

TO: Thomas Boyd, Interim Provost

FROM: Mines Faculty Senate

DATE: April 17, 2017

**SUBJECT: Dept Head/Div Director/Program Chair evaluations and term limits to department leadership**

Department heads (DH), division directors (DD) and program chairs (PC) have the job of leading and encouraging outstanding teaching, scholarship and service to the university and the community. The department is where the primary work of the university is done, and chairs/heads are obligated to make their departments the best they can possibly be in order to have the greatest impact on the university.

**At Mines** we generally have a structure that does not promote refreshment and rotation of department leadership. In some cases this might retard the advancement of the department and institution. In the current system, there is also lack of transparency. There is no written procedure for annual faculty evaluation of their DH/DD/PC at Mines. The Mines Procedure Manual has only two sections that deal with DH/DD/PCs:

- Section 5.3 of the Procedures Manual deals with Department Head Evaluation Procedure. It defines the procedures for deans' evaluation of department heads. Faculty have no input into this process and have no way to determine if their DH/DD/PC provides relevant information to the dean ([http://inside.mines.edu/UserFiles/File/academicAffairs/ProceduresManual/PM\\_Complete.pdf](http://inside.mines.edu/UserFiles/File/academicAffairs/ProceduresManual/PM_Complete.pdf))
- Section 5.4 of the Procedures Manual deals with Department Head Responsibilities. It does not define a term limit.
- There is no formal document that describes how DH/DD/PCs are being prepared for the position, the level of their authority, and their term limit. We did find a position description at <http://inside.mines.edu/ACAD-Job-Descriptions>, but it is unclear whether this document is being used.

Senate offers the following questions for Academic Affairs to consider:

1. Will Mines consider moving into a Department Chair model in which the term is limited and the faculty selects its leader? With the establishment of the Colleges and Deans system, departments became less sensitive to leadership "shocks" and can more easily transition between DHs.
2. What are the hurdles in the way of making DH/DD a rotating position?
3. Should Mines have specific chapter/procedures in the Faculty Handbook or Procedures Manual that better define/describe the accountability that DH/DDs have to their faculty and include a procedure for an annual faculty evaluation of DH/DDs?
4. What is the role of the deans in addressing faculty's concerns about the performance of DH/DDs?
5. There are currently too many interim DHs on campus. What is the plan to elect/appoint 'permanent' DH for these departments?

We request AA to address the five questions above, especially the most viable model(s), appropriate term limits and conditions for reappointment, and mechanisms for faculty evaluation of department leaders. The following pages consist of an Appendix that defines terms and provides background information.

## Appendix- Background Information

### Some information from the literature

There are two models for administering academic departments: department head and department chair. **In the “department head” model**, the department’s faculty propose a handful of acceptable candidates (internal and external) to the college dean, who interviews the candidates and then picks from that set. The individual remains as department head until (1) the dean chooses to terminate, (2) the head chooses to retire or step down, or (3) the faculty members get sufficiently riled that they agitate the dean to effect option #1 or they agitate the head to effect option #2.

**In the “department chair” model**, the department’s faculty chooses a chair, usually from internal candidates. The individual remains as chair for a fairly short time frame (three years is common). The main differences in these models are that (1) the head is responsible to the dean while the chair is partly responsible to the faculty, and (2) there is a known, short term of office for the chair.

Historically, department heads have been more administratively oriented while department chairs have leaned more toward faculty determination in setting the academic direction of a department. The head vs. chair decision does not need to be an either/or situation. The role of department chair is not one of being either an administrator or one of the faculty involved in shared governance. It must be both. Items from each definition can be used to accomplish the need for a strong leader who involves the departmental faculty in making major policy decisions for the department. The term chair describes this position better than the term head.

### At other universities:

#### **The California State University Department Chair Survey Report**

([https://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Reports/CSU\\_Chairs\\_survey\\_report.pdf](https://www.calstate.edu/AcadSen/Records/Reports/CSU_Chairs_survey_report.pdf))

**Length of Terms and Length of Service:** How long is the typical term for chairs in the CSU? **59% of chairs indicated that the typical term of service for a chair is 3 years**, followed by “Greater than 5 years” (18%), and 4 years (12%) (Table 3).

#### **San Francisco State University** (<https://senate.sfsu.edu/content/untitled-7>)

**Term of Office.** Department chairs will be appointed for a **three-year term** beginning in the fall semester. Department chairs may be re-appointed to additional terms subsequent to the normal nomination and faculty ballot process every three years, but not exceeding three consecutive terms unless by mutual agreement of the majority of the department faculty and the Dean prior to the normal election process.

#### **The University of Texas System** (<https://www.utsystem.edu/sites/utsfiles/policies/uts/uts182.pdf>)

**Term.** The term of appointment for a department chair is flexible, with standard terms being **between three to five years**. Terms may be renewed without limit as long as the department chair continues to meet or exceed expectations as defined by institutional policy. Department chairs are appointed on the basis of a fiscal year (12 months).

#### **University of Colorado, Roles and Responsibilities of Department Chairs**

(<http://www.cu.edu/ope/aps/1026>)

**Term of Appointment:** Consistent with Colorado state law, the position of chair is an at-will administrative position.

#### **University of Colorado, Board of Regents**

<http://www.cu.edu/regents/appendix-b-roles-and-responsibilities-department-chairs>

#### **4. Term of Appointment**

- a. Consistent with article 4, Laws of the Regents, 1990, department chairs will normally serve for **four-year** terms. Appointments may be made occasionally for shorter periods for specific reasons, and certain appointments in the schools of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy may be indeterminate in length.

- b. Reappointment of a department chair to an additional term will be dependent on the outcome of a performance evaluation and the positive recommendation of the department and dean.
- c. Department chairs may be appointed on the basis of either academic year (9-month) or fiscal year (12-month) appointments as appropriate, depending on the needs of the department.

**California State University, Monterey Bay, Department Chair Appointment and Evaluation Policy**

<https://csumb.edu/policy/department-chair-appointment-and-evaluation-policy>

**4.00 Term of Office:** The term of office for Chairs ordinarily shall be **three years**. The term of office may vary if agreed upon by department faculty and the Dean. After the initial term of office, a Chair may be recommended again through election via the process described in Section 3.00 of this policy. If a Chair does not complete a term of office, then the vacancy shall be filled consistent with Section 3.00 or Section 7.00 of this policy.

**Temple University, Roles and Responsibilities of Department Chairs**

<http://www.temple.edu/vpfaculty/documents/RolesResponsofChairsFall2011.pdf>

Term: Department chairs at all times serve at the pleasure of the dean. Commonly, chairs serve on or more multi-year term, but generally for **not more than a total of ten years**.

**7 thoughts on “Head versus Chair”** (<https://emutalkarchive.wordpress.com/2006/12/17/head-versus-chair/>)