




Office of the Provost and
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

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TO: Richard Koubek, President

FROM: Andrew Storer, Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs 

DATE: May 31, 2024

SUBJECT: Senate Proposal 23-24

Attached is Senate proposal 23-24, "Modify Senate Procedure 805.1.1: Search Procedures for Department Chairs", and a memo stating the Senate passed this proposal at their April 17, 2024 meeting. I have reviewed this proposal and consulted with Renee Ozanich, Manager, Academic Employment, Human Resources. I recommend that we not approve the proposal at this time, but request that it be revised to include wording that addresses the suggestions and concerns stated below.

Section 3.1. Department Faculty Representatives

Suggest that the second person involved in coordinating committee selection be the Senate Alternate for the unit.

The procedure for electing the committee can result in a committee with low or no diversity. Add the opportunity for an examination of the committee make up and approval from the dean. If the committee is not diverse, an alternative selection method may be used by the Senator and faculty member who are coordinating the selection of committee members. One option may be to have the dean appoint a committee from those nominated or indicating interest in serving, and then have a vote to approve the committee.

Section 3.6. Committee Chair

Ensuring the completion of required diversity training for faculty and staff should occur as soon as the committee is selected and could be the responsibility of the Senator during the steps in Section 3.1. Provision should be made for faculty and staff serving on the committee who need the refresher course.

Section 4. Confidentiality

Update the Confidentiality Statement process as per [the hiring process](#).

Section 5. Search Procedure

Clarify that the committee should work with the unit assistant to complete the Position Authorization form, which goes through the Dean's office and then on to Human Resources.

Section 7. Candidate Interview

Letters of recommendation are only available to the search committee, not to others in the department. In addition, the process does not indicate when letters are requested – please clarify if the timing of is decided by the search committee (with application, when shortlisted, etc.).

Section 8. Selection of Chair

Having the entire department vote on acceptability of candidates gives equal voice to those who have participated broadly in the search and those who have participated minimally. Indicate that feedback is solicited, including on the acceptability of the candidates.

Section 8. Selection of Chair continued

Add “The search committee will, after considering input from constituents of the unit, prepare a report on the strengths and weaknesses of candidates that the committee finds to be acceptable”.

Add provision for dean to meet with the search committee if requested by the dean or by the search committee.

Section 9. Unsuccessful Search

Replace the word ‘fail’ with alternative wording. For example, ‘Should the dean not appoint a chair following the search,’

Section 10. Appointment of Interim or Acting Chairs

Replace ‘...search has failed.’ with ‘search has not yielded a suitable candidate’.

Change to reflect that any Acting Chair is appointed by the Dean. Clarify that appointment of an Acting Chair only occurs in situations where the chair is not able to serve (as opposed to choosing to take a break in duties).

I concur X do not concur with the provost’s recommendation as stated in this memo.

Richard Koubek, President

Date



Michigan Tech

University Senate

DATE: April 18, 2024
TO: Richard Koubek, President
FROM: Robert Hutchinson
University Senate President
SUBJECT: Proposal 23-24
COPIES: Andrew Storer, Provost & Senior VP for Academic Affairs

At its meeting on April 17, 2024, the University Senate approved Proposal 23-24, "Modify Senate Procedure 805.1.1: Search Procedures for Departmental Chairs." Feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

University Senate of Michigan Technological University

Proposal 23-24

Modify Senate Procedure 805.1.1: Search Procedures for Departmental Chairs

(Voting Units: Full Senate)

Senate Procedure 805.1.1: Search Procedures for Departmental Chairs

Search Procedure for Department Chairs

1. Who can Vote

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

When a new Chair must be selected, the Dean of the College will visit the department and discuss whether the search will be open or restricted only to internal candidates from the Michigan Tech community. The College Dean will consider the will of the faculty and, after consultation with the Provost, will determine if the search will be an internal only or an open search. Both external candidates and current Michigan Tech faculty are encouraged to apply for any open search since the decision is made here only in reference to the publication and marketing of the search and eligibility to apply.

3. Search Committee Makeup

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 of more than

twelve faculty members will have a committee of at least four. No committee member can be considered as a candidate.

3.2. At-Large Representative

Whatever the department's size, the College dean will appoint one additional person from outside the department.

3.3. Staff Representative

If the department has staff, one staff member should be elected by the staff to be on the committee.

3.4. Student representatives

The individuals initiating the search will ask the Undergraduate Student Government and Graduate Student Government to each elect one Committee representative and one alternative. Both representatives should be enrolled in the department and will vote except in the case of a simple majority vote.

3.5. Human Resources and Equal Opportunity Compliance and Title IX Representatives

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

3.6. Committee Chair

The committee will elect the search committee chair at its first meeting. The dean may also make arrangements through the outgoing department chair to reduce the service load of the selected committee chair.

At the search committee's first convening, a Human Resources representative will be invited to review appropriate hiring procedures and ensure all search committee members have completed the required search committee 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

The chair of the search committee must 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 outside the candidate pool) and the Dean, will produce the first draft of the position description and advertisement. The Search Committee will complete the Position Authorization Form and send it to the Human Resources Office. The Committee is responsible for ensuring the search conforms to current legal requirements and 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 position's minimum qualifications. If necessary, to determine which candidates to invite to campus, the Committee may schedule and conduct screening interviews with a select pool of candidates (usually more than three and less than ten). The identity of those interviewed will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law.

The selected short-listed candidates will be invited to campus for an interview. If the search is only internal, all applicants who meet the minimum required qualifications will be on the shortlist of candidates.

7. Candidate Interview

Each candidate's application materials on the shortlist will be available to all departmental faculty and staff. The letters of recommendation will be accessible to department members, but the letters cannot be copied. The candidates will be informed of this requirement. They will be furnished with copies of the position description, departmental charter, statements of departmental goals, and other recent information about the department. If a recommendation letter is from a current Michigan Tech faculty member and the letter can be written so there is no concern about sharing with department faculty and staff, Human Resources or the search committee chair can redact parts of the letter to protect the author's identity. Alternatively, the 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:

- A technical presentation on their field of specialization that includes trends, directions, and opportunities for research in that field.
- 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; and the resources needed to attain the goals.

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

8. Selection of Chair

8.1 After the candidates have completed their interviews, the Search Committee will arrange a faculty and staff meeting 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 of the voting members of the unit by secret ballot for each candidate to determine if the candidate is acceptable or unacceptable to serve as Department Chair (See Section 11). The search committee will tabulate the votes. The search committee will prepare committee recommendations based on ballot results and strengths 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 only be deemed acceptable if a majority of voting members actually vote. No candidate will be deemed acceptable for the department chair who does not obtain a simple majority vote of the faculty who have voted.

8.3 The Dean will select their recommended candidate from the final list of acceptable candidates provided by the search committee or ask that the search be reopened or restarted (Section 9). The Dean will inform the candidate that the Dean will attempt to obtain independent assessments from references not listed by the candidate. Before beginning negotiations with any candidate, the Dean will forward the committee's recommendation and information through their supervisory chain of command. All academic administrators serve in their administrative roles at the pleasure of the University's president. The Dean will convey the committee's recommendation and their recommendation to the Provost and President. Upon approval, the Dean will begin negotiating with the selected candidate.

8.4 The Dean is responsible for making the appointment subject to the approval of the Provost and President. Before 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 Notes must be kept for three years.

9. Unsuccessful Search

If the Department finds no acceptable candidates following the interviews or the Dean cannot proceed based on the list of candidates provided, the Dean may reopen the search for additional candidates or restart the process. Should the Dean fail the search, they will announce the action and rationale for the action at a department faculty and staff meeting promptly. If a search has failed, a new search will begin at the earliest possible opportunity. The Dean will appoint an Interim Chair as provided by Section 10.

10. Appointment of Interim or Acting Chairs:

When it is evident that the Department Chair can only perform their duties for up to 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.

An Interim Chair differs 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 some 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 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.

11. Procedure for Conducting Secret Ballots

The chair of the department chair Search Committee will notify the Senate administrative assistant to conduct a secret ballot for voting on each candidate to determine if the candidate is acceptable or unacceptable to serve as Department Chair. There is a quorum if at least half of the department's voting members vote. If there is no quorum, a new vote will be taken when a quorum is believed to be available.