

The University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 36-23

Proposal to Modify Senate Procedure 805.1.1: Search Procedures for Departmental Chairs and School Deans

Background

The Senate has the responsibility and authority to establish procedures for the selection of Deans and Department Chairs (Senate Constitution, Article III.6.i.a.10). Following the adoption of the departmental governance policies defined by Senate Proposal 16-92, university units established revised procedures for searching for new Chairs. This proposal to modify Senate Procedures 805.1.1 - Senate Search Procedures for Department Chairs, incorporates numerous edits to clarify procedures, and bring the language of those procedures into alignment with other current campus governance documents, and one core change. Specifically, this proposal enables departmental selection of one of two processes for search: (1) an open search, with candidates from outside or inside MTU; or (2) an internal search, with candidates from within MTU only. This change is made in recognition of the fact that different departments have varying circumstances and different goals. While maintaining the core Dean's role of the final selection of a chairperson, the allowance for departmental selection of the approach for the chairperson search provides flexibility and is well within the bounds of shared governance. By having two alternative approaches, flexibility is embedded in the process. The selection of the method of the chair search is an important step for any department, and as such, once made, the selection will remain in place in the departmental charter, and can only be changed by the department through the process for charter change, and administrative approval process. This provides a safeguard against capricious changes from one to the other model for departments.

The second core change is formally in the sister process for CHAIR EVALUATION. While not directly relevant here, CHAIR EVALUATION and CHAIR SEARCH are systemically linked, because the evaluation process may trigger the need for a search.

I. Search Procedure for Department Chairs

1. The Department Charter shall specify who is eligible to vote at all stages of the search process.

2. Procedure for Determination of Open or Internal Search:

The Department Charter will also specify whether the Chair search process will be: (1) an open search, with candidates from outside or inside MTU; or (2) an internal search, with candidates from within MTU only. Accordingly, when a new Chair must be selected, the Dean of the College will visit the department and review the search process and whether it will be open or restricted only to internal candidates, per the Departmental Charter. Both external candidates and current Michigan Tech faculty are encouraged to apply for any open search, because the distinction is made here only in reference to publication and marketing of the search. In comparison, in a Department operating under the internal to MTU model, only current Michigan Tech faculty are encouraged to apply.

3. Search Committee:

3.1. **Departmental Faculty Representatives:** The Search Committee for the Chair will be elected through a secret ballot organized by the Senator of the department and one other faculty member selected by the department's faculty. The number of members on the Search Committee will depend on the number of faculty in a department. Departments with twelve members or fewer will have a committee of at least three **faculty** members. Departments consisting of more than twelve faculty members will have a committee of at least four faculty members. **No committee member can be under consideration as a candidate.**

3.2. **At-Large Representative:** Whatever the size of the department, one additional person from outside of the department will be appointed by the College dean.

3.3. **Staff Representative:** If the department has professional staff, one staff member should be elected by the staff to be on the committee.

3.4. **Student representative:** The individuals initiating the search will ask Undergraduate Student Government and Graduate Student Government each to elect one Committee representative and one alternative, both of whom should be enrolled in the department and will serve with ability to participate in committee discussion but without vote.

3.5. **Human Resources and Equal Opportunity Compliance and Title IX Representatives:** The persons initiating the search will ask Human Resources and Equal Opportunity Compliance and Title IX to each provide the name of their designated representative to serve without vote.

3.6. The chair of the search committee will be elected by the committee at its first meeting. At the first convening of the Search Committee, a representative from Human Resources will be invited to review appropriate hiring procedures and [ensure all search committee members have completed the required search committee required training](#). Following this consultation and review, the committee will determine the process for evaluating and voting upon candidates after they visit campus. [All procedures must comply with applicable University policies, procedures, and Human Resources and Equal Opportunity Compliance and Title IX practices to ensure equal opportunity to all candidates. Full and open disclosure of potential conflicts of interest concerning committee members and/or applicants is expected. See Board of Trustees Conflict of Interest policy 4.7.](#)

4. Confidentiality: It is the responsibility of the [Chair of the search committee](#) to read the [Confidentiality Statement provided by Human Resources](#) at the beginning of the process before the committee discusses criteria, drafts interview questions, reviews applications and/or resumes or begins any work. [All committee members must sign the confidentiality statement and the committee chair must send the completed statement to Human Resources.](#)

5. Search Procedure: The Search Committee, with input from the present Chair ([only if the present chair is not in the candidate pool](#)), and the Dean, will produce the first draft of the position description and position advertisement. The Search Committee will complete the [Position Authorization Form](#) and send it to the Human Resources Office. The Committee is responsible for ensuring that the search conforms to current legal requirements, and for maintaining the applicant flow log. Departmental faculty may nominate candidates. In the case of an open search, the position will be advertised in appropriate professional journals, and faculty should distribute position descriptions to their professional colleagues.

6. Short List of Candidates: The Search Committee will review the applications to produce a short list of candidates [who meet at least the minimum qualifications of the position](#). These candidates will be invited for an interview. [The committee will inform](#) each candidate who accepts the interview invitation [that the committee will attempt](#) to obtain independent assessments from [references](#) not listed by the candidates. [The committee](#) should solicit faculty help in identifying these [references](#). If the search is only internal, all applicants [who meet the minimum required qualifications of the position](#) will be on the short list of candidates. The committee is expected to obtain faculty input during the screening process.

7. Candidate Interviews: The application materials of each candidate on the short list will be available to all departmental faculty and [staff](#). The letters of recommendation will be accessible [to members of the department, but the letters cannot be copied. The candidates will be informed of this requirement, and will be furnished with copies of the position description, departmental charter, statements of departmental goals, and a recent annual departmental report. If a recommendation letter is from a current Michigan Tech faculty member and the letter can be written so that there is not a concern about sharing with department faculty and staff, Human Resources or the search committee chair can redact parts of the letter to protect the identity of](#)

the author. Alternatively, the letter writer can request that the letter only be shared with the dean and search committee.

While each candidate is on campus, the Search Committee will make arrangements for each individual to make two presentations:

1. A technical presentation in [their](#) field of specialization that includes trends, directions and opportunities for research in the field.
2. A second presentation that may include, but is not limited to, the following issues: the candidate's administrative philosophy and plans for meeting short and long term goals; [the direction of undergraduate and graduate education in the department](#); [resources needed to attain the goals](#).

The Search Committee will arrange the candidate's schedule and set up appointments with appropriate administrators and other persons outside of the department (Dean, VP for Research, Provost, other department chairs if overlapping research interest).

8. Selection of Chair:

[8.1](#) After the candidates have completed their interviews, the Search Committee will arrange a meeting of faculty and staff to discuss the candidates. [The sitting chair will not be part of this meeting](#). The Search Committee will solicit the opinions of graduate and undergraduate students. The Search Committee will conduct a vote by secret ballot [for each candidate](#) to determine if the candidate is acceptable or unacceptable to serve as Department [Chair](#). The vote of the department's staff takes place first, and will be advisory to the faculty vote, [if the department staff choose to vote](#). The search committee will tabulate the votes. The search committee will prepare recommendations based on ballot results and strength and weaknesses based on the [required qualifications of the position](#) of the acceptable candidates and meet with the Dean to [review the final list of acceptable candidates](#).

[8.2](#) A candidate will be deemed unacceptable if a simple majority of voting members is not reached. No candidate will be deemed acceptable for department chair who does not obtain a simple majority vote of the faculty [that have voted](#).

[8.3](#) Prior to beginning negotiations with any candidate, the Dean will forward their recommendation and information about the committee's recommendation up through their supervisory chain-of-command. All academic administrators serve in their administrative role at the pleasure of the President of the University. The Dean will convey the committee's recommendation and their own recommendation to the Provost and President. Upon receiving their approval, the Dean will begin the process of negotiating with the selected candidate.

8.4 The Dean has the final responsibility for making the appointment subject to the approval of the Provost and President. [Prior to making a final offer, reasons for non-selection based on the required and/or desired qualifications listed in the job description must be reviewed by Equal Opportunity Compliance and Title IX for the candidates not recommended for hire. Human Resources will confirm that reference checks were conducted and that all approvals were received from the President and Provost before approving the hiring documentation.](#)

8.5 [As of the writing of this procedure, notes must be kept for three years.](#)

9. Failed Search: If the Department finds no acceptable candidates following the interviews or the Dean is [unable to proceed based on the list of candidates provided, the Dean may choose to reopen the search for additional candidates or fail the search and restart the process.](#)

The Dean will appoint an Interim Chair as provided by II.A.10.

10. Appointment of Interim or Acting Chairs: When it is evident that the Department Chair will be unable to perform [their](#) duties for more than one semester or [the](#) Chair search has failed, the Dean will appoint an Interim Chair. Interim Chairs serving more than two years must be evaluated as detailed in [Senate Procedure 506.1.1](#).

If a search has failed, a new search will begin at the earliest possible opportunity. An Interim Chair is different from an "Acting Chair" or someone serving as "Next In Charge." If a Department Chair expects to be absent from campus or otherwise unable to perform [their](#) duties for a period of time, [they](#) must appoint another individual to serve as "Next In Charge." For somewhat longer absences, they can appoint someone as Acting Chair. "Next In Charge" appointments are intended only for very brief periods, generally lasting a few days. A serving Chair can appoint an **Acting Chair** to cover medium-term absences lasting up to one semester. If a Chair will be absent for more than one semester, [they will](#) step down and allow the Dean to appoint an **Interim Chair**.

II. Procedure for Conducting Secret Ballots:

Secret ballots will be conducted using a double envelope process. The marked ballot will be placed into a small sealed envelope. This envelope must be sealed into a larger envelope, which must be signed by the voter across the flap. The [Search](#) Committee must be present when the votes are separated from the large outer envelope by the Dean's Administrative Associate. The Dean's Administrative Associate will also record the names of the voters. Finally, the Dean's Administrative Associate will mix the smaller envelopes and give them to the appropriate Committee for vote counting. There is a quorum if at least half of the department's active faculty members vote. If there is not a quorum, the votes will be shredded and a new vote will be taken when it is believed that a quorum will be present.