Department Chair Selection Process

Updated April 2022

This document summarizes the process for nominating, renewing, or selecting department chairs in the College of Liberal Arts. It is meant to allow the Dean to gather direct, broad input from faculty, staff and students in the department while maintaining the option of a departmental committee to discuss and make recommendations to the Dean for these appointments.

Step 1: In the fall or early Spring of the final year of a department chair’s appointment, the Dean will work with department staff to provide an anonymous survey to be filled out by all faculty (tenured, tenure-track and professional track) and staff in the department. The survey will ask individuals, anonymously if preferred, to list the qualities they desire in the next chair, to name several individuals they believe possess these qualities (and are eligible to serve as chair), and to provide any other information that is critical for the Dean to have. If the current chair is interested in serving for another term, the survey will make clear that the current chair should be included in considerations of the next chair. The Dean may conduct in-person follow-up with some respondents if needed or desired. Graduate coordinators will be given an opportunity to gather input from interested graduate students.

Step 2: The department may also choose to gather additional feedback or conduct deliberations at the department level. This process can happen in parallel and simultaneously with Step 1. This departmental consultation can be communicated to the Dean in the form of recommendations which will be considered alongside the information collected in Step 1.

Step 3: After receiving the departmental recommendations, the Dean will consult with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and make a final selection, typically after a conversation with one or more of the recommended faculty members. The Dean will then communicate the terms of the offer to the nominee, after which the Dean’s Chief of Staff will compose a draft offer letter. Once the Dean and nominee agree on the terms, the Chief of Staff will submit a formal appointment nomination to the Provost’s office, which includes the draft offer letter, the nominee’s CV, and notes on the selection process.

Step 4: Once the nomination has been approved by the Provost, the final, approved offer letter will be shared with the nominee for signature. Once signed, the Chief of Staff will provide the Provost’s approval notification and final offer letter to COLA HR and Finance. The Dean will then announce the appointment to the department.

These procedures are intended to meet the criteria spelled out in the Handbook of Operating Procedures, Section 2-2140 and will be modified periodically to reflect any changes in those policies or to account for unanticipated situations. https://policies.utexas.edu/policies/selection-and-evaluation-departmentchairpersons