

# Guidelines for the Selection of Department Chairs and Schedulers | **Spring 2012**

---

The following guidelines are meant to assist departments in devising acceptable and sustainable processes. If a department is very close knit, there may be no need for formality. If, on the other hand, a department is large or has a history of less than easy consensus on matters such as selecting department chairs and or schedulers, we recommend the adoption of specific procedures and the keeping of records of processes and actions.

These guidelines are not intended to provide a legal framework although they do contain elements proven to withstand the test of legal challenges. They are intended for friendly usage to the extent they facilitate process and action rather than procedural wrangling, similar in some respects to the selective and facilitative rather than rigid application of Roberts Rules of Order which can be used to impede as well as to facilitate.

Whether or not departments decide to adopt and apply some or all of the guidelines formally is entirely up to individual departments. If they are adopted, it is strongly urged that, simultaneous with adoption, adoption of the means for revisiting or otherwise reconsidering is agreed to.

## Principles

1. Full and consistent transparency – What one person knows, everyone should know as long as it is pertinent and first-hand information. This goes for both those under consideration as well as all considering. This also goes for all aspects of process. Any proposed change in process should be known to all before anything happens to allow for comment and agreement.

2. Self revelation – whenever possible, whatever pertinent information can be said to be reasonably applied to a decision to vote or act for or against someone's candidacy for department chair or scheduler should come from the candidate herself or himself.

3. Avoidance of conflict of interest - avoiding even the appearance of conflict of interest is extremely important. Given the multiple levels of negative consequences with conflict of interest, very stringent standards (even what might appear to be extreme to some) are important. Nowhere is the ability of smart people to indulge in delusional rationalization more enhanced than with conflict of interest, however harmless it may seem to be to the rationalizer.

# Guidelines for the Selection of Department Chairs and Schedulers | **Spring 2012**

---

4. That which is least problematic by all accounts (both in terms of process and in terms of result) which nevertheless accomplishes the basic desired goal is best.

## Avoiding Conflict of Interest

- The appearance of conflict of interest may be seen as conflict of interest.
- Some departments may find that textbook authors should refrain from being schedulers of part time assignments where those assignments include the possible use of their textbook(s) or other instructional materials.
- Some departments may find that it is sufficient to have schedulers who are textbook authors remain absolutely silent about the fact that they have an applicable textbook when scheduling part time faculty

## Eligibility

- For a variety of reasons, department chairs and schedulers should be full time faculty.

## Election for a specified term

- Length of term should be specified prior to first election.
- The committee recommends two year renewable terms.

## Rotation

- Rather than election, some departments may find that rotation solves multiple problems
- A rotation list is simple if done by seniority in the department
- Each faculty member has the right to pass the task along to the next person on the list
- A provision should be made prior to implementing a rotational system regarding what to do if someone is unable to complete a turn. Completion of the preceding term and thus having all full terms start at the same time of year seems to be most satisfactory.

## Majority rule

- Two basic systems exist, majority of those eligible to vote and majority of those voting during a specified period of time.

## Part time faculty voting

# Guidelines for the Selection of Department Chairs and Schedulers | **Spring 2012**

---

- To allow part time voting or not to allow it is an important and potentially problematic question.
- As with other conflict of interest situations, every effort must be made to avoid even the appearance of conflict of interest. For example, in a contested election, no full time faculty member should speak to or otherwise contact part time faculty other than to inform them that voting will be taking place.
- Candidates for chair or scheduler positions should not contact part time faculty personally in any way.
- Notice of and other information about election should come from the department in a department approved written message .
- One simple way to allow part time participation while reducing the risk of “part timer takeover” is to require voting to be in person during a regularly scheduled department meeting.
- If part time faculty vote, it is simplest and best for them to have a full vote.

## Past Practice

- Past practice should only be relied upon only to the extent that it is non-controversially codified or is not a matter of controversy. in the first place.
- If what is past practice becomes a matter of controversy and there is no or insufficient codification, starting from scratch may be the only lasting solution.

## Voting Procedures

- Contested elections should be done by secret ballot with some agreed upon person from outside the department collecting and tabulating the votes. On line or electronic mail voting would be examples of this only as long as the person receiving and tabulating is not from the department.
- A perceived necessity of secret balloting may be a barometer of the departmental culture and may indicate that other aspects of departmental affairs should be codified.

## Potential Role of the Professional Relations Committee

- The Professional Relations Committee is prepared to assist with examining the culture of a department and to make recommendations on any aspect of selection desired by the department but neither seeks nor has the authority to determine

# Guidelines for the Selection of Department Chairs and Schedulers | **Spring 2012**

---

answers by itself.

- The committee may also be prepared to assist in election processes themselves on a case by case basis.

Document developed and approved by the De Anza College Professional Relations Committee Spring 2012
---