

From: APAFT Committee

To: Executive Committee

Date: Jan 25, 2010

Re: Report on Charge 5 of the APAFT Committee

Charge 5: Research policies for term limits of department chairs and deans at other institutions and bring information forward for discussion.

Discussion: There are no widely used term limits for department chairs and deans. Below are some instances of the term limits.

Department of Mathematics at the University of Alaska Fairbanks has a two-term limit for the department head. Scripps College uses a one-term rotating system for department chairs. University of California San Diego uses a flexible 3 to 5 year term for department chairs that can be renewed. In Portland State University, department chairs are elected or reelected solely by the department.

Evergreen State College has a rotating system for the deans and their responsibilities are for specific administrative functions and not an academic division. According to the article <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/1722/Academic-Dean.html>, academic deans rarely serve more than 10 years. At Simon Fraser University, after a wide ranging discussion a two-term limit for chairs and deans was put forward, but the Faculty Association President recommended what can be called increased shared governance by faculty, better communication, and training for chairs and deans in lieu of term limits. See <http://sfufa.ca/WhitePaperChairs.pdf>.

Conclusions: There are no standard policies for term limits of department chairs and deans. If a chair or dean is doing an excellent job and has the strong support of the faculty, he/she should not be limited in number of terms. However, without strong faculty input in the review process; it might not be possible to know if chairs and deans enjoy the support of the faculty. Also, it is important for each department and college to develop faculty members with expertise in department/college/university policies and administration and more opportunities to serve as a chair or a dean would be helpful in this regard. Based on these the committee recommends

1. Increased attention to faculty input on selection, evaluation and reappointment of department chairs and deans.
2. A question regarding reappointment and/or level of confidence to be added to the dean evaluation instrument. (The chair evaluation instrument already has such a question.)
3. In addition to step 2, improve the evaluation instrument for deans. APAFT will make a separate report on this issue.
4. A higher standard for reappointment than initial selection of chairs or deans after two terms, for example 60% approval rate rather than the minimum 50% rate for chairs.