

MEMO

TO: Department
FROM: Hokulani Aikau
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RE: Chair recommendation process

29 November 2008

The following proposal for selecting a new chair is designed to minimize the electoral period but maximize the opportunity for candidates for the office of chair to make their appeal to the entire electorate of faculty, graduate students and staff.

The contingent voting procedure that we recommend may be new to some, and so we include this short introduction to the reasoning behind it.

Contingent voting is designed to demonstrate majority sentiment in multi-candidate (2+) contests in a single vote. It is organized around the idea that a ranking of preferences among all candidates will demonstrate a majority if not in the first, then by the second round of *counting* of ballots. If an absolute majority is demonstrable in the counting of first-preferences, then the counting ceases and a winner is declared. In the case that there is no demonstrable majority (that is, that the top vote getter has less than 50% +1), then a second count of ballots commences. In this second count, all but the top two candidates are struck, but the order of preference for the remaining two candidates is noted. The top-ranked remaining candidate on each ballot is allocated to that candidate and the winner of a majority is declared. It is possible that a candidate winning the plurality will not win the majority in the second counting, particularly if there is a general sentiment that the candidate with the second-largest plurality is widely perceived as the electorate's second-choice, for example.

Although this outcome is similar to the effects of a run-off election, it permits a shortening of the time period for voting. It also has the strategic advantage of encouraging candidates for the office of chair to appeal to a wider constituency at the time they present their campaign platforms to the department. Rather than searching for a strong plurality, candidates are encouraged by this process to explain why their policies may be good for a broader segment of the electorate, since even a small preference ranking near the bottom of a preference list may redound to their benefit at a second counting.

CHAIR RECOMMENDATION PROCESS

The following guidelines describe the process through which the department decides who it will recommend to the dean of the college to be its new chair.

These guidelines were approved at a department meeting on 6 February 2009.

1. The individual to be recommended to serve as the new chair will be selected from the pool of regular faculty members who are tenured or on tenure track in the department. The pool includes faculty members on sabbatical or on leave. It also includes faculty members who have split appointments with other departments, and are at least half-time in the political science department.
2. In the fall semester of her/his last year, the outgoing chair asks a senior faculty member to coordinate the process for selecting a new chair.
3. The process should be completed in March of the following spring semester
4. The coordinator circulates these guidelines, and invites discussion of any proposed changes to the procedure.
5. All faculty members in the pool are polled by the coordinator to determine whether they are willing to stand as candidates for chair and whether they wish to indicate others who they prefer stand as chair.
6. All faculty members who are willing are regarded as candidates.
7. The election process is conducted during a department meeting.
8. At this election meeting, the candidates will be invited to give brief (ten minute) talks about their prospective roles as chair. Questions of the candidates will be entertained. After candidate presentations, discussion will take place without the candidates present.
9. The election process begins at the close of the election meeting and continues for four business days. The process entails voting, in separate ballot boxes, by three distinct constituencies:
 - (a) Regular faculty members, as defined in item 1 above.
 - (b) Currently enrolled graduate students.
 - (c) Departmental staff
10. Preparation of ballots
 - (a) Ballots will be prepared by the department listing all candidates running for chair.
 - (b) If there are one or two candidates, ballots will include the proviso that "Only ballots with one name circled will be considered valid."
 - (c) If there are more than two candidates, ballots will include the proviso that "ALL names must be ranked by a clear indication of preference; 1 will be highest, 2 next, etc. *ONLY* ballots with a ranking of *ALL* candidates will be considered valid."
11. Voting
 - (a) Eligible voters will be asked to sign in with the department staff before collecting a ballot.

- (b) Ballot boxes will be maintained in the office during regular office hours.
- (c) Absentee ballots will be accepted during the four-day voting period and will be counted along with the regular ballots.

12. Counting of ballots

- (a) If there are two or fewer candidates, ballots will be counted and the candidate with an absolute majority will be declared the winner for each constituency.
- (b) In the case that there are more than two candidates the following *contingent voting* rules will be used. [N.B. Contingent voting is designed to select, in one ballot, a candidate who has demonstrated majority support rather than the support of a plurality.]
 - i. There will be a maximum of two rounds of *counting* (not *voting*).
 - ii. In the first round only first preferences are counted. If a candidate has received an absolute majority of first preferences (i.e. more than half) then s/he has won the vote of this constituency.
 - iii. In the case that no candidate has demonstrated an absolute majority, then all but the two candidates with the most first preferences are eliminated, and there is a second round of *counting* for each constituency.
 - iv. In the second round of counting, any ballot with a listed first preference that has been eliminated will be allocated to whichever of the remaining candidates is ranked the highest on that ballot.
 - v. The adjusted ballots (ballots indicating a preference for one of the two remaining candidates *plus* ballots added through secondary allocation) will then be counted and whichever candidate has an absolute majority has won the vote of this constituency.

13. Reporting of ballots

- (a) If all three constituencies concur on the same first choice, that individual will be recommended to the dean as the department's choice.
- (b) If there are differences among the three constituencies, the first choice of each constituency group will be reported to the dean and the faculty's first choice will be recommended to the dean.
- (c) In the case of a tie vote in the faculty constituency, the two candidates will be reported to the dean as acceptable choices for chair.
- (d) All ballots, grouped by constituency, will be delivered to the dean.