

STEPHEN F. AUSTIN  
STATE UNIVERSITY

Office of the General Counsel

**POLICY SUMMARY FORM**

**Policy Name:** Administration of Academic Units

**Policy Number:** 4.4

**Is this policy new, being reviewed/revised, or deleted?** Review/Revise

**Date of last revision, if applicable:** 1/31/2017

**Unit(s) Responsible for Policy Implementation:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Purpose of Policy (what does it do):** Outlines the responsibilities, selection, and evaluation of academic unit heads

**Reason for the addition, revision, or deletion (check all that apply):**

- Scheduled Review       Change in law       Response to audit finding  
 Internal Review       Other, please explain:

*Please complete the appropriate section:*

**Specific rationale for new policy:**

**Specific rationale for each substantive revision:** Revisions include basic edits for clarification purposes and incorporation of policy 4.2. (Academic Unit Head Appointment). It is recommended that the policy be renamed to Academic Unit Head - Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation.

**Specific rationale for deletion of policy:**

*Additional Comments:*

Reviewers:

Academic Policy Committee  
Steve Bullard, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs  
Damon Derrick, General Counsel

## ***Administration of Academic Unit Head - Responsibilities, Selection, and Evaluation Academic Units***

**Original Implementation:** March 7, 1978

**Last Revision:** ~~January 31, 2017~~ October 28, 2019

The unit head is the chief executive of an academic department/division/school (hereafter referred to as “academic unit” or “unit”).

### Responsibilities of the Unit Head

The primary responsibilities of the unit head are to establish and maintain a climate conducive to the pursuit of knowledge. The decisions of the unit head should be made and implemented in the context of collegiality and regular communication. ~~with the faculty.~~ More specifically, the administrative responsibilities of a unit head include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Provide leadership in the establishment of a visionary direction and the maintenance of standards for the academic unit, consistent with college and university missions;
- Serve as the principal advocate for the unit and as an advocate for the college and university missions;
- Ensure quality through evaluation, modification, and development of academic programs;
- Respond to the needs of students, faculty, administration, the public, and others;
- Manage and allocate fiscal and physical resources of the unit;
- Establish, maintain, and communicate effective personnel *management* procedures and processes; and
- Promote the academic unit externally.

### Selection of the Academic Unit Head

1. A search and screening committee ~~shall~~*will* be used in each search for an academic unit head. The dean of the college ~~shall~~*will* meet with the faculty of the academic unit prior to the selection of the screening committee and will determine whether a search should be open or closed to outside candidates.
2. The committee ~~shall~~*will* be formed by the dean of the college in consultation with the faculty of the academic unit and with the approval of the provost and vice president for academic affairs. The committee ~~shall~~*will* have an odd number of members, with at least five members. The committee may be larger depending on the size and complexity of the unit’s programs.
3. Every committee ~~shall~~*will* have representation from outside the academic unit and at least one member with appropriate administrative experience. Outside representatives ~~shall~~*will* be appointed by the dean after considering recommendations by the faculty.
4. Once the size of the committee is established, the faculty ~~shall~~*will* elect its specified number of representatives to the committee. Faculty members eligible to vote ~~shall~~*will* hold faculty rank of instructor, assistant professor, associate professor, professor, or librarian I-IV in the academic unit. When possible, all tenure-track ranks will be represented on the committee. In all cases, the faculty ~~shall~~*will* elect a majority of the committee.

5. The dean ~~shall~~*will* convene the committee for its organizational meeting at which time the committee ~~shall~~*will* elect its chair and other officers. The committee chair ~~shall~~*will* inform the faculty of the names of the committee members.
6. ~~At least three e~~Candidates ~~should be invited brought~~ to campus for interviews *will be provided ample opportunity to meet faculty, students, dean of the college, provost and vice-president for academic affairs and the committee.*

~~Each visit shall provide opportunity for the candidates to meet faculty, students, the dean of the college, the provost and vice president for academic affairs, and the committee.~~

6.—

7. Following the interviews, the committee ~~shall~~*will* invite comments from all faculty, staff, and students who were involved in the campus visits. The committee ~~shall~~*will* forward a recommendation to the dean along with a summary of comments. The dean, in turn, ~~shall~~*will* forward a recommendation to the provost and vice president for academic affairs that is accompanied by all previous recommendations and summaries.
8. The provost and vice president for academic affairs ~~shall~~*will* make the appointment for an indeterminate term, subject to approval by the president and the Board of Regents.

#### Academic Unit Head Appointments

*Academic unit heads may be hired under either an eleven-month or twelve-month contract.*

*Academic unit heads under an eleven-month contract are expected to be on duty each work-day within the contract period when classes are in session. It is the responsibility of academic unit heads to ensure that ongoing academic unit obligations are met during their absence. Vacation time is not accrued under an eleven-month appointment. Sick leave is earned according to the schedule for Texas state employees. Academic unit heads under an eleven-month contract are also subject to being called upon to address a task or issue outside the normal work-day when it is determined by the dean to be in the best interest of the university. Academic unit heads who are appointed for eleven months should have no university duties during the equivalent of one calendar month (twenty-one work-days throughout the year). The twenty-one days will be logged in the academic unit office and approved by the respective dean prior to taking leave from duties.*

*Academic unit heads under a twelve-month contract are expected to be on duty each work-day. Vacation and sick leave are earned according to the schedule for Texas state employees. Academic unit heads are subject to being called upon to address a task or issue outside the normal work-day when it is determined by the dean to be in the best interest of the university.*

#### Evaluation of the Academic Unit Head

The evaluation of the academic unit heads is designed to promote academic excellence throughout the university. This process takes two forms: periodic reviews by the academic unit faculty and annual reviews by the dean. The annual review provides the basis upon which to award merit to unit heads.

1. The unit head ~~shall~~*will* be evaluated annually by the dean of the college. ~~and a recommendation for merit shall be forwarded to the provost and vice president for academic affairs.~~ In making an evaluation, the dean ~~shall~~*will* consider the responsibilities of the unit head as stated above, while any additional criteria ~~shall~~*will* be communicated to the unit heads in advance of the evaluation period.
2. ~~After the completion of the first year and~~ *At* at least once every three years *thereafter*, the unit head's performance ~~shall~~*will* be evaluated by the faculty of the academic unit. A summation of the faculty's evaluations of the unit head ~~shall~~*will* be included as a component of the final evaluation report. Following the faculty's evaluation, the dean ~~shall~~*will* meet with the unit to discuss the unit head's performance.
3. The evaluation of a unit head may be initiated at any time by a majority of the faculty or at the call of the unit head, dean, provost and vice president of academic affairs, or president. Comments which may have been received relative to the unit head's performance and the advisability of retention should be carefully weighed for both the annual and triennial reviews.
4. The dean ~~shall~~*will* review with the unit head the results of each evaluation. A report of the evaluation and any recommendations ~~shall~~*will* be submitted to the provost and vice president for academic affairs.
5. The unit head ~~shall~~*will* have ten (10) working days from the date of the review to submit to the provost and vice president for academic affairs a written response to the dean's report.

#### Merit for Academic Unit Heads

Merit pay for unit heads ~~should~~*will* be based on *the annual performance evaluation conducted by the dean, in administration, teaching, creative/scholarly activity, and service.* The dean ~~shall~~*will* submit a recommendation on each unit head in the college to the provost and vice president for academic affairs for merit consideration.

#### Teaching Load for Academic Unit Heads

The teaching load of academic unit heads is determined annually by the college dean in consultation with the academic unit head based on the changing needs and objectives of the unit. Factors such as number of faculty (full-time equivalent [FTE]), number of majors, and complexity of the unit are considered in determining the teaching load of the unit head for the full contract year (September 1 through August 31).

**Cross Reference:** Faculty Handbook, Faculty Merit Pay (7.6); *Faculty Workload (7.13); Sick Leave (12.18)*

**Responsible for Implementation:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Contact for Revision:** Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Forms:** Department Chair Administrative Effectiveness Appraisal

**Board Committee Assignment: Academic and Student Affairs**