1. GENERAL

Shared governance cannot exist in the absence of mutual trust. Broad faculty participation in the process will enhance the institution’s reputation, aid in recruiting the best faculty, promote a positive relationship between the faculty and the university administration, and ensure that all levels of the university function effectively.

The following principles and procedures are based on an assumption of mutual trust between the faculty and the administration of Texas A&M University. While the appointment and retention decisions for department heads is vested in the college dean, who may consider the view of other stakeholders, the principle of shared governance in the academy requires that the faculty of the department play an essential role in the selection of its department head.

For the purposes of this document, “faculty” shall mean those persons eligible to vote for members of the Faculty Senate. Violations of the principles or the spirit of these procedures and any other improprieties in the selection, evaluation, and retention of department heads shall be reported to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate.

2. SELECTION

2.1 When a vacancy occurs or is imminent, a search committee shall be appointed by the dean according to the provisions of this Rule, and the search for a new permanent department head shall begin promptly. The size and precise makeup of the search committee will vary according to circumstances, but a majority of the members will be faculty in the department. A majority of the faculty members from the department must be elected by the faculty of that department. The rest may be appointed by the dean. The balance of the committee members should broadly represent the college’s constituencies.

2.2 If necessary, the dean may appoint an interim head for a period not to exceed one year. The faculty should have an opportunity to nominate candidates for this position. The dean may appoint, or reappoint, an interim head only after giving the department’s faculty an opportunity to evaluate and vote on the acceptability of an interim head proposed by the dean.

2.3 During the search for a permanent head, the search committee shall take into account the rights of the individual candidates and the laws of Texas concerning open records. Curricula vitae and all other non-confidential material shall be made available for examination by the faculty.

2.4 Members of the departmental faculty shall be provided an opportunity to meet with the candidates and vote on the acceptability of each candidate after all candidates have been interviewed. Faculty shall be given at least one week to vote. Voting will be by secret ballot. The ballots shall be collected by a person chosen by the search committee. Ballots will be kept in a secure place, and measures will be taken to ensure that each
eligible faculty member votes at most once.

2.5 Members of the search committee shall tabulate the ballots. The results of the vote described in section 2.4 shall be reported to the departmental faculty within one week of the end of the balloting period. No other information shall be disclosed by the search committee. The Dean of Faculties and the Provost shall also be informed of the results. The ballots shall be kept in the Dean of Faculties’ office for three years.

2.6 After all the steps in sections 2.4 and 2.5 are completed, the committee shall deliver a report to the dean providing descriptions of each finalist’s strengths and weaknesses, and a committee recommendation. Only those candidates who are acceptable to the majority of the departmental faculty expressing an opinion may be sent to the dean as finalists. The committee may conclude that one or more candidates who are acceptable to the majority of the departmental faculty are not acceptable to the committee; if so these candidate names will not be forwarded. At the committee's discretion, the recommendation may include a ranking.

2.7 All deliberations and decisions of the search committee are privileged and confidential. No member is allowed to divulge any information discussed in its meetings, other than the results of the faculty poll.

2.8 The dean may take into consideration the entire spectrum of viewpoints from many stakeholders. The Dean shall recommend the appointment of a new department head to the Provost from the list of finalists.

2.9 The dean shall provide the committee with an explanation of the action taken on its report. If no acceptable appointment can be made from the list of acceptable candidates, the search process and above procedures shall be repeated.

3. EVALUATION AND RETENTION

The evaluation of department heads should serve to improve performance and enhance professional development. In addition it should promote a sense of shared values between the faculty, department heads, deans, and the University administration. The administrative officers responsible for evaluation shall determine faculty sentiment concerning incumbent department heads and seriously take such sentiment into account. However it is anticipated that the sentiment of other important constituencies shall be considered as well.

3.1 With the approval of the Provost, the initial appointment of a department head shall be four years renewable under the provisions of this rule. Heads normally will serve two consecutive terms, but the dean may recommend reappointment for a third term if the faculty concurs.

3.2 The Dean shall initiate a preliminary review of a new department head at approximately the 24th month of service. Thereafter formal reviews should occur every fourth year of the department head’s term in office. The results of these reviews shall be reported to the department faculty within 4 months of the initiation of the review process.

3.3 All reviews shall include an opportunity for department faculty members to present their views to the dean including, but not limited to, an opinion of whether the department head should continue in office. Individual expressions of opinion shall be made in confidence, subject to the limitations of the Public Information Act.

Office of Responsibility:
Dean of Faculties