



# Department Chairs Policy (AA 12)

## POLICY STATEMENT

This policy explains the role, length of service, and selection process for Department Chairs. It replaces the Department Chairs policy approved in 2011.

This policy updates the previous policy by:

- Revising the timeline for selecting a Department Chair;
- Clarifying procedures for selecting a Department Chair;
- Clarifying eligibility to serve as a Department Chair;
- Establishing the Department Chairs' length of service;
- Establishing compensation for Department Chairs;
- Revising the Faculty Feedback Form.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Academic Faculty:** Academic faculty as defined in NSHE Handbook Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 2.1.b generally consists of those professional staff members who specifically create and disseminate scholarly information through teaching, or provide counseling or library services closely and directly supportive of teaching and research.

**A-Contract:** A contract in which the base salary period is the full twelve (12) months of the fiscal year.

**Acting Chair:** A unit administrator appointed by a Dean in the case of a temporary absence of the Department Chair.

**Administrators:** A subset of the category defined in Section 1.1.b of the NSHE Code, to include President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Associate and Assistant Vice Presidents, Vice Provosts, and Deans.

**B-Contract:** A contract in which the base salary period is nine (9) months, though the actual number of days of contractual obligation may vary each year.

**Department Chair** (also sometimes referred to as “**Chair**”): Academic faculty member who teaches classes and serves as the leader of a department.

**Election Coordinator:** An individual appointed by a Dean to manage the nominations and voting process necessary to recommend a Department Chair.

**Fiscal Year:** The continuous twelve (12)-month period from July 1 of a year to June 30 of the following year.

**Institutional base salary (IBS):** The annual compensation paid by the College for an individual's appointment, whether that individual's time is spent on research, instruction, administration, or other

activities. IBS excludes any income earned outside of duties stipulated in the employee's basic appointment.

**Instructional Course Release:** A semester-long agreement for a full-time faculty member to have a reduced teaching load while receiving their normal academic salary.

**Interim Chair:** A unit administrator appointed by a Dean in the case of the removal or resignation of a Department Chair.

**Sabbatical Leave:** Paid leave to provide a faculty member opportunity for continued professional growth and new or renewed intellectual achievement.

**Working Day:** For the purposes of this policy, a Working Day is Monday through Friday when College classes are scheduled and in session during fall and spring semesters.

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## PROCEDURES

### I. Role of Department Chairs

Department Chairs are both Administrators and academic colleagues (NSC Bylaws, Chapter 3, Section 2). They serve at the discretion of the President (NSHE Code Title 2, Chapter 1, Section 1.6.1.a). Their primary duties may include (but are not limited to):

- Collaborating with relevant faculty and staff to schedule classes;
- Addressing student concerns in an appropriate and timely manner;
- Processing or consulting on student petitions, as needed;
- Monitoring the departmental budget and approving expenses;
- Proposing new positions and making strategic initiative requests;
- Recruiting and hiring part-time faculty;
- Completing annual performance evaluations of full-time faculty;
- Performing or coordinating annual course observations for all full-time faculty;
- Mentoring and supporting the professional growth of the faculty;
- Promoting programs and degrees offered by the department;
- Providing tangible support during the annual review and tenure processes by connecting faculty members to relevant campus resources.

Department Chairs are responsible for providing leadership for their unit and for collaborating with other units on projects for the benefit of the campus as a whole.

The Dean, in consultation with the Provost, assigns the Department Chair's workload. As academic faculty, Department Chairs accumulate time toward a Sabbatical Leave and progress toward promotion per the Nevada State College Bylaws (Chapter 6, Section 12) and the Board of Regents Handbook (Title 4, Chapter 3, Section 15).

- Eligibility to Serve as Chair:* Full-time, tenure-track academic faculty are eligible to serve as Department Chair. Faculty on short-term or emergency contracts are not eligible.
- Length of Service:* Appointments are renewed annually; Department Chair elections and appointments occur every three (3) Fiscal Years unless a Chair resigns or is removed before the end of a full three-year term. Terms coincide with the Fiscal Year, beginning on July 1 following the Chair's selection and ending June 30 in the final (third) year of the term. Department Chairs may not serve for more than six (6) consecutive Fiscal Years, not counting time served as an Interim Chair role or taken as Sabbatical Leave during a term.

- C. *Compensation*: Department Chairs serve on A Contracts.
1. The salaries of faculty on B Contracts are annualized from their nine-month Institutional Base Salary during their term serving as Chair.
  2. Chairs are awarded a \$5,000 stipend per Fiscal Year of service as Chair.
  3. Department Chairs are granted Instructional Course Releases of fifteen (15) total instructional units (generally equivalent to five [5] courses; the exact course equivalency may vary slightly due to variations in the credits carried by lab and clinical components of a course load) during each Fiscal Year of their service. The Dean approves the schedule for Instructional Course Releases and administers them in accordance with the Faculty Instructional Course Release Policy (see Section IV of that policy for specific limitations).
  4. Department Chairs accrue annual leave during their term of service as Chair; unused annual leave is forfeited at the end of a Department Chair's term.

## II. Department Chair Selection

NSHE Code states that the President has ultimate authority for appointing Department Chairs:

The appointment of the heads of administrative units below the level of vice president within a System institution, including Department Chairs, and all other persons reporting directly to the institutional President shall be made by the President. In the process of making such an appointment, the President or his or her designee shall consult with faculty of the appropriate administrative unit. Persons appointed to such positions shall serve solely at the pleasure of the President. Department chairs as administrators shall be directly responsible to their supervisor or supervisors for the operation of their departments. (1.6.1.a)

In the evaluation of the Chair, and in cases of Chair resignation, temporary absence, or removal, the President may delegate authority to the Dean.

In the spirit of shared governance, the faculty in a unit provide a recommendation to the administration concerning the Chair appointment. This recommendation is derived from a vote that occurs in the spring semester of the Fiscal Year in which a Department Chair's term is to expire.

- A. *Voting Eligibility*: Full-time Academic Faculty in renewable positions within the affected unit are eligible to vote; Academic Faculty on emergency contracts are not eligible to vote.
- B. *Voting Process & Timeline*
1. The Dean (or designee) appoints an Election Coordinator to manage the election. The Election Coordinator must be outside of the affected department. The Dean (or designee) provides the Election Coordinator with a list of faculty who are eligible to serve as Department Chair as well as all faculty who are eligible to vote.
  2. The Election Coordinator is responsible for developing a timeline for the election process, with the intent of completing the voting process no later than the first week of March.
    - i. The Election Coordinator distributes information about the selection process and accepts nominations over a period of five (5) Working Days.
    - ii. At the end of the nomination period, individuals who accept the nomination have five (5) Working Days to submit a statement of interest of no longer than two (2) single-spaced pages to the Election Coordinator; the statement of interest should

address the responsibilities of the Department Chair and describe the candidate's skills and abilities to serve.

- iii. The Election Coordinator distributes statements of interest to those faculty eligible to vote and collects votes in a confidential manner over a period of five (5) Working Days.
3. When the voting period concludes, the Election Coordinator sends raw data from the vote (with any potentially identifying information, such as IP addresses, removed), a list of all candidates and the total number of votes received by each, and all statements of interest to the Dean and Faculty Senate Chair.
4. The Dean forwards to the Provost the results of the faculty vote, the candidates' statements of interest, and the Dean's recommended choice for the Department Chair position, with a rationale for the recommendation.
5. The Provost forwards a recommendation to the President.
6. As per NSHE Code, the President appoints all Department Chairs.

### **III. Resignation, Temporary Absence, or Removal from Office**

- A. *Resignation*: The Department Chair may voluntarily resign at any time. When possible, the resignation shall conform to the Fiscal Year, allowing the Department Chair to return to full-time teaching at the start of the normal B-Contract period. If the Department Chair must vacate the position immediately, the Dean, acting pursuant to delegated authority from the President, determines a departing Chair's workload requirements in consultation with the departing Chair; the department Chair's stipend (see Section I.C.2) is pro-rated based on the proportion of the Fiscal Year served.
- B. *Removal*: The President may remove a Department Chair at any time. When possible, this should be done in consultation with faculty in the department affected and the Faculty Senate's Executive Committee.
  1. *Reasons for Removal*: The President may choose to remove a Department Chair before the end of a full term for any of the following reasons:
    - i. An advisory vote of "no confidence" by a numerical majority (a minimum of fifty [50] percent plus one) of all full-time faculty on renewable contracts in the unit. A no-confidence vote may be organized by faculty in a unit in coordination with the Faculty Senate Chair;
    - ii. Mismanagement of departmental resources;
    - iii. Failure to fulfill the duties of Department Chair;
    - iv. Other reasons as deemed appropriate by the President.

Since the Department Chair serves at the discretion of the President, there is no appeal process for removal, and removal is not subject to grievance procedures.

When possible, removal shall conform to the Fiscal Year, allowing the Department Chair to return to full-time teaching at the start of the normal B-Contract period. If the President determines that removal must occur immediately, the Dean, acting pursuant to delegated authority from the President, determines a departing Chair's workload requirements in consultation with the departing Chair; the department Chair's annual stipend (see Section I.C.2) is pro-rated based on the proportion of the Fiscal Year served.

- C. *Temporary Absence*: The Dean, acting pursuant to delegated authority from the President, may allow a Department Chair to vacate the position temporarily. A temporary absence may last no more than one full Fiscal Year. In the case of a temporary absence, the Dean may

appoint an Acting Chair or develop a coverage plan in consultation with the Department Chair who will be absent.

1. **Selecting an Acting Chair:** An Acting Chair may be appointed by the Dean, acting pursuant to authority delegated by the President. For short temporary absences (no more than twenty-five [25] Working Days), the Dean (or designee) may coordinate with the Department Chair to develop a plan to cover the Chair's duties and delegate signature authority without the formal appointment of an Acting Chair.

- D. *Refilling the Position after a Vacancy:* If a Department Chair is removed or resigns, the Dean appoints an Interim Chair to serve until June 30 of that Fiscal Year. A new Department Chair is then selected in accordance with Section II above (Department Chair Selection) or on a timeline established by the Dean if the election period described in Section II.B has passed. The new Chair begins a three-year term on July 1.

#### **IV. Faculty Feedback**

To assist the Dean with evaluation of Department Chairs, the Academic Faculty of each unit shall have the opportunity to provide feedback concerning their Department Chair. The feedback, in summative form (see section IV.C, Anonymity), will be included in the Chair's annual performance evaluation under Service and may be used in decisions involving the Chair's annual review ratings. Individual feedback will not be shared with the Department Chair, nor will it become part of the Department Chair's permanent personnel record. The Dean will take all available precautions to protect the anonymity of faculty members submitting feedback.

- A. *Deadline:* The Department Chair Feedback Survey is distributed in January; feedback is due to the Dean by January 31. Faculty feedback should cover the Chair's activities from January 1-December 31 of the previous calendar year.
- B. *Evaluation Document:* The Department Chair Feedback Survey contains standard, required questions; these questions are included as an appendix to this policy. Individual Schools, with the approval of Faculty Senate and the Provost, may include additional School-specific questions. The feedback survey addresses responsibilities as Department Chair, not as teaching faculty.
- C. *Anonymity:* To ensure accurate and honest feedback, all surveys are submitted anonymously through an online survey. The Dean (or designee) discusses the results with the Department Chair only in summary form. No information that could reveal the identity of any individual Academic Faculty member should be shared. This is intended to ensure confidentiality and allow for full disclosure from faculty members.
- D. *Administrative Faculty and Classified Staff:* The Dean shall solicit feedback from non-academic faculty and administrative assistants who are supervised by, or work closely with, the Department Chair.

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## **FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS**

Department Chair Evaluation Survey

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## CONTACTS

OFFICE/UNIT	CONTACT	PHONE	EMAIL
Provost's Office	Gwen Sharp	X2645	Gwen.sharp@nsc.edu

## RELATED INFORMATION

Faculty Instructional Course Release Policy (AA 10)

## HISTORY

Original policy approved by President Leslie DiMare in 2011.

## APPROVAL SIGNATURES PAGE




2.07.2019

Faculty Senate (Chair's Signature)

Date

Recommendation (check one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Denial*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X	Approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approval w/ condition*
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2-11-2019

Office of the Provost (Provost's Signature)

Date

Recommendation (check one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Denial*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X	Approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approval w/ condition*
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3.18.19

Office of the President (President's Signature)

Date

Final decision (check one):

<input type="checkbox"/>	Denied*	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	X	Approved
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\*Attach rationale for denial or conditional approval

## Appendix A: Department Chair Evaluation Survey

The feedback you provide should cover *only* the period from January 1 to December 31 of last year.

### Section 1

Indicate your response to each statement by selecting the following:

5 = Strongly Agree

4 = Agree

3 = Undecided

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly Disagree

N/A= Insufficient Information or Does Not Apply

### Work Responsibilities

In my opinion, the Department Chair...

1. Is reliable and follows through on commitments and responsibilities.
2. Acts as an effective liaison between faculty/staff and college leadership.
3. Involves faculty/staff in setting departmental priorities and decision-making.

### Communication

In my opinion, the Department Chair...

4. Responds to faculty/staff concerns in a timely manner.
5. Reliably communicates information from college leadership.
6. Is receptive to faculty/staff feedback and suggestions.

### Concern and Fairness

In my opinion, the Department Chair...

7. Exhibits professionalism and treats faculty, staff, and students with respect.
8. Shows interest in helping faculty/staff in the department succeed.
9. Resolves faculty/staff issues in an effective and professional manner.

### Annual Evaluations

In my opinion, the Department Chair...

10. Uses multiple sources of information to evaluate faculty members' teaching.
11. Provides concrete, evidence-based suggestions for improvement in annual reviews.
12. Is thorough and provides concrete examples in the description of a faculty member's performance.

### Section 2

Indicate your level of satisfaction with each item by selecting the following:

5 = Strongly Agree

4 = Agree

3 = Undecided

2 = Disagree

1 = Strongly Disagree

N/A= Insufficient Information or Does Not Apply

How satisfied are you with each of the following?

1. Your ability to set up a one-on-one meeting with the Chair when needed.
2. The Chair's communication with the department about news and/or initiatives.

### Section 3

If you have additional comments, include them here: