



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.5042

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

TITLE: Selection, Appointment, and Reassignment of Department Chairs/Directors

DATE: January 30, 2012

REVISED: September 23, 2013. June 14, 2022

Authorized by: Robert Fischer, Provost and Vice President Academic Affairs

I. Purpose and Scope

This policy establishes the roles and responsibilities of department chairs/directors and the procedures through which they shall be selected, appointed, and/or reassigned.

Throughout this document, the term “department chair/director” refers to the leader of an academic unit that awards academic credentials.

II. Policy

1. Department chairs/directors, have duties in academic department leadership, faculty personnel actions and evaluation, programmatic and budgeting, curriculum development and class scheduling, student affairs, office organization, and communication/interaction with a variety of entities within the university. A more comprehensive list of duties can be viewed in Appendix A.
2. A department chair/director represents the department both within the university and with external entities. The department chair/director serves as a liaison between the faculty of that department and the dean of the college in which that department resides. They may consult with the faculty of that department and represent their recommendations, but may (or in certain cases, must) also add their own views, opinions and recommendations in communicating with the dean and with external entities.

III. Procedure

A. Review

1. Early in the fall semester of the fourth year of the department chair/director's appointment, the Dean will initiate a comprehensive review of the performance of the department chair/director. Evaluation of a general nature – such as degree and quality of judgment, initiative, and competency – may be supplemented by specific criteria relating to the achievement of department goals and objectives.
2. The fourth-year review is conducted by the Dean. The Dean will convene faculty in the department or academic unit to review the performance of the Department concerning the department chair/director's leadership qualities, professional competency, ethical behavior and working relationships. Roles and responsibilities of the department chair/director are posted in Appendix A.
3. The Dean may use procedures and instruments to provide for participation in the review process of the department's faculty, department chairs/directors within the college, and appropriate groups. If the department chair/director wishes to be considered for reappointment for another term, at a minimum, a secret ballot of the faculty with professorial rank in the department indicating renewal or non-renewal will be conducted.
4. After the review is complete, the Dean will discuss the findings of the review committee with the department chair/director and provide a written report to the chair/director.
5. After consultation with the Provost, the Dean will make a decision on a renewal term for the department chair/director and will communicate any actions resulting from the review process to the faculty of the department.
6. An individual whose appointment as department chair/director is not renewed for a subsequent term may not be put forth as a candidate during the process described in III.B.4.

B. Selection and Appointment

1. Primary responsibility rests with the Dean of the college in which the department resides for the selection of department chairs/directors.
2. Appointment of a department chair/director may occur either at the end of a term, through reassignment, or through other circumstances.
3. Whenever it becomes necessary to select a department chair/director, the Dean first determines, in consultation with the Provost, whether or not to conduct an external or internal search. Factors involved in this decision include the availability of likely internal candidates, faculty input from the department where the vacancy has occurred, and fiscal constraints.

4. If an internal search is conducted, the faculty of the department will, through a process determined by the college, present a list of acceptable candidates to the Dean. The selection of acceptable candidates should include, at a minimum, a secret ballot of the faculty with professorial rank, indicating the acceptability of each candidate. The Dean will then, after an appropriate screening process, and in consultation with the Provost, either (a) select one of these candidates, (b) request additional candidates, or (c) conduct an external search.
5. If an external search is conducted, the department will select a representative search committee with the concurrence of the Dean. The membership of the search committee will be established in accordance with the university's established policy for position searches. The committee chair shall be appointed by the Dean. When possible, the committee chair should have experience or currently be a department chair/director.

Following establishment of the search committee and appointment of the search committee chair, deliberations of the search committee will be in accordance with university guidelines and policies. The committee shall establish procedures that provide for participation in the process by the faculty of that department and other appropriate groups and shall solicit the input of the faculty with professorial rank of that department, indicating the acceptability of each candidate interviewed. Findings of the committee are transmitted in writing to the Dean for consideration. The Dean will then, in consultation with the Provost, make an appointment.

6. The department chair/director should hold tenure and, except in unusual circumstances, tenure should be held in the department in which the appointment is made.
7. For chairs/directors appointed as a result of an external search, the rank of faculty appointment should be determined by the dean after consultation with faculty of equal or higher rank to that proposed. Tenure at appointment may also be granted in accordance with the provisions of the Faculty Handbook.
8. Appointments are for four-year terms. The number of terms an individual may serve is not limited by this policy.

C. Reassignment

Reassignment of a department chair/director prior to the formal four-year evaluation process normally would occur only upon consultation between the department chair/director and the Dean.

D. Incapacity and Temporary Appointment

In the event of vacancies caused by untimely resignation, illness, death, or other causes, the Dean will appoint an individual on an acting or interim status.

1. *Acting* will be used as part of the professional title in circumstances where the currently appointed department chair/director will only be absent for a specific period of time.
2. *Interim* will be used as part of the professional title in circumstances where there is an actual vacancy, and the position is being searched.

The acting or interim department chair/director should hold tenure. Normally, such an appointment will not exceed one academic year. The Dean will consult with the department faculty and other appropriate individuals in determining whom to appoint.

IV Related Policies

V Reasons for Revision

September 2013

Section I added to allow for unit heads with titles other than “head” or “chair”

Sections III.B.5, III.B.6, III.B.7 and III.D updated to specify how the chair of the search committee for an external search is appointed and to clarify aspects related to tenure

June 2022

Substantive revision made to Section III to clarify ‘acting’ versus ‘interim’. Non-substantive revisions made to Sections I, II, & III as a result of the fifth-year review in accordance with Policy 0.000V.

Appendix A

Department Chair/Director Duties and Responsibilities

Academic departments/schools at Western Kentucky University occupy a central place in carrying out the university's teaching, research and services missions. Effective leadership of departments is therefore of critical importance. The chair/director will be responsible for initiating policy discussions within the department/school and, with the dean's concurrence, for implementation of department/school policies. Such policies should always be directed toward the accomplishment of university goals. Further, the department chair/director will encourage the faculty to share responsibility both for making departmental/school decisions and for implementing the results of those decisions.

The roles and responsibilities of the chair/director should be carried out with appropriate faculty consultation, both as provided through formal university policies and departmental/school governance procedures and also through informal discussions in departmental meetings or through personal interaction.

I. Academic Leadership

The ability to exhibit leadership is of fundamental importance to a successful head. Four areas in which or through which this leadership is required are: faculty quality, statesmanship; instructional programs; and student affairs.

A. Faculty Quality

- a. Participating in the recruitment, employment, and orientation of new faculty; including demonstrating a commitment to the affirmative action goals of the university.
- b. Encouraging and facilitating professional development through activities such as suggesting funding sources, discussing research ideas, and urging attendance at professional meetings and workshops.
- c. Providing appropriate opportunities for faculty to participate in department affairs.
- d. Evaluating faculty on a regular and continuing basis in the areas of teaching, research, and service with appropriate recommendations for improvement, particularly for untenured faculty.
- e. Creating a forum through which faculty can express ideas freely, thus promoting productive discussions among the departmental faculty members.
- f. Making informed documented recommendations concerning faculty retention, promotion, tenure and annual salary increments, the outcomes of which will be intended to serve the best interest of the department as a whole.

- g. Encouraging university and community service activities appropriate for faculty participation.
- B. Communication and Representing the Department within the University
- a. Providing a communication link between and among the faculty and the other levels of administration.
 - b. Communicating accurately university and college policy and reasons for policy to the department faculty.
 - c. Acting as an intermediary between faculty and administration.
 - d. Being the spokesperson for and yet the strongest constructive critic of the faculty and the department.
 - e. Representing the department both within the university's administrative and governance structures and externally with professional and community groups.
 - f. Maintaining personal professional competence in order to set a good example for faculty in teaching and research.
 - g. Initiating operational policies within the department for discussion, approval, and implementation.
 - h. Enforcing faculty responsibilities while at the same time protecting faculty rights and privileges.
 - i. Establishing effective working relationships with the non-academic portions of the university in order to facilitate departmental operations and to promote university-wide policies and practices within the department.
- C. Instructional Programs
- a. Articulating program-related goals.
 - b. Providing leadership for the faculty in developing strong and attractive curricula.
 - c. Providing leadership for the faculty in developing methods for assessing the effectiveness of instructional programs.
 - d. Providing leadership for the faculty in providing programs that are pedagogically sound and that use available resources maximally.
 - e. Encouraging cooperation with other departments, colleges, or institutions whenever this is appropriate.
 - f. Encouraging consideration of new program ideas when appropriate.

g. Managing teaching loads in a fair, flexible, and productive manner.

D. Student Affairs

a. Ensuring that student activities and student organizations receive adequate supervision.

b. Dealing with student problems that are not the appropriate concerns of the faculty.

b. Arranging with faculty for academic counseling.

c. Disseminating information of interest to students.

d. Responding to student grievances and requests.

f. Recruiting good undergraduate and graduate students.

II. Administrative Leadership

A successful head must be able to handle the administrative details which make the office function efficiently, professionally, and effectively.

A. Budgetary

a. Coordinating the preparation of the department budget.

b. Administering the department budget.

c. Adhering to the budget management procedures established by the Business Office.

d. Allocating funds in a manner consistent with the goals of the department.

B. Programmatic

a. Coordinating the development of long-term planning for the department.

b. Preparing teaching schedules and assignments.

c. Maintaining faculty files.

d. Approving students' degree programs.

e. Coordinating the use of instructional facilities.

f. Generating proposals for funds to support the academic programs.

D. Office Organization

- a. Coordinating support staff activities.
- b. Arranging for and assigning departmental space, facilities, and equipment.
- c. Coordinating the reports that go to other offices and service areas.
- d. Implementing administrative policies.
- e. Managing clerical support.
- f. Maintaining an efficient system of records.
- g. Preparing agenda for, convening, and chairing departmental meetings.