

## **POLICY ON DEPARTMENT CHAIRS**

### **A. GENERAL POLICY**

Each department shall have a Chair<sup>1</sup> who is the designated administrator of the department and the academic leader of the departmental faculty. The position of Department Chair is an instructional administrative assignment and does not carry tenure with it. Each Department Chair serves at the pleasure of the President<sup>2</sup>. Each term of a Department Chair shall be for four (4) years. The Chair reports to the respective School Dean.

### **B. ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible to serve as a Department Chair, an individual shall hold a tenured position in the department at the rank of either Associate Professor or Professor.

### **C. NOMINATION BY THE DEPARTMENT**

1. Department Chairs shall normally be selected by the President from the list of nominee(s) recommended by the department. Chair nominations and voting will be overseen by the School Dean or Dean's designee and conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE). See sample ballot and procedures in Appendix A.
2. These procedures shall provide that all full-time tenured and probationary faculty members of the department are eligible to vote on the nomination of a Department Chair. Temporary faculty unit employees may participate in department chair nominating elections as follows:
  - a. All temporary faculty members with 15 WTUs during the semester the nomination takes place are entitled to a full vote. Temporary faculty who have maintained 6 WTUs or more for four consecutive semesters including the semester in which the nomination takes place are entitled to a full vote.
  - b. All other temporary faculty teaching 6 WTUs or more in the current and previous semester of the nomination are entitled to a half vote.
  - c. Temporary faculty who are appointed below 6 WTUs and have served four consecutive semesters are entitled to a .25 (ONE-QUARTER) vote if in active status, including when the nomination takes place during the fourth consecutive semester of service.
  - d. Service for either semester during an academic year shall count as a "consecutive semester" served, if the faculty member serves for any other semester during the same, previous or next academic year.
  - e. In reporting the vote, OIE shall provide a single tally of the votes cast by the department faculty. There shall be no distinctions on the ballots except as necessary to identify the numerical value of the vote cast for counting purposes.

Among those eligible to vote are faculty members on sabbatical or difference-in-pay leaves and participants in the Faculty Early Retirement Program who are teaching

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Department Chair" also means "Program Coordinator" in programs recognized for this purpose by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> For purposes of this Policy, President means President or designee.

during the semester in which the nomination election occurs. Individuals who are on a professional or personal leave without pay are ineligible to participate in the nominating election. Proxy voting shall be prohibited but provisions may be made for absentee voting.

3. The result of the vote shall be provided to the department's faculty.
4. If a candidate receives 50% or more of the eligible votes, the candidate's nomination shall be forwarded by OIE to the President, Provost, Dean, and Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs.
5. If no candidate receives 50% or more of the eligible votes, the top two candidates will participate in a run-off election. No write-in candidates shall be allowed in the run-off election. The candidate receiving the most votes on the second ballot is elected and their nomination shall be forwarded to the President. The nomination(s) shall be accompanied by a description of qualifications.
6. If there is only one candidate on the ballot, the candidate shall receive 50% of the vote to be nominated. If they receive below 50% of the eligible vote, the nominating process will be forwarded to the President who, after consultation with eligible-to-vote department faculty, shall make a final Chair appointment.
7. The President shall review the Personnel Action File(s) of the departmental nominee(s) before making an appointment.
8. Should the President find the nominee(s) of the department unacceptable, the President shall give the department faculty one (1) additional opportunity to nominate another individual. Should the department fail to nominate an acceptable candidate, the President may appoint an interim chair for one (1) year.
9. In instances where the candidate receiving the largest percentage of votes is not appointed chair, the candidate is afforded the right to receive the President's written justification directly, while the department will receive a separate written justification only of the appointment made.
10. For all situations that are not provided in the above, the President shall make a final appointment decision after consultation with eligible-to-vote department faculty.

#### **D. RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to consult with the full-time departmental faculty on policy matters, plans, and procedures which affect the department. In those cases, when consultation is not possible, the Chair may make an interim decision until such time as full-time faculty can be assembled for consultation.
2. The Department Chair is also responsible for the overall direction and management of the department, including:
  - a. overall responsibility for the planning and administration of academic programs within the department including the scheduling of classes, the assignment of non-instructional workload, and the evaluation and enhancement of instruction,
  - b. the formulation, development, and implementation of strategic plans for the department,
  - c. the preparation and administration of the department's budget,
  - d. the oversight of hiring of temporary faculty,

- e. the oversight of department-affiliated staff,
- f. the proper implementation of the adherence to all University, school and departmental policies and procedures, especially those relating to personnel administration,
- g. the preparation of required reports, position descriptions, and hiring requests.
- h. the performance of other responsibilities as assigned by the School Dean.

#### **E. EVALUATION**

1. Within the chair's initial semester of service, the Dean or Dean's designee shall provide and review all criteria and evaluation procedures through which the chair will be evaluated during their term. The chair shall document in writing having reviewed these criteria, and that documentation be placed in the Chair's Personnel Action File (PAF)
2. A holistic (informal) review of chairs shall occur during the second semester of the second academic year following appointment. This review is to be formative, in that the focus is on generating feedback that facilitates enhancement of performance and provides opportunities for reflection. Results of the holistic review shall not be subject to dissemination with department faculty, staff, or students.
3. Interim chairs who serve in the position for one year or less shall not be subject to a holistic (informal) review. Interim chairs who serve for more than one year will be subject to a holistic review during the final semester of service.
4. A formal evaluation of all chairs shall occur and be completed by the end of the first semester during the academic year in which the normal term of the chair is to be concluded. The evaluation should be based, in part, upon progress toward the achievement of written departmental goals. Holistic (informal) reviews and formal evaluations of chairs shall be initiated by the School Dean or Dean's designee and conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE).
5. Consistent evaluation criteria for both holistic (informal) reviews and formal evaluations shall be generated by the Council of Chairs in consultation with the Academic Affairs Leadership Team. Criteria must have demonstrated validity and reliability, as well as including space for written comments. Departments shall have discretion in requesting additional discipline-specific criteria be added by OIE to the review form.
6. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness (OIE) shall make available the review form to all concerned parties, including department faculty, department staff, and the Dean's Office. Links to participate in the holistic review or formal evaluation will be provided electronically to all concerned parties.
7. The report of the formal evaluation results shall be placed in the Chair's Personnel Action File (PAF). Holistic (informal) reviews will not be placed in the Chair's Personnel Action File (PAF).

**F. VACANCIES**

1. Vacancies in the position of department chair shall normally be filled by a nominating election at the earliest possible date.
2. After consultation with the faculty of the department, the President may appoint an interim chair for one (1) year to temporarily fill a vacancy.
3. A department or School Dean may request that an outside search be conducted for the position of Department Chair. Such requests must be approved by the Provost prior to the commencement of the search process.
4. In filling a vacancy, an individual may serve up to one (1) year of an unexpired term prior to the commencement of a four-year term. In this eventuality, an individual elected as Department Chair could serve up to five (5) years in one term.

**G. REASSIGNMENT**

Should the President remove the Department Chair prior to the conclusion of the term, the President shall meet and discuss the decision with all of the full-time tenured and probationary faculty members of the department. This meeting will occur only after the Chair has been informed of the President's decision.

**Senate Recommendation****President Approval**

November 18, 2015  
April 21, 2022

May 1982  
May 1989  
April 1995  
January 11, 2016  
March 15, 2023