Professorships are scholars who may transform our understanding of their discipline and enhance Penn State’s profile in the academic world and beyond.