



Department Chair Terms – Handbook Change

RES 252621

FAC

RESOLVED: The Academic Senate approves revisions to the University Handbook regarding the selection and appointment of Department Chairs and Program Directors. Deletions are in ~~strikethrough~~, and additions are in **bold and underlined**.

312.3 Selection and Appointment Procedures

The appropriate dean shall request that the department or program faculty vote to recommend one or more persons for the position of chair or director. In addition, the dean shall offer the opportunity for the faculty to convey individual, confidential advice, orally or in writing. The recommendations of the faculty and the dean shall be forwarded by the dean to the P&VPAA by April 1st. The offer of appointment shall specify the criteria, including but not limited to those outlined in section 312.2 above, by which the administration will evaluate the performance of the chair or director. ~~Chairs or directors are expected to serve no more than two (2) consecutive three-year terms.~~

Chairs or directors are expected to serve no more than two (2) consecutive three-year terms in the same role. To promote shared governance, leadership development, and equitable distribution of service, departments and programs shall ordinarily limit service to these two consecutive terms, after which a break in service is expected before an individual may be considered again for the same position. This expectation does not impose a lifetime limit on service; individuals may become eligible to serve again following a break.

However, in cases where no other qualified and willing candidates are available, departments may recommend an exception to the expected term limit. Such recommendations must document (a) the efforts made to identify other qualified and willing candidates, and (b) the unit's rationale for extending the term limit. Any exception requires the approval of both the dean and the P&VPAA.

RATIONALE: This resolution responds to Academic Senate Referral 2025–2026–28, which requested that the Faculty Affairs Committee review existing handbook language governing Department Chair and Program Director appointments and consider whether updates are warranted to ensure greater consistency across Colleges.

The proposed language establishes a clear normative expectation of no more than two consecutive terms, while preserving necessary flexibility through a documented exception process when no other qualified or willing candidates are available. Importantly, the policy does not impose a lifetime limit on service, allowing experienced faculty to return to leadership roles following a break in service. This approach balances institutional consistency with departmental autonomy, supports sustainable faculty leadership structures, and aligns local practices with widely accepted norms in shared governance across higher education.

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