School of Arts and Sciences
Protocol for the Selection of Department Chairs and Program Coordinators
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Introduction:
Department chairs and program coordinators are academic leaders for their departments and programs so they play important roles in faculty governance. For descriptions of their responsibilities, please see the School of Arts and Sciences Dean’s Office website, “Department Chairs and Program Coordinators” (http://asadmin.richmond.edu/chairs/chair-job_description.html). All department chairs are appointed and removed by the President of the University. In the spirit of shared governance, the President delegates to the Provost, deans, and departments the responsibility of nominating, appointing and removing chairs in the manner prescribed in “A Guide to Faculty Governance.” The appointment and removal of program coordinators follow the same procedures as department chairs.

To foster a robust culture of faculty governance, cultivate academic leadership, and promote democratic inclusiveness, the School of Arts and Sciences prepares this protocol for chair and program coordinator elections. This protocol complements the pertinent sections from “A Guide to Faculty Governance” (http://facultygovernance.richmond.edu/Ch_I/index.html), reproduced at the end of this document.

Protocol:
1. Tenured faculty members are eligible to serve as department chairs or program coordinators. In exceptional circumstances, a continuing or tenure-track faculty member may stand for election and appointment.
2. All continuing faculty members of the department (tenure-stream and faculty directors) are eligible to vote for the department chair. Similarly, all continuing full-time faculty members who serve on a program advisory committee are eligible to vote for the program coordinator.
3. Typically, the term of appointment for a department chair or program coordinator is three years. However, the Dean may determine other terms of appointment. Chairs and coordinators can be reelected and reappointed, subject to satisfactory job performance.
4. An election should be held prior to the semester in which the department chair’s or program coordinator’s term will expire. The chair / coordinator should ask a tenured colleague to serve as the election convener.
5. The election should be made by secret ballot. Rules about what constitutes a valid ballot should be established.
6. The election convener will solicit nominations, convene and lead the election meeting, arrange for the preparation of ballots and ballot box or envelope, and count the votes.
7. Prior to the election, voting faculty should have opportunity as a collective to deliberate about their leadership needs.
8. Candidate(s) should have a chance to explain, if desired, to the voting faculty why they stand for nomination and how they will lead the department / program if elected.
9. The convener should distribute the paper ballots to the voting faculty. After allowing sufficient time for the meeting to vote, the convener should announce the end of the election
and instruct the voting faculty to place their ballots into the box / envelope prepared. Every effort should be made to ensure that all votes are cast as secret ballots.

10. The convener should open all ballots, verify if any is invalid, read out each vote, and tally the votes for each candidate, and announce the results of the election.

11. The person nominated as department chair or program coordinator must have the approval of at least half of the department's / program’s continuing faculty members. If no candidate receives over half of the votes, the election convener should consult with the dean. In such case, the dean will work with the department to select a mutually agreeable candidate.

12. The nomination will be in the form of a letter to the Dean of the School stating the qualifications of the nominee and the outcome of the election.

13. In the event that a department chair or program coordinator takes a professional or personal leave of absence during his or term, the dean may appoint an acting chair pursuant to a department election.

14. Typically, the Dean recommends the department’s / program’s nominee to the Provost. But if the Dean does not support the department’s / program’s choice, procedures for reproducing a mutually acceptable candidate can be found in “A Guide to Faculty Governance.”

From the Provost’s Office website, “A Guide to Faculty Governance” (http://facultygovernance.richmond.edu/Ch I/index.html)

c. Chairs of Departments

Department chairs are responsible for the normal operations of their departments, including scheduling of classes, assignment of instructors, preparation of annual budgets, and recommendation of employment, promotion, tenure and salary increases of faculty members in their departments. Chairs represent their departments to the administration as well as in the Academic Council and the University Senate and are expected to keep their departments informed of actions of both of these bodies.

All department chairs are appointed and removed by the President of the University. In practice, however, and in the spirit of shared governance, the President delegates to the Provost, deans, and departments the responsibility of appointing and removing chairs in the manner prescribed below.

Department chairs (and their interim replacements) in the School of Arts and Sciences and the Robins School of Business ordinarily are nominated by the regular full-time department faculty acting as a collective and deliberative body and voting ordinarily by secret ballot. The person nominated will have the approval of at least half of the department's members. The department's nomination will be in the form of a letter to the Dean of their school that explains the department's choice of a chair. Although individual members of the department should be informed that they have the right to send a confidential letter of their own to the Dean, such letters should not be required or even solicited by the Dean. If the Dean does not support the department's nomination, the Dean meets with the department to explain his or her reasons for not supporting the nomination. The department will then reevaluate its nomination and consider the Dean's objections. Subsequently, the department will communicate its choice of candidate for chair to the Dean.

The Dean and the department will remain in consultation until a mutually agreeable candidate has been selected and has agreed to serve as chair. A mutually agreeable candidate is a person who has the support of both the Dean and at least 50% of the regular full-time department faculty. The consensus candidate's name is forwarded to the Provost and then to the President as a recommendation for appointment. In rare instances when a consensus is not attained in a timely manner after protracted effort, the record of consultations and reasoning on all sides will be communicated to the Provost for resolution and recommendation to the President. Chairs are appointed for a term of a specified number of years and normally are eligible for reappointment for additional terms.
A department chair may be removed before the end of her/his term, but removal should be a last resort to be used only if the chair is unwilling to modify her/his problematic behavior. With two exceptions, explained below, a chair may not be removed unless both the Dean and a majority of the department's regular, full-time faculty agree to the removal. Removing a chair can be initiated by either the Dean or by a majority of the department's regular, full-time faculty, but before any such attempt is made, the chair must be notified in writing by the concerned party (Dean or department faculty) of the problematic behavior and be given an opportunity to explain, defend, and/or modify it. If the concerned party is not satisfied with the chair's response, it should request the chair to resign. If the chair refuses to resign, the concerned party should meet with the other party (Dean or department faculty) to secure its support for removing the chair. If such support is not secured, the chair may not be removed, except in the following two situations.

First, when the alleged grounds for removing a chair are the chair's failure and likely continued failure to perform the officially prescribed duties of a chair, the party (Dean or department faculty) making the allegation may appeal to the Provost, who, after hearing the arguments and evidence presented by the Dean, department faculty, and the chair, will decide whether the chair should be removed on the grounds of failing to perform officially prescribed duties. The second exception is when the Dean has clear and credible evidence that the chair, in the exercise of her/his authority as chair, has engaged in illegal activity. In such a case, the Dean, with the concurrence of the Provost, may remove a chair without consulting with the department's faculty or making public the reasons for the removal. Whenever a decision has been made to remove a chair, for whatever reason, the chair will be given the option of resigning prior to being removed, except when that option is not allowed by law.

Preceding section amended by vote of the faculty on November 9, 2006 and on May 10, 2010