INTRODUCTION

These observations on appointment and compensation derive from the registration forms of attendees at the American Council on Education’s national workshops for chairs, division heads, and deans between 1995 and 2000. Most attendees (75 to 85 percent) came from state comprehensive institutions. The others represent independent institutions, proprietary schools, and federal institutions.

HOW ARE CHAIRS RECRUITED? INTERNAL VS. EXTERNAL APPOINTMENTS

Chairs are either appointed from within the institution (almost always from the department) or recruited externally, specifically for the position of chair. In the past, internal appointees were tenured senior professors exclusively. At current ACE workshops, we see chairs who are recent arrivals to their institutions and who have yet to undergo a tenure review. Note that these chairs were recruited as department faculty, not as chairs.

In the case of a chair who is recruited externally, the person comes to the institution to be the chair and tenure in that position may lack any defined term of service. However, such a chair would expect to hold tenure as a member of the department faculty. The reasons for recruiting from outside the institution range from tradition to a desire to bring in new leadership.

WHO APPOINITS THE CHAIR?

There are no rules for the appointment of department chairs; each institution defines its own standards. Some of the entries in “Appointment of Chairs: Campus Examples” indicate that the president of the institution may add the official imprimatur to the chair appointment. Nonetheless, there are a limited number of routes to this position.

Rotational chairs: Common in very small departments, in which each faculty member takes a turn at a required civic duty.
Elected chairs: Chairs may be chosen by their colleagues. Such election may be followed by formal appointment by the dean.

Appointed chairs: Chairs may be appointed exclusively by the university administration, usually—but not always—by the VPAA or dean.

Nomination with appointment: Chairs may be nominated by colleagues and then appointed by a dean or VPAA.

TENURE STATUS OF CHAIRS
Most chairs, whether recruited internally or externally, are tenured members of the department. However, it is no longer unheard of for chairs to hold their appointments without tenure. This may happen to a chair who is recruited from outside the institution or who becomes chair while he or she is a tenure-track faculty member who has not yet been awarded tenure.

LENGTH OF SERVICE
As in all other aspects of chair appointments, there are no rules governing duration of service, merely a series of common variations.

Term without limit: This may occur in an institution in which there has been no tradition of term or rotational service or when an externally recruited chair serves under appointment by the dean.

Fixed term: The fixed-term appointment is currently the most common. The most frequent term length is three years, although five years is not unusual. (Judging from ACE registrants, four-year terms are a rarity.) When fixed terms are used, they are generally limited to one renewal. After that, the chair must step down for at least one term.
COMPENSATION FOR CHAIRS
While there are no standards for compensation, a limited number of variables come into play.

**Contract length:** Chairs can be moved from 9- to 10-month faculty contracts to 11- to 12-month administrative contracts. That generates one to two months of additional supplemental income.

**Course relief:** Chairs may be given course relief time in recognition of the extra tasks they must manage.

**Combination package:** A combination of course relief and extra compensation is common.

ASSISTANTS
The department usually has a secretary who, in effect, becomes the chair’s administrative assistant. Large departments may have more than one secretary, and very large departments also may have a budget manager.

MISCELLANEOUS PERQUISITES
Other forms of compensation may include perquisites such as a designated office, extra travel funds, and, in some cases, a post-chair sabbatical. What could mean a great deal to a chair is the availability of an assistant to handle much of the administrative work of the job, and/or a research assistant so that the chair does not pay such a heavy price in terms of lost research or study time.