
Subject: Department Head or Chair Appointments

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1. Purpose

This policy provides guidelines about the role, responsibilities, appointment, and evaluation of department heads and chairs. These guidelines apply to all academic departments. It also interprets and implements the guidelines in Section 1.3.2 of the *Faculty Handbook*.

2. Policy

Departments are under the supervision of department heads or chairs who are responsible to the dean of the college.

Department heads or chairs are responsible for the growth and vigor of the academic programs, for the recruiting of new faculty, and for the administration of the curriculum and the budget of their departments. In certain cases, some of these responsibilities may be delegated to program chairs or directors of specific disciplines within the department. In such instances and depending on the responsibility and authority they are granted, it may be appropriate to develop parallel procedures adopted by the college for appointment, reappointment, and periodic review of program directors providing leadership within an academic department.

Department heads or chairs serve for fixed-length terms, specified by the department. The length of term and procedures for renewal are to be decided by the departmental faculty in consultation with the college dean, taking into account any cycle of periodic departmental reviews that may be in the college's procedures.

2.1 Role and Responsibilities

The department administrator (head or chair) has primary administrative responsibility for all personnel, budget, program, equipment, and facility matters related to the academic department. The individual also is the department's academic leader and is responsible for the character and quality of the department's academic programs. As an academic leader, the head or chair is responsible for understanding and discussing with the faculty and students current issues and directions of the discipline or profession. The individual is responsible to both the faculty of the department and to the Dean of the College and the University. In this capacity, he

or she serves as an explicator and advocate for the department and is also responsible for understanding and explaining University and college goals, objectives, decisions, and circumstances.

2.2 Term of Appointment

Heads or chairs are appointed for terms of no longer than five years. They may be reappointed for additional terms, as outlined in this policy.

2.3 Appointment of Department Administrators

The head or chair shall be recommended for appointment by the dean, but only after extensive consultation with the department faculty. It should, in effect, be a joint process. The President or the University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will actually make or authorize the appointment.

2.4 Reappointment

A comprehensive evaluation shall precede any reappointment of an individual as head or chair. A head or chair may serve a series of terms - as long as the individual's performance is demonstrably satisfactory and the dean recommends continuation.

A department administrator may decline reappointment without prejudice. The dean, with the approval of the University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, may remove a department administrator or division director at any time for good reason.

2.5 Evaluation of Department Administrators

Heads or chairs shall be evaluated annually by the dean. A periodic review shall be conducted by the department during the last year of the appointment (if reappointment is a possibility), or at least every five years. The purpose of the comprehensive, periodic review is to support the success of the university's academic units by providing developmental feedback to promote fair and effective academic leadership.

2.6 Leaves

Because department or division administrators are usually expected to maintain their professional faculty careers, they will be eligible for periodic Study-Research leaves or Research Assignments similar to full-time faculty. At the end of the individual's administrative service, the University may grant a Study-Research leave or Research Assignment to enable the person to resume effectively a full-time faculty career--unless the individual has taken leave within the last several years.

2.7 Stipends

It is reasonable to provide department heads or chairs with stipends as an incentive and in recognition of the considerable responsibility they assume. While the stipends may differ from one department to another, depending, for example, on the size of the department and on the scale and complexity of the responsibility, there should be a common set of guidelines for determining the assignment and the amount of the stipends.

Department heads are typically appointed on a calendar-year basis. Upon completion of appointment as head and return to the faculty, the calendar-year appointment will be converted to an academic-year appointment in those departments where academic-year appointments are the standard. The administrative stipend, if provided at the time of appointment, will be removed, or the salary will be adjusted to reflect the change in responsibilities.

2.8 Recognition and Reward

The department administrator serves in a very important academic administrative position. That person works directly with faculty and students and is responsible for academic programs. In a certain sense, he or she

stands at the center of the university. It is a necessary and valuable role and must be recognized as important academic work in the promotion and tenure process.

3. Procedures

3.1 Appointment of Department Administrators

The head, chair, or director shall be recommended for appointment by the dean, but only after extensive consultation with the department faculty. The President or the University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will actually make or authorize the appointment. Normally, the dean establishes a search committee, consisting mainly of department faculty, after consulting with the department; the committee conducts the search according to department and University policies, and then makes recommendations to the dean. The dean's choice normally should conform with the department's judgment. If the dean's nomination for appointment or reappointment differs from the faculty's recommendation, then the dean must provide an explanation of the decision to the faculty.

3.2 Reappointment

A comprehensive evaluation shall precede any reappointment of an individual as head, chair, administered by the department faculty. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to the faculty and should significantly influence the dean's recommendation. Upon a satisfactory evaluation, the dean may recommend to the University Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs the reappointment or continuation of the department administrator.

3.3 Periodic Evaluation of Department Administrators

Each college should adopt a set of general guidelines and procedures for the conduct of periodic reviews in consultation with the faculty and in accordance with the general principles below:

- **Frequency:** Reviews of department administrators shall be conducted during the final year of the term whenever reappointment is a possibility, or at least every five years. A review may be initiated at any time by the dean and/or at the request of at least one-third of the tenure-track faculty in the department.
- **Composition of Review Committee:** The review should be conducted by a small group of tenured faculty and others defined below, who are selected by the dean in accordance with stated college procedures. The majority of the members should be tenured faculty members selected from among recommendations prepared by the faculty. Such recommendations may be developed through special departmental election, through membership on a relevant standing committee in the department, or through other methods agreed upon in advance in consultation with the departmental faculty. One or more members of the review committee may be from outside the department and/or outside the university, in the case where involvement with external constituencies is an important aspect of the head's role. One or more classified staff members may be selected for participation on the committee in accordance with college procedures. For the departments participating in Agency 229 programs, it may be appropriate to include an extension agent on the committee. The committee is expected to work in close consultation with the dean.
- **Nature of the Review:** The evaluation should be developmental, as well as summative; it should help both the administrator and the department develop and improve.
- **Participation in the Review:** The review committee is expected to seek input from all faculty (including extension agents or instructors in departments where these employees play a significant role in the life and programs of the department), departmental staff, and representative students. Where appropriate, faculty and administrators from outside the department and constituencies outside the college should be invited to provide feedback.

- Length of Review: To avoid undue disruption of the academic unit and ongoing responsibilities of the administrator and review committee members, the review should take no longer than four months from inception to final report.
- Report of Findings: The review committee reports its findings to the dean and the dean communicates the results to the department administrator. A summary is shared with the department. The review committee and the dean determine together how the results will be communicated to the department by the dean.

4. Definitions

5. References

Policy Memo 108, "Length of Administrative Terms in Office," April 23, 1990.

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6. Approval and Revisions

Approved July 16, 1990 by Senior Vice President and Provost, E. Fred Carlisle.

- Revision 1

Sentence added to last paragraph of Sec. 2.0 to define how the length of a term will be determined.

Approved January 11, 1991 by Senior Vice President and Provost, E. Fred Carlisle.

- Revision 2

Deleted references to "divisions" and division "directors."

Added general guidelines for conduct of periodic evaluations at the request of the Faculty Senate.

Approved October 16, 1998 by Senior Vice President and Provost, Peggy S. Meszaros.

- Revision 3

Updated April 19, 2002 to reflect change in Provost's position title.