

According to the Faculty Handbook, Department Chair Selection Policy:

“The department has the principal responsibility for selecting the Department Chairperson and shall conduct the election for chairperson before the end of the fourth semester of the incumbent’s term of office. The faculty of a department shall select, by secret ballot, a nominee from the tenured faculty of the department. Nominating and voting procedures shall be specified in department by-laws. The name of the selected nominee will be submitted to the Dean for recommendation to the President. Within two months from the date of nomination, the President shall appoint the selected nominee.

In the rare case that the nominee is not acceptable to the President, the President and the Dean shall meet with the Department to determine a chairperson acceptable to both the President and the Department.

If the President and the Department cannot reach an agreement within two months from the date of the rejection of the original nominee, the Department shall notify the Faculty Senate. The Senate shall form an Ad Hoc Committee to conduct a review and, within two months from the date of notification, recommend a chairperson to be appointed by the President.”

On September 9, 2021, the President of the University notified the department of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Instructional Technology that the elected nominee was not acceptable to her. The President and the Department were unable to reach an agreement by the two-month deadline, and notification of this fact came to the Faculty Senate President on November 11, 2021. This would imply a January 11, 2022 deadline for the Ad Hoc committee to conduct its business. However, since this date falls during winter break, and the next Senate meeting is not until Monday, January 31, the Steering Committee requests that the Ad Hoc committee conduct its review, prepare its report, and send it to the Steering Committee and the University President by Monday, January 24.

The task of the Ad Hoc committee is to identify and recommend a chairperson to be appointed by the University President for a three-year term. The recommended person should meet the standard requirement of being tenured; however, there is no requirement for the person to be a member of the department. The Ad Hoc committee must keep in mind that the person they identify should be acceptable to the department and the University President, and that the University President retains the right to not appoint the recommended chairperson.

The requirement to “review” implies that the Ad Hoc committee will investigate the history up to this point: the original election and its results, the explanation given for rejection of the original nominee, the second call for nominations, the second election and its results, etc. Part of the task of the Ad Hoc committee will be to meet with all affected parties (faculty in the department, Dean, Provost, President) to understand the reasons that have made the process unsuccessful up to this point. The committee should present its findings in a report to the department, the Senate Steering Committee, and the University President.

Proposed members of the Ad Hoc committee:

Alicia Bray (Biology)

Carolyn Fallahi (Psychological Science)

Pat Foster (Technology & Engineering Education)

Jesse Turner (Literacy, Elementary, & Early Childhood Education)

Barry Westcott (Chemistry & Biochemistry)

Samuel Zadi (World Languages, Cultures, & Literatures)