



Research Article

# Present and Future of Professors Emeriti at the University of Salerno

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## Abstract

The University of Salerno has 36 emeriti professors, including 2 past Rectors and a member of the Italian Lincean Academy. It is also worthwhile that 10 of us are members of EAPE, the European Association of Professors Emeriti. Since 2022 a new Regulation has governed the conferral of the title; really, their state is left to the single Departments. Together with an institutional seniority, they must have contributed significantly to research and innovation in teaching or third mission activities. In the last years we decided to constitute an Association, despite the fact that official relations with the University of Salerno have been almost non-existing. However, we hope that the very recent election of the Rector could open a new deal: he considers professors emeriti a helpful resource in building a novel university, looking at the future with necessary curiosity and experimentation, but without canceling the memory of the past.

**Keywords:** University of Salerno. Emeriti professors. EAPE.

Today the University of Salerno has 36 emeriti (only 5 women) and 5 honorary professors. Really, since 2016, 45 full professors got the ministerial nomination, but 9 of them are dead. While before 2022 the nominations were regulated only by the Old Italian legislation (1933 and 1958), after that date a new Regulation has governed the conferral of the title.

Both titles are awarded exclusively to Full Professors which have made an extremely important contribution to the advancement of their discipline and that have brought particular prestige to the University of Salerno. Basic requirement is “institutional seniority”, as the title of Professor Emeritus may be conferred on full professors who have served at least twenty years in the role at the date of retirement or acceptance of resignation. Fifteen years in the role is the seniority required for the title of Honorary Professor. Moreover, for both titles the retirement date must be no more than 24 months before the nomination proposal.

With reference to university services in research, teaching, third

mission, candidates must have made important contributions to scientific research, demonstrated by high-profile publications at international and national level and from obtaining prestigious national and international academic awards. Moreover, they must have one of the following positions: Rector, Pro-Rector, Academic Senator, Advisor of Administration, Head of Department. They must have contributed significantly to innovation in the field of teaching or third mission activities, or to have provided an important contribution to the academic community in the specific forms of the different areas proven by national and/or international awards.

The conferral of the title of Emeritus Professor and Honorary Professor is responsibility of the Ministry of Universities and Research, as the final step of a procedure starting from a proposal by the Council of Department with a resolution adopted by an absolute majority of those entitled to vote, sent to the Rector to be evaluated by a specific University Commission, then sent to the Academic Senate for approval, finally forwarded to the Ministry of Universities and Research, for the final measure of competence.

More in detail, each Department has the limitation of formulating no more than two proposals for the conferral of the title of Emeritus Professor or Honorary Professor for two academic years, of which no more than one per Professor Emeritus. The University Commission, appointed by the Rector, includes the Pro-Rectors, the Dean of the University of National University Council areas, and is chaired by the Rector. The Director of the Department that formulated the proposal is invited to the work of the Commission.

Coming back to the emeriti colleagues of the University of Salerno, I'm pleased to mention that there are two past Rectors, one member of the Italian Lincean Academy, and the President of Italian Data Protection Authority.

The cultural areas represented are: Engineering (13 emeriti), Physics (8), Legal sciences (4), Mathematics, Chemistry, Humanities, and Cultural Heritage (2), Economics and Statistics, and Political Science (1).

Moreover, it is also worthwhile that 10 of us are among the 55 Italian members of EAPE, the European Association of Professors Emeriti, founded in Athens in 2016, and gathering today more than 200 members. EAPE has an Italian past president, emeritus of the University of Campania "Luigi Vanvitelli", while the President-Elect is emeritus of the University of Napoli Federico II. I myself am a member of the EAPE Board of Directors, as treasurer.

Official relations of professor's emeriti with the University of Salerno have been almost non-existing. I'll refer to the last ten years, 1st November 2015 being the date of my retirement, and 2016 the year of my nomination as emeritus professor of Industrial and Technological Chemistry. The opportunity of the first action of aggregation with my colleagues was the really unexpected and unjustified communication of the decision of canceling the access to the informatics services, including the e-mail service, as for all the retired personnel of the University of Salerno. It was a real battle with the university administration on the simple and indisputable principle that we are still professors of the University of Salerno, differently from the all retired professors. Moreover, we profited from this case to express our opinion that that decision was a useless act towards all retired professors. In the end we won, maintaining the access to all informatics services, but the email address was continued to be canceled to all retired, non-emeriti professors.

Therefore, the state of professors emeriti is in some way left to the single Departments. In some cases emeriti maintain their office, participate without voting to some teaching and research activities, typically the PhD School, can contribute

to research projects. They can be responsible for a course through a free of charge contract with the University, following the Italian rules for retired professors of public institutions.

The mentioned event of the recognized specificity of professors emeriti pushed some of us to try to define a role inside the University of Salerno. We had an official meeting with the pro-rector, he proposed the constitution of the umpteenth Commission, a typical Italian mean to postpone to never the crux of the matter. In fact, we never received any evidence of willingness to really face the matter.

Therefore, in the last years we decided to design and then constitute an Association of Professors Emeriti of the University of Salerno, independently from the position of the University, looking at the wide problem of the cultural and professional role of emeriti with an international approach; some of us are trying to act in this perspective through EAPE. At the end of last year we officialized the decision of establishing the Association by optimizing the draft prepared bylaws. Before the end of 2025 I'm sure we'll see the Association.

Finally, I would like to express a much more optimistic forecast than a date for that foundation. It is related to a very important very recent event, the election of the Rector. Some emeriti contributed to write a document that analyzed the current state of cultural and political crisis, suggesting some basic turning points. Inside an apparent revival of responsible wide participation for a rebirth of the University of Salerno, the topic "professors emeriti" has been mentioned by the Rector elected as a helpful resource in building a novel university, looking at the future with necessary curiosity and experimentation, but without canceling the memory of the past.



The Campus of Fisciano, a symbol of the unicity of the University of Salerno.