



POLICY & PROCEDURE DOCUMENT

NUMBER: 1.5041

DIVISION: Academic Affairs

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

DATE: January 30, 2012

REVISED: June 12, 2013

Authorized by: A. Gordon Emslie, Provost and VPAA

I. Purpose and Scope

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

Throughout this document, the term "department head/chair" refers to the leader of an academic unit that awards academic credentials. This term also includes directors of schools, etc.

II. Policy

1. Department heads and department chairs have duties in 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 at http://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/depthead_responsibilities.php.
2. A department head/chair represents the department both within the university and with external entities. The head/chair serves as a liaison between the faculty of that department and the dean of the college in which that department resides. S/he may consult with the faculty of that department and represent their recommendations, but may (or in certain cases, must) also add his/her 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 term of the head/chair, the Dean will initiate a comprehensive review of the performance of the head/chair. 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 head/chair's leadership qualities, professional competency, ethical behavior and working relationships. Roles and responsibilities of the head/chair are posted at http://www.wku.edu/academicaffairs/depthead_responsibilities.php.
3. The Dean may use procedures and instruments to provide for participation in the review process of the department's faculty, department heads within the college, and appropriate groups. If the head/chair wishes to be considered for reappointment for another term, 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 head/chair and provide a written report to the head/chair.
5. After consultation with the Provost, the Dean will make a decision on a renewal term for the department head/chair, and will communicate any actions resulting from the review process to the faculty of the department.
6. An individual whose appointment as department head/chair 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 for the selection of department heads/chairs rests with the Dean of the college in which the department resides.
2. Appointment of a department head/chair may occur either at the end of a term, through reassignment, or through other circumstances.
3. Whenever it becomes necessary to select a department head/chair, 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 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 head. Following establishment of the search committee and appointment of the search committee head, 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 head/chair should hold tenure and, except in unusual circumstances, tenure should be held in the department in which the appointment is made.
7. For heads/chairs 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 head/chair prior to the formal four-year evaluation process normally would occur only upon consultation between the head/chair and the Dean.

D. Incapacity and Temporary Appointment

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

June 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