Department Chair Selection Policy

1. **Policy:**

   **Background:**

   The department chair (DC) position at ASU is a faculty line that has a significant amount of administrative responsibility. Prior to 2003, the DC position was primarily a faculty position with some administrative duties (the amount varying between departments). When the campus reorganized in 2003, the four academic Dean positions were discontinued, and an Assistant Vice President position was created. This reorganization resulted in the position of department chair becoming more administrative in nature. The DC is primarily responsible for the evaluation of faculty, day-to-day operations of the department, course scheduling, class schedule preparations, assessment, departmental budget, personnel issues, student complaints, and the DC plays a large role in developing departmental vision and in providing feedback and leadership on state-wide policies.

   **Performance:**

   The DC position is evaluated yearly by the VPAA per the faculty handbook (form C) utilizing the department chair’s self-evaluation, feedback provided by faculty (form D), and feedback from support areas (budget, records, financial aid, admissions, etc). Given that faculty can vote to remove a chair, faculty are encouraged to be diligent about submitting chair evaluations yearly. A chair should have an opportunity to address issues, rather than being removed without warning. The evaluation style is similar to that used for tenured faculty; looking at strengths and areas to improve upon. The department chair position is an at-will position. A DC may step down at any point in time or be asked to step down from serving as the department chair, if their performance is not acceptable as determined by the Chief Academic Officer (CAO) and/or President, or if the CAO and President believe a new DC is required in order to take the department in a new direction. In the case that a DC is asked to
step down, the CAO should attempt to notify the DC a week in advance, allowing
the DC to voluntarily step down, except under extenuating circumstances.

Vacancy:

By September 1st of the preceding academic year that a DC’s seat is to become
vacant, for any reason, the academic department shall conduct a meeting and follow
the selection procedures listed below. Should a DC position become vacant due to
removal or other unforeseen circumstances, the academic department shall conduct a
meeting at the earliest reasonable time.

An Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer:

Adams State University is particularly interested in applications from women and
minorities. In compliance with the Immigration Control Act of 1986, candidates for positions
must provide proof of eligibility to work before an offer of employment can be made final. Adams
State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Applications
are sought from all qualified persons regardless of race, color, sex, disability, and as
covered by law, veteran status. In addition, university policies prohibit discrimination
on the basis of religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation including
transgender status and gender expression, marital status, and parental status.

II. PURPOSE:

To define the responsibilities and hiring process of Department Chairs (DC’s).

III. DEFINITIONS:

A. Chief Academic Officer (CAO): The Vice President for Academic Affairs will
act as the Chief Academic Officer and will be the person responsible for all daily
operational activities related to academics and academic programs offered by
ASU.

B. Department Chair (DC): The ASU faculty member that acts as the
administrative head of an academic program.

C. Faculty Member: The individual responsible for course instruction in an
academic discipline.

IV. PROCEDURES:

A. Eligibility: All tenured associate and full professors shall be eligible to become a
DC. Under extenuating circumstances, such as a department with no tenured
faculty or where none of the tenured faculty want to be chair, a non-tenured
faculty member may be eligible with the support of the department and CAO. Support shall be indicated by a majority vote. If two or more untenured faculty are eligible, then the selection method in section IV.B shall be followed.

B. Selection Method:

a. All eligible departmental faculty who desire to become DC shall constitute the pool of nominees.

b. Nomination & voting procedure

i. Interested eligible faculty may self-nominate or nominate others by notifying the administrative assistant to the CAO in writing.

ii. Each candidate is encouraged to share with the voting members of the department a document explaining what positive qualities and directions they would bring to the DC position. This document should focus on the positive aspects if they were to become chair, while avoiding any negativity toward other candidates.

iii. Voting will be done by secret ballot. The administrative assistant to the CAO shall provide ballots including the names of the self-nominated candidates to the department.

iv. All tenured and non-tenured, tenure track faculty (including the current chair) shall be eligible to vote.

v. Due to the facts that a simple majority may not be reached (e.g., 3 candidates) and ties may occur, the Range Voting method is recommended. Each voter assigns each candidate a whole number score from 0 to 10, indicating their support for that candidate (with 10 being high). The candidate with the highest total score wins. Following the secret ballot, the administrative assistant to the CAO shall collect and total the ballots, and share the name of the elected chair with the department. In cases of a tie, the department will choose, by simple majority vote, between the options of:

1. A run-off vote between the candidates, perhaps using a 0 to 100 range.

2. Allowing the CAO to choose among the top candidates.

c. The CAO shall review the name/s submitted by each department and shall take one of the following actions:
i. Approve the candidate/select from the candidates and forward the recommendation to the President.

ii. Reject the candidate(s) recommended by the department.

d. If the CAO rejects the candidate(s) put forward by the department, he or she shall meet with the department and explain his or her concerns. After hearing the CAO's concerns about the rejected candidate(s), the department, by a simple majority vote of its tenured and non-tenured, tenure track faculty, may ask for an external search or mediation.

C. External Search Committee:
Should an external search for a DC commence, the CAO shall select its members such that the committee will have both departmental and campus-wide representation. While the composition of the complete committee changes depending on the unique situation of each department, the chair of the search committee is typically a Department Chair from another department and the remaining representatives are from the faculty of the affected department (tenured and untenured). In rare cases, lack of tenure/tenure-track faculty or other extenuating circumstances, the remaining representatives may be chosen from the faculty as a whole.

D. Length of Terms, Start of Terms, & Removal from Office:

a. Chairs shall serve five-year terms, except as specified in sections IV.D.c and IV.D.d. Terms will begin after the end of Spring semester, except as specified in sections IV.D.c and IV.D.d.

b. The DC is an at-will position. This person may be asked to step down by the CAO and/or President as outlined in section I or recommended for removal by one’s department as outlined below.

c. An academic department may, by means of a 2/3 vote of its tenured and non-tenured, tenure-track faculty, voting by secret ballot, recommend that their DC be removed from office. The DC is ineligible to vote in cases of removal. The most senior faculty member (excluding the current Chair) will tabulate and forward the results of the ballot to the CAO for decision and action. If a 2/3rd majority is in favor of removal, the CAO should strongly consider forwarding the recommendation to the President. If the CAO and/or President ask the DC to step down as outlined in section I, then a new chair will be selected according to the procedures outlined in section IV.B.

d. Appointments may be made occasionally for shorter periods for specific reasons, and certain appointments in departments with extenuating
staffing circumstances may be indeterminate in length. In the case of a shorter period, the department will still follow the selection procedure in section IV.B. In the case of extenuating circumstances, any department that has more than one faculty member eligible to be DC will follow the selection procedure outlined in section IV.B by September 1 of the final year of the chair’s term. As an example of extenuating circumstances, departments who wish to opt out of the chair rotation procedure must still follow the selection procedure as outlined in Section IV.B to retain the current chair.

E. Renewal of Terms:
Chairs shall be limited to two consecutive five-year terms and shall not be eligible to be a candidate for a third consecutive term except as herein provided. A chair may be a candidate for election for additional successive terms, provided that 2/3 of those eligible voting members of that academic department, voting by secret ballot, agree to allow the chair to become a candidate. Ballot procedures are the same as outlined in section IV.B.

F. Contract & Stipend:
Chairs will be compensated with stipends and reassigned time commensurate with their responsibilities and as negotiated between the elected chair and CAO. The DC has the traditional academic year faculty contract and a separate contract for being the DC during the AY. Summer department chair contracts are separate. The size of the stipend is dependent on the size and complexity of the program.

G. Orientation/Mentoring:
The outgoing chair will develop an orientation program for the incoming department chair. If the outgoing chair is unable to execute this duty, the incoming chair may request a mentor who is currently chairing another academic department. If neither of these options is possible, the CAO will conduct orientation and mentoring for the incoming chair.

a. The orientation program should provide information that will enable the department chair to function more effectively and efficiently. Areas which should be addressed in the orientation program include University personnel procedures for faculty and classified staff, the budget and planning processes, development of new degree programs, faculty governance relationships, relationships with other offices such as contracts and grants and with the administrative hierarchy, and other areas that are relevant to the department and to DC evaluation.

b. This orientation program will be implemented upon the selection of the incoming DC and should run concurrently with the last year of the outgoing chair’s service.
V. **RESPONSIBILITY:**

A. It is the responsibility of the Office of Academic Affairs to contact / notify all tenured / tenure-track faculty within the department with the vacancy.

B. It is the responsibility of an interested person within the department to notify the administrative assistant to the CAO, in writing, of their interest in the department chair position.

VI. **AUTHORITY:**

VII. **HISTORY:** Approved April 14, 2016

VIII. **ATTACHMENTS:**