Northern Arizona University
Academic Chairs Council
Bylaws

Ratified: 7 December 2011

PREAMBLE

Northern Arizona University chairs first came together in 1996 in a grassroots effort to create a forum for chairs to discuss their common experiences and challenges. Over time, administrators and other policy-makers sought out the advice and opinion of the assembled chairs concerning proposed policy changes at the University.

The Academic Chairs Council that organically developed from these roots does not have a formal role in the faculty governance structure of the University. The formal voice of the faculty is expressed through the duly constituted Faculty Senate. The Academic Chairs Council makes no policy, has no formal authority, and enacts no binding decisions, but rather advises and makes proposals to faculty committees and the administration. It serves as the collective voice for department chairs and other academic unit directors, expressing the departmental perspective on university policies and procedures.

ARTICLE I: TITLE, MISSION and GOALS

Section 1: The name of this organization is the Academic Chairs Council (ACC).

Section 2: The mission of the Academic Chairs Council is to:

a) improve the ability of chairs and directors of academic units to accomplish their administrative responsibilities;

b) enhance communication with other university constituencies; and

c) advise university policy makers on issues relevant to chairing departments and other concerns within academic affairs.

Section 3: In fulfillment of its mission, the primary goals of the Academic Chairs Council are to:

a) ensure that members receive timely information regarding issues and developments affecting Northern Arizona University;

b) provide chairs with a forum within which to discuss their common experiences and to exchange useful information about strategies for best serving their respective departments;

c) facilitate communication between faculty, chairs, and administration;

d) facilitate and improve working conditions for chairs;
e) provide a supportive forum for discussion of challenges facing chairs at Northern Arizona University;
f) initiate proposals on issues of concern to academic departments and department chairs to faculty governance committees.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: The voting membership of the Academic Chairs Council (hereinafter referred to as “chairs”) shall consist of all permanent and interim leaders of academic units below the college level (i.e., departments, schools, and free-standing programs) who supervise and evaluate faculty, have budgetary authority for academic degree programs, and report through the Provost.

Section 2: In addition to the provisions of Article II Section 1, each unit that was represented on the ACC at the time of the approval of these Bylaws will continue to have representation on the ACC. The current leader of each such unit is a voting member of the Academic Chairs Council.

Section 3: Acknowledging the diversity of administrative units within the Division of Academic Affairs, the leader of an administrative unit within Academic Affairs whose position does not fully meet the definition of membership in Article II Section 1 may petition for membership on the ACC. Such a petition will consist of a written justification as to why the unit leader should be an ACC member in the context of the Mission and Goals of the ACC as described in Article I. Upon review of the petition, the Executive Committee of the ACC will make the decision as to whether or not to grant ACC membership to the unit leader.

Section 4: The President of the Faculty Senate or his/her designated representative shall serve as an ex officio non-voting member of the ACC.

ARTICLE III: LEADERSHIP

Section 1: The Academic Chairs Council shall appoint an Executive Director for a fixed term as described in Article V, section 1.

Section 2: The Executive Committee of the Academic Chairs Council shall consist of the Executive Director and six voting members of the ACC. On an annual basis, one voting member of the Executive Committee will be selected by the Executive Director to serve as the Associate Director.
Section 3: The duties of the Executive Director are to:
   a) oversee day-to-day communication to and from the ACC membership, bringing to the attention of the ACC membership those University issues deemed to be of importance to academic chairs;
   b) serve as liaison to the University administration, in particular represent the ACC on the Provost’s Academic Leadership Council (PALC), the President’s Cabinet, other standing and ad hoc University committees as required, and other university functions where ACC representation is appropriate;
   c) organize and chair monthly meetings of the ACC, as well as additional meetings where necessary;
   d) organize and chair meetings of the ACC Executive Committee;
   e) maintain the ACC website;
   f) prepare the regular meeting calendar for both the ACC and the Executive Committee, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee;
   g) maintain an up-to-date roster of the ACC membership;
   h) provide a draft of ACC meeting agendas to the Executive Committee for their approval;
   i) prepare and disseminate written notes summarizing the discussion after each ACC meeting.

Section 4: The duties of the Executive Committee are to:
   a) establish the agenda for regular meetings of the Academic Chairs Council;
   b) manage the business of the ACC between regular meetings;
   c) advise the Executive Director;
   d) work with the Executive Director to find ACC representatives to ad hoc and other University committees as needed;
   e) serve as the Performance Review Committee for the Executive Director (who is not a part of the committee when it is engaged in this function);
   f) serve as the Hiring Committee for a new Executive Director when the position is vacant;
   g) represent the ACC to the university administration when called upon (e.g., President’s Leadership Day).

Section 5: The duties of the Associate Director are to:
   a) chair the Performance Review Committee;
   b) chair the Hiring Committee;
   c) preside over all meetings in the absence of or at the request of the Executive Director;
   d) fulfill other duties of the Executive Director in his/her absence (e.g., represent the Academic Chairs Council on the President’s Cabinet or Provost’s Academic Leadership Council).
ARTICLE IV: MEETINGS

Section 1: Regular meetings of the Academic Chairs Council will generally be held monthly during the course of the academic year August through May. Other meetings may be called if needed as determined by the Executive Committee.

Section 2: As a consultative, advisory body, generally action of the Academic Chairs Council is determined by consensus. However should a formal vote be needed, a simple majority of the ACC membership will constitute a quorum at any regular or special meeting.

Section 3: When a formal vote is taken, a quorum being present, a simple majority of those present and voting is necessary to approve recommendations or other matters considered by the Academic Chairs Council.

Section 4: A majority of those members present at a regular or special meeting of the Academic Chairs Council, whether or not a quorum is present, may refer a recommendation or other matter to the full membership for a formal vote to be carried out via e-mail (or other appropriate electronic means). When a formal vote is undertaken electronically, a period of no less than five business days will be required between the time when the full ACC membership is electronically sent the ballot and when the ballot must be returned. In such a circumstance the quorum requirement for a formal vote is considered satisfied, and a simple majority of those voting is necessary to approve the recommendation or other matter put before the membership.

Section 5: As needed, meetings will be conducted according to the latest edition of Robert’s Rules of Order, except where in contradiction with the rules established by these Bylaws.

Section 6: A chair who is unable to attend an ACC meeting may send a faculty member from his/her academic unit as a voting representative.

ARTICLE V: APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Section 1: Executive Director
a) The Executive Director is appointed by the membership of the Academic Chairs Council for a fixed term not to exceed 3 years, but subject to renewal upon agreement by all parties.

b) When the position of Executive Director is vacant, the Executive Committee, chaired by the Associate Director will serve as the Hiring Committee whose responsibility it will be to:
1. put out a call for nominations and applications to the University community;
2. establish minimum and preferred qualifications for the position, in consultation with the full ACC membership. Minimum qualifications will include: tenured faculty status in an academic department at NAU; and previous experience as head of an academic unit at NAU represented on the ACC. The Executive Director may not be head of an academic unit during his/her term as Executive Director;
3. establish a procedure for reviewing applications, and selecting and interviewing finalists. The schedule of interviews will include the opportunity for the full ACC membership to meet and interview each candidate;
4. provide the Provost an opportunity to interview finalists.

c) After the interview process has been completed, and the Hiring Committee has received input on the candidates from the ACC membership, the Hiring Committee in consultation with the Provost will report to the ACC membership, recommending a candidate to be appointed as Executive Director from among the interviewed finalists, or recommending that the nomination / application process be re-opened. The ACC membership will then take a formal vote (as outlined in Article IV, Sections 2, 3 and 4) to accept or not accept the Hiring Committee’s recommendation. Should the Hiring Committee’s recommendation not be accepted, the ACC membership may by formal vote: appoint an alternate finalist as Executive Director; or re-open the nomination / application process.

d) Should there be remuneration or course release associated with the appointment provided by the Office of the Provost, an additional step involving negotiation between the chosen candidate and the Provost will be added to the process.

Section 2: Executive Committee
a) Normally, each of the six chair members of the Executive Committee serves a three-year term.

b) A member of the Executive Committee whose term as academic unit chair ends prior to the end of his/her term on the Executive Committee will automatically vacate his/her position on the Executive Committee at the end of his/her term as chair.

c) When a vacancy occurs on the Executive Committee, the Executive Director will announce the vacancy and seek nominations, including self-nominations, from the current continuing membership of the ACC. The replacement position will be for a three-year term.

d) A nominee for the Executive Committee must currently be a chair member of the ACC and have the reasonable expectation of continuing membership for at least one year.
e) An election by written (or electronic) ballot from among all those nominated will be conducted by the Executive Director. Candidates will be contacted to ascertain their agreement to stand for election prior to preparation of the ballot. Ballots will include the name, academic unit and college of each nominee.

f) As part of the election process, the Executive Director will inform the ACC membership of the current continuing membership of the Executive Committee, including each continuing member’s college affiliation. It is the hope that the make-up of the Executive Committee reasonably reflects the membership by college of the ACC. However this is not to be construed as requiring that the Executive Committee include at least one representative from each college of the University.

ARTICLE VII: REVIEW OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Section 1: The job performance of the Executive Director shall be reviewed by the Performance Review Committee, see Article III Section 4 e), upon consideration of his/her reappointment for an additional term.

Section 2: The review will be based on how well the Executive Director has fulfilled the duties listed in Article III Section 3, as well as any additional responsibilities outlined in the job description at the time of his/her initial appointment or reappointment.

Section 3: The Performance Review Committee will seek input in its review of the Executive Director from the full membership of the Academic Chairs Council, the Provost and other constituencies as it deems appropriate.

Section 4: The Performance Review Committee will provide a summary of its review in writing to the Executive Director. The summary will include an overall assessment of performance using the three-point scale “Does not meet expectations”, “Meets expectations”, “Exceeds expectations”. The summary may also include constructive criticism and suggestions for improvement in specific areas of responsibility as determined by the Committee.

Section 5: Should the annual review of his/her performance result in an overall assessment of “Does not meet expectations”, the Executive Director may be removed prior to the end of his/her term upon the recommendation of the Performance Review Committee and approval of the recommendation by the full ACC membership at a special meeting called to consider the matter. Such a meeting will be chaired by the Associate Director.
ARTICLE VII: ENACTMENT

Section 1: These bylaws shall go into effect immediately upon approval by a two-thirds vote of those present at a regular meeting of the Academic Chairs Council, provided a simple majority of the membership is present.

ARTICLE VIII: AMENDMENT

Section 1: These bylaws can be amended by a two-thirds vote of the members present at any regular meeting where a quorum is present, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous meeting, or submitted electronically or in writing to the membership at least ten days prior to the date of the next meeting.