**NAU Internal Selection Process for Academic Unit Leaders**

# **Background Information**

Appointed academic unit leaders such as chairs, directors, assistant deans, and associate deans are administrative employees and thus subject to the ABOR *Conditions of Administrative Service* (COAS), [Policy 6-101](https://public.azregents.edu/Policy%20Manual/6-101-Conditions%20of%20Administrative%20Service.pdf). Normally, academic unit leaders also continue to serve in their faculty position, which is subject to ABOR and NAU *Conditions of Faculty Service*.

Distribution of effort for faculty is documented in a *Statement of Expectations* and evaluated during annual review, which is conducted and archived in FAAR. The assigned portion of workload for administrative work shall be documented in section “D. Other” on the SOE. Additionally, deans shall develop a goals document for the administrative tasks to be performed. These goals will serve as the basis for the evaluation [“appraisal”] of the administrative work. The goals document and appraisal shall be archived outside of FAAR, in the faculty member’s personnel file in the dean’s office.

ABOR COAS establishes that

* “The president shall establish procedures for securing recommendations for appointments to administrative positions. Appointments become effective when approved by the president.” [C.1.a]
* “All administrative employees receive each year an appointment for an academic year or for a fiscal year beginning July 1 or a portion thereof. Appointments and reappointments shall not be for more than one fiscal year.” [C.2]
* “Duties and responsibilities of an administrative employee shall consist of those assigned by the president. All duties and responsibilities shall be carried out under the direction of the president who may alter or amend assigned duties or change titles at any time.” [F.1]
* “Performance of assigned duties by administrative employees shall be subject to evaluation by the president and performance shall be considered in decisions relating to compensation, retention, termination or a decision not to reappoint.” [F.2]
* “Decisions relating to reappointment shall be made in accordance with university rules and procedures developed by the president. The decision of the president not to reappoint is final.” [G.1]
* “An administrative employee has no expectation of continued employment and shall not be entitled to a hearing following or prior to a decision of non-reappointment. An administrative employee whose appointment is not renewed shall not be entitled to a statement of reasons for that action.” [G.2]

## ***Guiding Principles* for all NAU Searches**

**The recruitment, selection, and hiring of all employees, heretofore called the “search process,” is conducted in accordance with the NAU Diversity Strategic Plan, the core principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ), and the following guiding principles:**

* **Cultural Inclusivity:** We actively foster a climate of universal access and respect for underrepresented perspectives, cultures, and experiences in all stages of the search process.
* **Shared Responsibility and Accountability:** Through intentional checks and balances everyone involved in the search process holds themselves accountable to their role in the process and to each of the core and guiding principles, including furthering the institution’s hiring goals towards becoming a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and just environment. Central offices provide regular oversight on individual and organizational compliance with the search core and guiding principles and search policies and procedures.
* **Transparency, Consistency, and Timeliness:** Search policies and procedures promote fair, efficient, timely and thorough searches, and are consistent with other related policies, procedures, and legal requirements including, but not limited to, affirmative action, nondiscrimination, and equal opportunity laws and regulations.
* **Flexibility and Measurability:** Search procedures are regularly reviewed and revised to meet the evolving needs of the NAU community and DEIJ philosophies, and data informs decision-making.
* **Integrity:** As individuals and as an organization, we are honest in our communications and actions both internally as well as with current and future applicants.

# **Academic Unit Leader Selection and Re-appointment Procedures**

1. The procedures listed below guide the NAU-internal competitive selection or re-appointment of academic unit leaders (AUL). The procedures are aligned with the *Guiding Principles* for all NAU searches and NAU's status as an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer. Academic units may provide additional written procedures, approved in advance by the provost and the Equity and Access Office (EAO), that are more specific than these and which do not contradict this process.
2. These procedures are intended to be continually improved. Revisions will occur through the Provost’s Office, Equity and Access Office and/or Human Resources, in consultation with the Dean’s Council, Office of General Counsel, and with final approval from the President or designee.
3. AULs who were appointed before these guidelines became effective (Spring 2022) and have served for at least 3 years shall be subject to either the competitive selection or the re-appointment process as outlined below.
4. An AUL whose term (usually three years) comes to an end shall notify the dean in writing as early as possible whether they plan to step down or continue for another appointment.
5. With as much lead time as possible, upon an upcoming or potential vacancy, the dean consults with the provost and initiates either 1) the competitive selection process or 2) the reappointment process.

## **Competitive Selection Process**

### **Initiating the Search**

1. A screening committee and chair are elected by the unit or appointed by the dean, depending on unit-level bylaws. External screening committee chairs can be appointed, if needed. The dean approves the final screening committee.
2. The dean meets with the unit faculty to discuss the challenges and opportunities the unit is likely to face during the next AUL’s term and about the qualities that candidates should possess in order to provide leadership during their term.
3. A written job description is provided to the screening committee by the dean and may be customized by the screening committee, specifying eligibility criteria including minimum and preferred qualifications. The job description shall reflect the need for candidates that are committed to the inclusivity principle. The dean approves the final job description, **and a copy is sent to EAO (see B.1.4).**
4. Deans’ office creates an ePost for tracking purposes, with optional posting to the NAU Careers page. If posted publicly, the minimum qualifications must include status as a current NAU employee as a criterion to disqualify external applicants that may apply.
5. A written announcement of the position containing the approved job description shall be made available to all unit faculty via email and include a due date for applications and nominations. Normally at least two weeks will be allowed for applications or nominations. **A copy of the announcement will be sent to EAO.**
6. At a minimum, applicants should submit a CV and letter of interest that addresses how they will further [NAU’s strategic plan](https://nau.edu/president/strategic-plan/) in the role. Faculty nominated by others are consulted to make sure that they are willing to serve and, if so, to submit their application.

### **Reviewing Candidates**

1. Screening of minimum qualifications can be done either in the dean’s office or by the screening committee. **Documentation of the screening (e.g. matrix) and candidate names and NAU ID numbers is sent to EAO.**
2. The dean approves the pool of applicants.
3. The screening committee determines [or: recommends to the dean/consults with the dean about] the most suitable vetting process (e.g. open forum, presentation) for the unit faculty and staff through which each candidate is given the opportunity to explain how they will meet the requirements of the position, e.g. how they would meet the dean’s expectations, their ideas on the future of the department, and how they would provide leadership during their term as AUL.
4. The screening committee solicits feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of candidates with regard to qualifications as stated in the job description from faculty, staff and (if relevant) students.
5. The screening committee submits all feedback collected and a written assessment of each candidate’s strengths and weaknesses to the dean **with a copy sent to EAO**.
6. The dean interviews each candidate.

### **Finalist Selection**

1. The dean reviews the screening committee’s assessment, feedback from faculty and staff (and students, if applicable) and makes a recommendation for the appointment to the provost. The provost, in consultation with the president, approves the appointment. The dean conveys the decision to the screening committee and unit and reiterates the challenges and opportunities the unit is likely to face during the next AUL’s term. **A copy of the dean’s request and Provost approvals are sent to EAO, and status codes are updated for the non-selected applicants in the ePOST.**
2. The dean creates an MOU for the next AUL’s term, including information about term length.
3. The dean establishes formal goals for the next AUL’s term, on which the performance appraisal shall be based.

### **Documentation**

1. Internal searches will conform to reporting and documentation required by the university. **The screening committee and/or the dean’s office may choose either to provide a summary document to EAO at the conclusion of the search or send documents after each stage of the process as noted above.** The summary should include the job announcement and job description (if not included in the announcement), a list of applicants with their NAU ID numbers, the method and outcome of the screening process, the recommendation for hire including the strengths and weaknesses of the candidates interviewed, and status codes for the non-selected applicants. The dean’s office will provide a summary of their recommendation for hire and the Provost’s Office approvals to EAO.

### **Extenuating Circumstances**

1. The process described above should be viewed as the typical course of events, recognizing that leadership transitions sometimes occur under unusual circumstances and/or may require adaptation to unit-level needs. For example, situations involving naming of an *Interim* Chair or Director, which are often urgent, may involve little or no input from the unit. **In these circumstances, the dean will write a memo describing the unique situation and how they made their selection to send to the Provost and EAO.**

## **Re-appointment Process**

* 1. The dean meets with the unit faculty to discuss the challenges and opportunities the unit is likely to face during the next AUL’s term and about the qualities the AUL should possess in order to provide leadership during their term.
	2. A written job description is developed by the dean or designee, reflecting the need for candidates that are committed to the inclusivity principle, and noting the goals of the position for the next term period. The dean shares the job description with the incumbent.
	3. If the incumbent AUL is willing to serve another term, the dean may seek affirmation of support from the academic unit for the reappointment in accordance with unit level bylaws.
	4. The dean reviews feedback from the unit, if applicable, and makes a recommendation for reappointment to the provost. The provost, in consultation with the president, approves the appointment. The dean conveys the decision to the unit. **The dean’s request and Provost approvals are stored in the dean’s office.**
	5. The dean creates an MOU for the next AUL’s term, including information about term length.
	6. The dean establishes formal goals for the next AUL’s term, on which the performance appraisal shall be based.