

College of Engineering

Procedures for Periodic Review of Department Heads

Virginia Tech Policy 6100 provides guidelines for the periodic evaluation of academic department heads. The department head evaluation will follow the general guidelines provided in the Virginia Tech faculty handbook and in Policy No 6100.

The purpose of the periodic review is to support the success of the university's academic units by providing developmental feedback to promote fair and effective academic leadership.

This document provides implementation details for the review of department heads in the College of Engineering (COE). The COE aims for each review to be informative without being overly burdensome. Reviews should be completed within a twelve-week timeframe.

Mechanism for Initiating the Review

Under normal circumstances, the review should be conducted in the fifth year after appointment or reappointment. At their discretion, the Dean may initiate an evaluation at any time or at the request of one-third of the tenure-track faculty in the department. A department head in their first term may also request an earlier informal review to provide a midterm assessment of their performance. If in the final year of a DH's appointment, a reappointment is not sought or will not be offered, then the Dean may elect to forgo the review.

The Dean will notify each department head well in advance of the review. The Office of the Dean will be responsible for initiating the regular review of the department head.

Following the establishment of the evaluation team, the Dean will meet with the evaluation team to explain the expectations and purpose of the review, to discuss the evaluation procedures, and to elect a chair from among the departmental representatives.

The evaluation is conducted by the Dean with input from the Departmental Evaluation Team.

The Departmental Evaluation Team

The dean will appoint a committee to conduct the review after soliciting input from the department's full-time faculty.

Typically, the committee will consist of:

- three to five full-time instructional and teaching/research faculty (a majority of whom must be tenured), selected by the departmental faculty
- a staff or AP faculty member from the department, selected by the departmental staff and/or AP faculty
- one senior faculty member from another department within the College that is acceptable to the department representatives on the committee, the Department Head under review, and the Dean, and
- one associate dean appointed by the Dean

The dean may appoint additional members if he or she believes they will improve the review process.

The Dean will identify the planned composition of the review committee to the department head under review. The department head has the right to challenge any member of the review committee. This challenge must be in writing to the dean within five working days of being notified of the committee's planned composition. The dean, having evaluated the challenge, will provide a response to the department head under review, within 5 days. The dean may choose, or not choose, to modify the composition of the committee based on the challenge.

The evaluation team must reflect the diversity of the departmental faculty. The department may consider nominating someone to serve on the evaluation team that also serves on the departmental diversity committee.

The evaluation team is responsible for collecting information, preparing a report for the Dean, and for delivering the departmental results of the evaluation to the faculty and staff of the department.

Criteria

The department head should be evaluated in their capacity as the administrative leader of the department. As an academic leader, the head is responsible for understanding current issues facing research-active academic departments. The review will not evaluate the administrator's teaching, research or discipline related service activities but instead review administrative activities and the accomplishments of the unit the administrator oversees.

Following are examples of typical evaluation criteria. The Dean will discuss these and other criteria during the initial meeting with the evaluation team.

- Communication
- Execution of strategic initiatives
- Faculty development, evaluation, and recruitment
- Management of academic programs and directions
- Management of research programs and directions
- Management and generation of department resources
- Morale and attitude
- Staff recruitment, evaluation and development
- Vision

Scope of Input

All faculty and staff in the department should be invited to participate in the review process. Others providing input could include faculty and administrators from outside the department or college, alumni, students, and other interested parties from in or outside the University, such as advisory board members.

The only input to be considered in the evaluation is that which deals specifically with the ability and performance of the individual.

The evaluation team will make a concerted effort to ensure there is a high (more than fifty percent) response rate by the departmental faculty and staff (more than 50% in each category). A survey must be used to collect quantitative data. In carrying out a review of the department head, the goal is to assess performance, not popularity. The evaluation will include a meeting with the department head early in the process to obtain a description of the personal goals and objectives of the past term. This information should highlight areas of progress, or lack of progress. The department head will also provide an up-to-date resume.

The evaluation team may also consider the information generated by the ABET departmental review and by the external evaluation of the graduate program. Both of these reviews provide a view of the department by individuals that are external to the university. While these do not focus directly on the performance of the department head, they may provide useful information of the progress and direction of the department at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

The evaluation team keeps confidential all information it gathers. The report of the team shall likewise be confidential and all notes of the team members will be destroyed at the completion of the process. The evaluation team will not keep a copy of the report.

Reporting

- The evaluation team prepares a report for the dean. The report is typically 2-3 pages long and may include an appendix with documents such as survey results.
- At the discretion of the dean, the dean meets with the evaluation team for an in-depth discussion and interpretation of the results.
- The dean and chair of the evaluation team meet with the department head to present and discuss the results of the evaluation.
- The Dean sends a letter to the department head summarizing the outcome of the evaluation.
- The dean and evaluation team meet with the departmental faculty and staff and provide an appropriate overview of the department head evaluation.