

ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

University Statement 31.99.99.C1.01 – Approved April 30, 2007

1. DEFINITION

Chairs of academic departments hold mid-management positions in the university. Appointed by the college deans, subject to approval of the Provost, chairs represent their respective departments in college and university matters and act as liaisons between departmental faculty and the college dean. With the active engagement of their faculties, they oversee the curricular, personnel and functional aspects of the departments. They also keep their departmental faculties informed of issues facing the college and university. The chairs of academic departments work under the supervision of the dean and are responsible for such duties as assigned by the dean. They provide a major leadership role in the academic mission of the university.

2. APPOINTMENT

- 2.1 Chairs may be selected internally or through an external search. In all but exceptional cases, internal candidates must be tenured in the department for which they will chair. If the search is identified as internal, only candidates internal to the university will be considered. If external, candidates internal to the university as well as those outside the university may be considered.
- 2.2 The search process, whether internal or external, will follow accepted practice for academic positions within the institution. Departmental faculties will be given the opportunity to meet and assess all viable candidates. Their assessment will be provided to the search committee and the dean and should be a major factor in final selection. As a general operating procedure, the dean and the Provost will appoint a department chair whom a majority of the tenured and tenure-track faculty support.
- 2.3 Although every attempt should be made to ensure that a chair is in place for each department at all times, there may be instances during which the dean, in consultation with the department faculty, determines that an interim chair is needed. If this occurs, the dean, with the approval of the Provost, and in consultation with the department faculty, will appoint the interim chair. This individual will fulfill the duties of the chair until a search can be conducted and the position is filled. In exceptional cases, the interim chair may be from outside the department.

3. WORKLOAD AND LENGTH OF TERM

- 3.1 Department chairs normally receive nine-month appointments. In most cases, during fall and spring semesters, a department chair's appointment is half-time administrative and half-time teaching. Department chairs' length of appointment and length of term will be mutually agreed upon by the individual and the dean and

specified in the dean's appointment letter. Circumstances may arise in which a department chair negotiates with the dean for a special assignment for a specific time period. In such a case, the allocations of time for various duties may shift when agreed upon by both parties. Normally, time for various duties should not exceed 100%. During the summer sessions, department chairs could receive administrative appointments at a salary equivalent to that of one course per regular summer session.

- 3.2 A chair has the prerogative of resigning the position at any time, with reasonable notice to the dean. The dean has the prerogative to end the term of a chair at any time with approval of the Provost.

4. ANNUAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

4.1 The dean, with input from the departmental faculty, will evaluate the chairs and their overall performance annually. For department chairs who carry teaching loads, their student evaluations and other documentation of teaching effectiveness will be considered as well. The dean will consider faculty input and teaching evaluations when a chair's reappointment and merit pay is being determined.

4.2 If a department chair receives two consecutive unsatisfactory annual evaluations by a majority of faculty in the department, the dean should view this as a strong indication of the faculty's overall dissatisfaction with the departmental leadership. This will be taken into account when considering reappointment and merit pay. As a general operating principle, the dean and the Provost should not reappoint a department chair deemed unacceptable by a majority of the departmental faculty.

5. LEAVE

Department chairs, regardless of the length of appointment, are expected to maintain work schedules mutually agreed upon with the dean. Work schedules are assigned and vacation dates will be approved by the dean according to the needs of the college and at the discretion of the dean.

6. COMPENSATION

Department chairs will receive compensation for their appointments. This compensation is for the duties they perform as chair and is payable only for the period one serves as chair.

Contact for Interpretation: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs