

CHAPTER 4

4. ORGANIZATION OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

4.1. Introduction

The Provost and Executive Vice -President for Academic Affairs is the chief academic officer of the university. The Provost holds a tenured professorship appointment. Reporting to the Provost are the Associate Provosts, the Deans of the Colleges and the Dean of Professional and Continuing Studies, the Dean of Graduate Studies, and the Chief Information Officer (CIO). Academic Directors reporting to the Provost include the Directors of Institutional Research and Assessment, Library, Disability Services, Testing Services, Office of International Engagement, and the Registrar. The processes for selection, appointment, and reappointment of Deans are given in Appendix A and those for the CIO and Directors are given in Appendix B.

4.2. Academic Colleges

Within Academic Affairs, there are six degree granting colleges: Business Administration; Education; Engineering; Arts , Humanities, and Social Sciences; Nursing; and Science. Also within Academic Affairs are the Honors College, the School of Graduate Studies, and the Library. The Colleges of Education; Engineering; Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences; and Science have departments headed by chairs who report to the dean. The six degree granting colleges administer courses of instruction leading to the baccalaureate degree and furnish courses of instruction and faculty in support of graduate degrees administered by the School of Graduate Studies. Academic Departments serve the dual functions of administering courses of instruction leading to degrees and of leading faculty, students, and staff.

4.3. Responsibilities and Duties of a Dean

An academic dean is the chief administrative and academic officer of a college. He or she functions under the supervision of the Provost and needs to have a suitable working relationship with the Provost. The appointment may potentially be up to five years and is subject to reassignment at any time by the Provost with the concurrence of the President, after consultation with the faculty of the college. Deans sit on the Provost's academic council. A dean holds a tenured faculty appointment in an academic department.

A dean is responsible for strategic planning for the college, for the administration of college operations, and for leadership of the college and its faculty, staff and students. The dean is the chief academic and operating officer of the college and has overall responsibility for instructional, research, and service programs; college student services and academic advising; faculty and staff personnel procedures; and budgetary matters. However, as responsibility for

program policies, procedures, and curricula; grading standards; instructional delivery style; and other academic freedom-related areas rests with faculty of the programs, the dean cannot override traditional prerogatives of the faculty. Information concerning the specific responsibilities and duties of a dean as chief operating officer is available in the Office of the Provost.

A dean communicates to faculty and students in the college, university colleagues, alumni, the community, and the disciplines or professions. The dean provides leadership to his/her college faculty and staff in the development, operation, and improvement of academic and research programs; develops and recommends to the Provost budgets for departments, programs and academic support areas; provides comprehensive programs of academic advising that involve the faculty and academic advisors and supports the university's student recruitment and retention programs; makes recommendations to the Provost for appointments, promotions, tenure, sabbaticals, and terms of employment for faculty and staff within the college; and reviews and recommends actions on faculty leaves and faculty exchanges to the Provost. The procedures on selection, appointment, evaluation and reassignment of a dean are given in Appendix A.

Assistant or associate deans are appointed by the dean after consulting with the Provost and the faculty of the affected college. The appointment may potentially be up to five years and is subject to reassignment at any time by the Dean. Normally the appointment of an assistant or associate dean occurs as the result of an internal search; however, external searches may be conducted with the approval of the Provost. Assistant and/or associate deans assist the dean with planning, budget development, personnel matters, student and faculty recruitment and retention, program administration, development, and evaluation, academic advising, and supervision of support functions. An assistant or associate dean holds an academic appointment in the college in which he or she serves. Appendix A describes the procedures on evaluation of assistant and associate deans.

4.4. Establishment, Review, and Dissolution of a Department or College

A department may be formed only within a college. The department is both an academic unit and an administrative unit of the college. A department has a sufficient number of faculty to be a viable organizational unit and typically offers at least one major or program for an undergraduate or graduate degree. If a new department or college is formed, or if a unit is merged, tenured faculty members transferring to the new or merged department or college will have their tenure transferred.

The performance and relevance of a department are reviewed at least every ten years or in conjunction with a department's professional accreditation review cycle, according to the program review description in Section 4.8. Findings and recommendations of review committees are submitted to the Provost. After consultation with the faculty, Department Chair, and Dean, and agreement with the President, the Provost may recommend that a department be continued. Based essentially on educational considerations arising from the review, or for financial exigency reasons, the Provost may decide to reorganize, merge or discontinue a

program, department or college. Examples of educational considerations include program viability, the need to avoid duplication, or to strengthen related programs and does not include cyclical or temporary variations in enrollment. When the Provost with the concurrence of the President decides to merge or discontinue a program, department, or college, the Provost will seek the advice of administrators and faculty within the university, including the Faculty Senate and the appropriate faculty committee(s). The Provost will ensure that the faculty and staff who might be affected by the reorganization, merger, or discontinuance of programs are consulted before a final decision is announced. The decision will consider the needs of the current students and will provide every opportunity for the students currently enrolled in that program to graduate or transfer to another major with the intent not to slow their progress toward graduation and not to harm the students in any way. When the Provost announces a decision, the faculty of the program, department, or college affected by the decision have the option to file an appeal of the decision to the President within 30 days (expanded to 60 days for decisions made within 30 days of the end of spring semester or during summer). When the appeals period ends, if a final decision is reached to dissolve or merge the program, department, or college, a proposal will be forwarded to the Board of Trustees for review and approval.

Additional Considerations

The University shall make every reasonable effort to provide other suitable positions for tenured faculty members whose appointments in their present program are lost due to a decision to merge or discontinue a unit, with transferal of tenure, as noted above, for faculty transferred to other academic units. Probationary, clinical, research faculty members and other faculty on annual or multi-year appointments, whose appointments are lost due to a decision to merge or discontinue a unit, may have their appointments terminated with appropriate notification. If placement in another position at the University for a tenured faculty member would be facilitated by a reasonable period of training, financial and other essential support for such training will be offered. If no position is available within the University, with or without reasonable retraining, the tenured faculty member's appointment may be terminated. Notice of termination to faculty members will be provided consistent with policies published in the Faculty Handbook.

If the University is unable to provide suitable employment for a tenured faculty member who is displaced by the merger or discontinuance of academic units, the University shall provide at least one year of notice or at least one academic year of severance pay. In determining the date of severance and the amount of severance pay, the University will consider the faculty member's service to the University and will be mindful of the interests of the faculty members who are approaching eligibility for vesture in the retirement system or eligibility for retirement.

Any tenured faculty member whose appointment is terminated because of merger or discontinuance of a unit, or who believes changes in his/her assignments are tantamount to termination of appointment, and who questions whether the University followed the policy described in this document, is entitled to appeal to the Faculty Appeals Committee. This Committee shall function as a hearing committee and report its findings and recommendations

to the President and to the faculty member involved. The hearing will be limited to questions as to whether the University has followed policy described in this document; the decision to merge or discontinue the unit shall not be at issue. The hearing need not conform in all respects to a formal proceedings; however, it shall provide the essentials of an on-the-record adjudicative hearing. Upon receiving the recommendations of the committee, the President will make a decision regarding the appointment of the faculty member. The decision of the President shall be final.

4.5. Responsibilities and Duties of a Department Chair

A department chair provides academic and administrative leadership for the department. He or she represents the department faculty, maintains a suitable working relationship with the dean, and is accountable to the university administration for implementing the plans, goals, and policies of the University. The appointment may potentially be up to four years

The chair has administrative responsibility for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the department's instructional, research and service programs. Department chairs have the responsibility to provide leadership in formulating and implementing departmental goals and long-range plans; to represent the department internally within the administrative and governance structures of the university and externally with professional and community groups; to ensure that high standards are maintained in curricula, course content, and instruction while promoting student success and retention; to provide a communication link between and among the faculty and the other levels of administration; to prepare course schedules, assign courses and teaching loads, and recommend course scheduling to the dean within the context of meeting student needs; to develop an outstanding faculty of teacher-scholars by encouraging and facilitating their professional development; and to promote an academic environment that is scholarly and humanistic and that affirms the university's nondiscriminatory policies. Department chairs are obligated to build a department strong in teaching capacity; in scholarship and/or creative activity; and in service. This obligation to follow the mission of the department must be thoughtfully considered and respected by faculty and administration. Department chairs are expected to be active participants in all departmental activities and a visible presence in the department. The procedures on selection, appointment, evaluation, and reassignment of a department chair are given in Appendix B.

4.6. An Academic Program outside the Departmental Structure

Occasionally the university needs to establish an academic program outside the departmental structure, typically for an interdisciplinary program. In such cases, faculty from two or more departments staff the program. A program may be formed within a college or between colleges. The program proposal must identify one department as the primary unit for administrative purposes. The proposal for a new program must follow the current guidelines approved by the university and the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama. A faculty member does not earn tenure in an academic program outside the departmental structure. The administrative

officer of the program is the program chair. The program chair reports to a dean who, with the program chair, selects faculty members to form the program committee. The program committee establishes academic policies and procedures and acts on matters requiring faculty decisions. After the program is fully operational, the program faculty or an elected program committee conducts the program.

4.6.1. Responsibilities and Duties of a Program Chair

The program chair provides academic leadership to the program and is accountable to the dean of the college and to the university administration for implementing the plans, goals, and policies of the university. The program chair has administrative responsibility for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the program's instructional, research, and service components. The procedures on selection, appointment, evaluation, and reassignment of a program chair are in Appendix B.

4.7. Cooperative, Joint, and Shared Programs

In keeping with stated policy of the Board of Trustees, the university engages in cooperative, joint, and shared programs. Such programs shall follow the stated policy of The Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama and the Alabama Commission on Higher Education Academic Policies/Operational Definitions.

4.8. Comprehensive Program Review

A comprehensive review to evaluate academic programs will be undertaken by the Provost, at least every ten years or in conjunction with the discipline's professional accreditation review cycle. As part of the review process, the unit conducts a self-study. A review committee of faculty along with an external consultant writes reports addressing strengths and weaknesses of the program. Findings and recommendations are submitted to the Provost. Details of the review procedures and follow-up actions are in the Manual for Comprehensive Academic Program Review found in the Office of the Provost or offices of the Deans.

4.9. Responsibilities of the CIO and Academic Director

The academic directors listed in Section 4.1, as well as the CIO, provide academic leadership to their unit and are accountable to the Provost and to the university administration for implementing the plans, goals, and policies of the university. The academic director has academic and administrative responsibility for ensuring the quality and effectiveness of the unit's mission and functions including but not limited to the unit's functional, administrative, instructional, research, and service components. The procedures on selection, appointment, evaluation, and reassignment of an academic director are in Appendix B.

4.10. Other Academic Units Reporting to the Provost

4.10.1. Institute for Science Education

The Institute for Science Education (ISE) was established in 1990 to provide a mechanism to assist in solving problems in precollege science and mathematics education. The institute works cooperatively with the Colleges of Science, Engineering, and Education and the Division of Professional and Continuing Studies. In carrying out its mission to provide leadership and coordination for projects and programs to effect improvement of precollege science and mathematics education, the ISE works closely with all appropriate elements of business, government, and industry.

4.10.2. Alabama Space Grant Consortium

The Alabama Space Grant Consortium includes seven Ph.D. granting universities, all with space-related research activities. The university is the lead institution. Other members are Alabama A&M University, Auburn University, The University of Alabama, The University of Alabama at Birmingham, Tuskegee University, and the University of South Alabama. The Consortium awards fellowships, scholarships, and research grants, as well as provides support for seminars, workshops, and educational outreach programs. There is an active program to recruit individuals from traditionally underrepresented groups into careers in aerospace science, technology, and allied fields.

4.10.3 Ombudsperson

The ombudsperson is usually a faculty member and is selected, appointed, and reappointed according to the same procedures as for Academic Directors in Appendix B. The ombudsperson's appointment is typically a one-third time appointment during the academic year.