

Administrative Policy: Periodic Comprehensive Evaluation of Department Chairs, Heads and Directors

Scope

This policy applies to all those among the faculty who (1) report directly to a college dean; (2) have a multi-year appointment to oversee an academic unit with one or more degree programs; and, (3) supervise a cohort of faculty and staff that collectively is responsible for these programs. Typically, these individuals are given the title Department Chair, Department Head, or Director (hereafter referred to as “chair”).

Principles

- Every college will have a process in place to facilitate the periodic comprehensive evaluation of chairs, which is directed and managed by the college dean. This comprehensive periodic evaluation is in addition to the annual evaluation process, and it will occur on a regular schedule of no more frequently than once every three years and no less frequently than once every five years.
- An integral part of the process will involve the full engagement of the faculty and staff who comprise the chair’s supervisory responsibilities.
- Additionally, the process will solicit feedback from those in equivalent positions, with whom the chair works on a regular basis (i.e., other chairs within one’s own college).

Purpose

The purpose of the periodic comprehensive evaluation is to provide the dean with written feedback and data from the chair’s constituents about the performance and effectiveness of the chair in relation to the responsibilities of the role and the expectations of these constituents. These data may then be used by the dean to guide mentoring strategies, formulate a plan for continuous improvement, and assess the individual’s continued suitability for the leadership role. A secondary benefit is to increase the level of communication between the dean and the chair’s constituents to better articulate the roles and responsibilities of the chair on a going forward basis. Consistent with these goals, the evaluation process shall include feedback for improvement and/or professional development as well as assessment of performance.

Key Elements of the Process

Consistent with the policies and procedures established within the individual colleges, the process will be initiated by the dean, beginning with a formal communication to the chair’s constituents regarding the goals and objectives of the comprehensive review and the timeline for the process. The process shall include methodologies by which constituents can provide feedback to the dean regarding the performance of the chair. In particular, the process shall include a questionnaire, endorsed by the constituents, that covers the broad range of responsibilities of the position and gives

each faculty and staff member the opportunity to express their personal perception of the individual's performance in these areas. Where possible, efforts should be taken to ensure the anonymity of each survey respondent. In cases where anonymity proves difficult, the identification of each survey respondent shall remain confidential to the dean. Indeed, the guiding principle of keeping the identity of individuals confidential to the dean should be honored in the dissemination of all feedback.

The dean shall be responsible for compiling, summarizing and interpreting the results. The outcomes, as understood by the dean, will be communicated in writing to the chair. The outcomes will also be communicated to the constituents in a timely fashion, consistent with the confidentiality normally associated with other related personnel processes at the university as well as that assured to individual constituents engaged in the process. Typically, the outcomes will be communicated in the form of significant strengths and weaknesses, and may be communicated in written or oral form. The chair, in consultation with the dean, will craft a response that presents a plan of action to address weaknesses, if any, and the essence of this plan will be communicated in a timely fashion to the chair's constituents.