

**University at Buffalo**  
College of Arts and Sciences

Procedures for Department Chair Search

A Department Chair in the College of Arts and Sciences normally serves two successive three-year terms. This arrangement provides the best opportunity for sustaining effective academic leadership of a Department. As well, experience suggests this approximates the optimal period for a faculty member to invest in this key administrative service to the Department. While it is generally preferable for faculty at the full professor rank to serve as Chair, due to the size or historical situation of a Department this may not be optimal or possible; hence all its tenured faculty are considered eligible. These search procedures address: consideration of reappointment of an incumbent Chair; selection of a new Chair from among the Department's Associate and Full Professors; and appointment of a new Chair from outside the current Department faculty.

A. Internal Searches

1. Consultation Process for Incumbency Reappointment

Where the incumbent is completing a first term as Chair, the Dean will distribute an advisory ballot to the voting faculty of the Department regarding the incumbent's reappointment. This will take place not later than the beginning of the last semester of the incumbent's term. The ballot will ask whether the voting faculty support reappointment of the Chair for another three-year term or prefer to consider all eligible candidates for Chair. The ballot will also solicit the faculty's views on the Chair and comments as to what the faculty view as the important issues facing the Department over the next few years. The Dean will report to the Department the results of the advisory ballot. If there is consensus support for reappointment of the incumbent, the Dean will then meet with the Chair to discuss reappointment.

If due to exceptional circumstances reappointment of an incumbent Chair beyond a second three-year term merits consideration, the procedures for reappointment of an incumbent Chair will be followed.

2a. Consultation Process for a New Appointment

When a new Chair is to be appointed, not later than the beginning of the last semester of appointment of the current Chair the Dean will conduct a preferential ballot by the voting faculty of the Department on all tenured Associate and Full Professors in the Department; the choices for each will be 'acceptable', 'neutral', and 'unacceptable'. The results of this preferential ballot shall be confidential; the Dean shall report to each Associate and Full Professor the results for him or her, and ask each whether or not he or she is willing to be a candidate for Chair.

The Dean will then conduct an advisory ballot by all voting faculty of the Department; only those tenured Associate and Full Professors who explicitly notify the Dean of willingness to be a candidate for Chair will be included. The Dean may solicit candidates. The advisory ballot will ask the faculty for their views on each Chair candidate. It will also solicit their comments on what they consider to be important issues facing the Department over the next few years. This ballot is to give the Dean evaluations of the individuals the Department's faculty consider the most qualified candidates.

## CAS Procedures for Department Chair Search

If the Department Bylaws so provide or at least 30% of the Department faculty so request, the Department shall have a meeting at which the candidates present their approaches to and views of the Chair position and discuss these with the faculty. This meeting shall be held at least one week prior to the closing date for the advisory ballot.

The Dean will report to the Department the results of the advisory ballot. The report will include the votes on all candidates on the ballot unless:

1. the Department's bylaws specify that the report is to include only the results of the vote for the candidate to be recommended as Chair; or
2. the Department faculty vote, by a two-thirds majority of the ballots cast in a separate component of the advisory ballot, that the report is to include only the results of the vote for the candidate to be recommended as Chair; or
3. a candidate withdraws from consideration for appointment as Chair after the ballot has been issued, in which case the results for that candidate will be omitted; or
4. a candidate notifies the Dean that if not recommended for appointment as Chair, he or she withdraws from consideration and requests results of the vote for his or her candidacy be omitted.

### 2b. Final Selection - New Appointment

Based on the advisory ballot, the Dean will develop a short list of candidates and meet with each to discuss serving as Chair. If the initial advisory ballot identifies one leading candidate for appointment as Chair, the Dean may meet with that candidate alone. In situations where no clear consensus has emerged, the Dean may seek further consultation with the Department; this may include a second advisory ballot on the leading candidates identified in the initial advisory ballot. The Dean will report to the Department the results of any additional ballot, following the procedures for inclusion in a ballot and report of its results specified above. The Dean will then select a candidate to be recommended to the Provost for appointment as Chair.

### 3. Recommendation to the Provost; Approval and Appointment

In the Dean's recommendation to the Provost, the Dean will include the results of the ballot(s), a draft offer letter, the candidate's resume, and background information gathered in the consultation process.

After Provostal approval of the proposed appointment, the Dean will send an offer letter to the candidate for Chair with a copy to the Provost.

After the candidate accepts, the Dean will send a copy of the acceptance to the Provost for the record. The Dean will concurrently notify the Department faculty and staff and the Dean's Office staff of the appointment.

## B. External Searches

### 1. Formation of a Search Committee and Department Consultation

In some cases it may be desirable to go outside the existing faculty to appoint a Chair. In any such case the Dean will first meet with the Provost to discuss options. If an external Chair search is authorized, a search committee will be formed with majority membership from the Department. A senior

## CAS Procedures for Department Chair Search

faculty member from outside the Department will chair the search committee, and at least one other faculty member from outside the Department will serve on it. University and College policies and procedures for searches for new faculty appointments will be followed. Given the time required to conduct an external search, the incumbent Chair or another tenured faculty member shall normally be appointed to serve as interim Chair until the new Chair is in place.

The Search Committee will recommend a slate of finalist candidates to the Dean. The Dean will seek consultation from the voting faculty of the Department by means of the advisory ballot procedures specified above for internal searches. The Dean will report to the Department the votes of this advisory ballot. The Dean will then select the candidate to be recommended to the Provost for appointment as Chair.

### 2. Recommendation to the Provost; Approval and Appointment

In the Dean's recommendation to the Provost, the Dean will include the results of the ballot(s), a draft offer letter, the candidate's resume, and background information gathered in the search and consultation process.

After Provostal approval of the proposed appointment, the Dean will send an offer letter to the candidate for Chair with a copy to the Provost.

After the candidate accepts, the Dean will send a copy of the acceptance to the Provost for the record. The Dean will concurrently notify the Department faculty and staff and the Dean's Office staff of the appointment.

-----

Adopted by the CAS Policy Committee 30 September 2004.