

Academic Operating Procedure 3

Appointment of Academic College Administrators



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AOP Statement

Texas A&M University-Kingsville (TAMUK) has an open and transparent process for selecting, reviewing, and appointing faculty to serve as college deans, associate/assistant deans, department chairs, and school directors. This Academic Operating Procedure (AOP) is developed to ensure consistency among colleges at TAMUK.

To support student success and the development of faculty excellence, the appointment of college deans, associate/assistant deans, department chairs/school directors, and associate chairs/directors is essential. The selection and appointment process prioritizes collaboration among faculty, deans, and the provost to identify, recruit, and retain qualified leaders who foster academic growth, research, and innovation.

This AOP replaces the previous *AOP 3: Faculty Participation in the Selection of Deans*.

Procedure and Responsibilities

1. APPOINTMENT OF ACADEMIC UNIT LEADERSHIP

- 1.1. Department chairs, associate chairs, school directors, and associate directors (hereafter referred to as the department chair) report directly to the dean of the respective college. Department chairs are responsible for consulting with and representing the department, college, and university's interests in policies, plans, and procedures that affect their department. Each department chair will serve as their faculty's academic leader and the designated administrator of the department.
- 1.2. Each department chair shall be appointed by their dean following feedback from departmental faculty, staff, and others, subject to the approval of the provost and the president, in accordance with university and Texas A&M University System (System) policies, regulations, and procedures.
- 1.3. To be eligible to serve as a department chair, a faculty member should generally hold a tenured position in their respective department and have demonstrated leadership, managerial, and administrative abilities, preferably at the rank of full professor. When conducting an external search, candidates should be eligible to hold a tenured faculty position in the department.

- 1.4. A department chair is appointed, in general, on a twelve-month basis for a term of four years. In some cases, the appointment may be on an eleven-month basis. The appointment shall be full-time, and the appointment letter will stipulate the duties of the position. Chairs are to be available to respond to the needs of students, faculty, college deans, and other campus administrators.
- 1.5. Annual evaluations shall be conducted by the dean of the college. Chairs in their second and, if continued, in their fourth year of service will be reviewed by the dean in consultation with departmental faculty and staff through feedback. Terms may be renewed as long as the department chair continues to meet or exceed expectations. Upon approval by the provost and dean, following the expiration of the initial term, the department chair may be reappointed.

2. SELECTION PROCEDURES FOR DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

There are four options for selecting a department chair:

- (1) reappointment of the incumbent,
- (2) appointment through a national search process,
- (3) appointment from within the department following department faculty nominations, and
- (4) appointment by the dean of an interim (acting) chair for a specific term, generally no longer than twelve months.

2.1. Reappointment of the incumbent department chair:

- 2.1.1. On or around November 1st of the last full year of the four-year term of office, the incumbent must notify the dean whether or not reappointment is desired.
- 2.1.2. If the incumbent wants to be considered for reappointment, the dean shall conduct a review of the incumbent's performance prior to December 1st of the final year of the incumbent's term of office.
- 2.1.3. The dean shall gather feedback from departmental faculty and staff concerning the chair's performance.
- 2.1.4. On or around December 15th, the dean shall make a recommendation to the provost regarding the reappointment of the incumbent chair.

2.2. Appointment of a non-incumbent through a national search:

- 2.2.1. If the dean selects a national search, the dean will appoint a search and screening committee and select its chair and members.
- 2.2.2. University employment procedures will be followed. Internal candidates may apply.

2.2.3. Department faculty, staff, and others participate in interviewing candidates invited for interviews and submit interview evaluation forms to be reviewed by the committee members and the dean.

2.2.4. The candidate(s) will provide a presentation to the department members, and the department faculty, staff, and others will submit their reflections on the candidate's strengths and weaknesses to the dean after the presentation(s). The dean, in consultation with the departmental faculty and staff via evaluation forms/feedback, will select a candidate for recommendation to the provost.

2.2.5. If the search process does not yield a candidate acceptable to the department or the dean, the dean may reopen the search with the same search and screening committee, or name a new committee, or authorize the department to nominate candidates from within the department according to procedures outlined in Section 2.3 of this AOP.

2.3. Appointment of a non-incumbent from within the department:

2.3.1. If the dean selects a within-department search, the dean will set the date, time, and place for the submission of department faculty nominations.

2.3.2. Permission of nominees should be obtained prior to tendering their nomination.

2.3.3. Candidates and all participants submitting nominations shall generally be tenured or tenure-track department faculty members.

2.3.4. Candidate(s) submit their credentials to the dean for review by the department faculty, staff, others, and the dean. The dean shall schedule presentation(s) by each candidate. The presentation review process shall follow Section 2.2.4 of this AOP.

2.3.5. Any nominee may withdraw at any time by personal request.

2.4. Appointment of an interim (acting) chair:

2.4.1. An interim (acting) department chair may be appointed by the dean in consultation with the departmental faculty and staff through gathered feedback, in accordance with procedures established by the college for a specific term generally no longer than twelve months, and with the approval of the provost and the president.

3. APPOINTMENT OF ASSOCIATE/ASSISTANT DEANS

3.1. Associate/assistant deans report directly to the dean of the respective college and are expected to support the dean in executing college responsibilities.

3.2. To be eligible to serve as an associate/assistant dean, the appointee should hold a tenured faculty position in an academic department within the college and have demonstrated leadership, managerial, and administrative abilities.

- 3.3. The dean will identify potential candidates and solicit feedback from the department chairs, faculty, staff, and others about each candidate. Then, the dean will forward a recommendation to the provost for review and consideration. In some cases, a national search may take place for an associate/assistant dean role following approval of the provost.
- 3.4. Associate/assistant dean appointments are considered an extension of faculty appointments and may be full-time, but will usually be made by granting faculty release from teaching, research, and/or service.
- 3.5. An associate/assistant dean is appointed on a nine or twelve-month basis for a term of four years. In addition to the annual evaluation by the dean of the college, associate/assistant deans in their second and, if continued, in their fourth year of service will be reviewed by the dean. Terms may be renewed as long as the associate/assistant dean continues to meet or exceed expectations. Upon approval by the provost and dean, following the expiration of the initial term, the associate/assistant dean may be reappointed.

4. APPOINTMENT OF COLLEGE DEANS

- 4.1. College deans report directly to the provost and are expected to support the provost in executing administrative responsibilities.
- 4.2. To be eligible to serve as a college dean, a candidate should hold or (in the event of a national search) be eligible to hold a tenured position in their respective department. Candidates should have demonstrated leadership, managerial, and administrative abilities.
- 4.3. During the selection process, college chair, faculty, and staff feedback will be gathered through hiring committees and/or other appropriate venues. The provost will analyze the finalists' strengths and weaknesses in relation to the position criteria and discuss these data with the president. If the sole finalist is approved by the president, supporting materials will be submitted to the System for review and approval.
- 4.4. An appointment to the position of college dean shall be full-time, and the position offer letter will stipulate the duties of the position.
- 4.5. A college dean is appointed on a twelve-month basis for a term of four years. In addition to the annual evaluation by the provost, college deans in their fourth year of service will be reviewed by the provost. Feedback on potential renewal will be solicited from chairs, faculty, and staff of the college as well as others. Terms may be renewed as long as the college dean continues to meet or exceed expectations. Upon approval by the provost and president, following the expiration of the initial term, the college dean may be reappointed.
- 4.6. Interim dean position appointments should be no longer than necessary to secure permanent leadership through typical processes unless the appointment is made by the provost and president with approval by the System.

- 4.6.1. The provost will make interim dean appointments in consultation with the president, who will forward the recommendation to the System for approval.
- 4.6.2. An interim dean shall have the same responsibilities and authority as a permanent dean.

5. APPOINTMENT LETTERS

- 5.1. To initiate an administrative appointment, the provost or dean shall issue a letter of appointment that includes the following:
 - 5.1.1. An appointment statement for the faculty member assigned administrative responsibilities.
 - 5.1.2. A breakdown of the faculty member's salary, indicating:
 - (1) the portion of the faculty's salary that is associated with the administrative duties; and
 - (2) the portion of the faculty member's salary not associated with the administrative duties, which must not exceed the salaries of other faculty members with similar qualifications and responsibilities.
 - 5.1.3. The appointment letter should also include the anticipated term of the administrative appointment.
 - 5.1.4. The appointment letters for faculty members with administrative duties must also state that the administrative duties may be removed without cause.

6. TENURE ON ARRIVAL

- 6.1. There may be instances when it is appropriate to offer a prospective academic college administrator a tenured faculty appointment at the time of hire. If granted upon arrival, tenure applies solely to the faculty appointment and does not extend to the administrative role.
- 6.2. If tenure on arrival is anticipated, the position announcement should clearly state that candidates must present a record of academic achievement that justifies immediate tenure consideration.
- 6.3. A faculty applicant may be considered for tenure on arrival at the time of initial appointment if the following criteria are met:
 - (1) A minimum of six years of full-time service at an accredited college or university;
 - (2) Current appointment in a tenured position and in good standing;
 - (3) Current academic rank of associate professor or full professor;
 - (4) An offer of full-time employment at TAMUK at the rank of associate professor or higher.

- 6.4. Under exceptional circumstances, the criteria above may be adjusted with the approval of the provost or designee.
- 6.5. Tenure evaluation for faculty candidates in administrative appointments will be based on the candidate's full academic credentials to the point of hire with TAMUK, and the review will be conducted by the tenure and promotion committee of the department most closely aligned with the candidate's area of expertise.
- 6.6. The following process shall be followed for the consideration of tenure on arrival:
- 6.6.1. The hiring manager shall initiate a request to hire that includes documentation for tenure consideration. Documentation verifying the applicant's tenure status at their previous institution must be included in the request.
 - 6.6.2. A review by the department tenure and promotion committee must occur prior to submission of an offer letter, where possible. The curriculum vitae will generally serve as the document being reviewed; however, the committee may request substantiation of items where reasonable. In general, an external hire being recommended by a search committee provides reasonable assurance that the candidate has met the standards for tenure in the department or college, provided the search committee is constituted of at least three tenured faculty in the area.
 - 6.6.3. The request shall route through the respective college tenure and promotion committee and college dean for a comprehensive review. Final academic approval will be granted by the provost or designee.
 - 6.6.4. The president or designee will document the final approval on the hiring memorandum, which will be returned to the hiring manager. The hiring manager is responsible for communicating the outcome of the tenure request to the applicant.
 - 6.6.5. The president will submit the tenure recommendation to the System for review and final approval by the Board of Regents.

7. END OF APPOINTMENT

- 7.1. In accordance with System Policy [*12.01 Academic Freedom, Responsibility and Tenure*](#), faculty members with administrative appointments may be removed without cause.
- 7.2. The end of the administrative appointment shall be without prejudice to a faculty member's tenure or contractual rights, provided other issues do not cause the individual to be dismissed from the tenured faculty position for cause.

Related Statutes, Policies, Rules, or Requirements

[System Policy 12.01, Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure](#)

[University Rule 12.01.01.K1, Institutional Rules for Implementing Tenure](#)

Definitions

Faculty: For this Academic Operating Procedure, faculty refers to individuals holding academic appointments at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, including tenured and tenure-track professors (assistant, associate, and full professors), as well as full-time lecturers within the academic college/department.

Staff: For this Academic Operating Procedure, staff refers to individuals holding full-time status as non-faculty personnel within the academic college/department.

Term: For this Academic Operating Procedure, term refers to the designated duration of an appointment held by the academic college administrator. Terms are typically set at four years and may be renewed upon successful performance evaluations and approval by the appropriate administrative authorities. Interim terms are no longer than necessary to secure permanent leadership.