

Document XIX

PROCEDURES FOR SELECTING DEPARTMENT HEADS

I. PREAMBLE: THE OBJECTIVES OF THE DEPARTMENT HEAD

The selection of a department head is an important event in the life of a university. Effective heads need the confidence and support of both the departmental faculty and the dean. As interpreters and communicators, as champions of faculty and student needs and rights, and as exemplars for the ethics and professionalism of the discipline, department heads assume considerable responsibility, placing the department as their highest priority.

In as much as the department head is expected to take the lead in building a consensus within the department and between the department and the dean on such matters as curriculum, standards, directions for the development of the academic program, and the allocation of resources, and, in addition, to organize and consult with committees in the department, particularly those dealing with hiring, promotion and retention, and with courses and curriculum, the selection process should include a broad representation of interests within the department, and the committee should bear these functions of the department head in mind during its search.

II. PRELIMINARY MEETING OF THE DEPARTMENT AND DEAN

When a vacancy occurs in the headship of a department or similar faculty unit, the dean of the appropriate college calls a meeting of the department (along with, perhaps, other administrative officers) to define the context in which the selection will take place. About a week before the meeting, the dean circulates an agenda and a list of administrative participants to the faculty of the department in advance of the meeting; the business of this meeting includes a discussion of the state of the department, its goals and plans, the role of the department head, the qualifications for the position, the financial resources available for the search, the scope of the search (internal only or internal/external), the size of the search committee, which non-faculty constituencies (other departments, students, alumni, or citizens) may be represented on the committee, and any other factors relevant to the selection of the new department head.

III. COMPOSITION OF SEARCH COMMITTEE

In a small department, all members of the department may serve on the committee. In the larger departments, at least two-thirds of the committee members are full-time faculty members elected by the full-time members of the department. The dean is invited to serve on the committee. Other members of the committee, including representatives of non-faculty constituencies when appropriate, may be appointed by the dean. In all cases, at least two-thirds of the committee members shall be full-time faculty members of the department.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE SEARCH

The search committee is responsible for advertising the position, receiving applications and nominations, reviewing credentials, and recommending a slate of at least two "finalists" to be invited for on-campus interviews. All materials prepared by or received by the committee are available for inspection by the faculty of the department, and at each stage of its activities the committee formally solicits information and opinions from them. The following outline of search committee activities is appropriate for an internal/external search; in a strictly internal search, minor changes may be made.

- 1) The search committee and the dean review or prepare a job description.

- 2) The committee, with the approval of the dean, the EEO Officer and the Academic Vice President, prepares and distributes official notices of the vacancy and places advertisements in appropriate periodicals.
- 3) The committee, consulting with the dean, decides on its procedures and schedule. All policies concerning evaluation scales, voting processes and the like are defined in advance. Before examining applications, the committee defines and weights the criteria it will use in evaluating candidates. In the process it prepares an evaluation questionnaire for later use by the committee in determining the opinion of the other members of the department. (viz. step 6)
- 4) After the applicant pool has been certified by the EEO Officer and reviewed by the dean, the committee evaluates the applicants and selects a short list of finalists. Telephone interviews with applicants may prove useful at this stage. The faculty and other appropriate constituencies are provided opportunities for input to the committee before this selection.
- 5) The committee and the dean schedule the visits of the finalists to the campus. These applicants have separate interviews with the search committee, the dean, and other administrative officials. The interview process also includes a meeting of each candidate with the entire department at which time the candidate responds to questions from the faculty. The department may choose this to be an informal session, or it may invite the candidate to make a formal presentation. Department faculty who wish to may meet individually with a candidate, but if time is sufficient to accommodate this privilege for all desiring it, none shall enjoy it.
- 6) After the interviews and consideration of any additional information obtained by the committee, the committee meets again with the department for the purpose of informal discussion of the candidates in relation to the aims and goals previously set. The committee then distributes its questionnaire to the faculty in order to determine their colleagues' opinions about the candidates.
- 7) The committee, after consideration of the results of the interviews and the faculty questionnaire, prepares its report to the faculty and the dean; this report includes the committee's ranking of those finalists whom it recommends for the position. The committee forwards copies of the faculty questionnaires and other documents related to the committee's deliberations to the dean with this report.
- 8) After consultation with the Academic Vice President, the dean meets with the committee to present his or her response to the report. If the dean's ranking of the candidates differs from that of the committee, the reasons for the differences are given in writing and discussed. In the unusual event that none of the candidates recommended by the committee is suitable to the dean, the selection process resumes at the appropriate stage. The dean, in consultation with the committee, may wish to appoint an interim department head in this case.
- 9) The dean then prepares his or her formal recommendation concerning the appointment and transmits it, along with copies of the committee's report and documents, to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who discusses the recommendation with the President. If the Vice President or President rejects the recommendation or the recommended candidate does not accept the position, the Vice President, the dean, and the committee meet to decide on a course of action.