

Section:	II.3.4	
Title:	Chair Eligibility	
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Approved By:	Provost	
Responsible Unit:	Academic Affairs (609-771-3080, academic@tcnj.edu)	
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1.0	July, 2012	New policy; Initial release
2.0	May, 2020	Reviewed and edited by CFA

I. INTRODUCTION

This policy is designed to protect untenured professors and librarians (regardless of rank) as they develop professionally and move toward tenure.

II. DEFINITIONS

Department Chair is a broad definition that includes any faculty/librarian administrative assignment where the faculty/librarian in this role makes resource allocation decisions (scheduling, budget, etc.) that affect full-time faculty/librarians. The College has a broad range of programs; therefore, the position titles may be “Department Chairs”, “Program Coordinators”, “Program Directors”, “Co-chair”, “Assistant Chair”, or some other term. The key factor for this policy is not the position title or the rank of the faculty/librarian, but whether the faculty/librarian is **untenured** and put into a reversed power dynamic. The policy does not apply to positions that hold a similar title but do **not** require resource allocation decisions that affect full-time faculty (e.g., such as an Assistant Chair whose job duty is to advise students).

III. POLICY

This policy is designed to protect **untenured** professors and librarians as they develop professionally and move toward tenure (i.e., it only applies to full-time, tenure-track faculty). Untenured faculty members that make resource allocation decisions (e.g., scheduling, budget, etc.) that affect full-time tenure track faculty are put in a reversed power dynamic that should be avoided. These faculty must make difficult decisions that affect the very people that will evaluate them during the tenure decision. In addition, serving as chair demands a workload that is beyond reasonable expectations

for someone developing their teaching and scholarship. Consequently, untenured professors and librarians (at any rank) are **ineligible** to serve as department chairs. To avoid being pressured into this role, untenured faculty and librarians are ineligible for a chair election or appointment until their tenure decision has been approved by the Board of Trustees.

There is one exception to this ineligibility rule. Untenured faculty could serve as department chair if they were specifically hired (as specified in the job description) to serve in this role. In this situation, special care should be taken at the time of hiring to ensure a conflict-free tenure evaluation process, such as creating a PRC that includes faculty from outside the department.

In situations where there are no tenured faculty/librarians available to serve as a department chair (e.g., when the program is new or when there are many recent retirements), a tenured faculty member from another department should serve as chair or someone can be hired to serve as department chair. In some special situations, accrediting bodies require the chair to have specific training; therefore, the problem cannot be solved by appointing a tenured faculty member from another department to serve as chair. An untenured faculty member is eligible to serve as chair in these special circumstances provided that several conditions are met to protect the faculty/librarian from reversed power dynamic abuses. First, the Dean must secure documentation from the accrediting agency that indicates one accreditation requirement is the chair must have a particular background or training. This documentation will be provided to the Provost. Second, the department/program's disciplinary standards must be modified for the untenured faculty/librarian serving as chair. The modified disciplinary standards should specify lower expectations for scholarship to accommodate for the increased service requirements of the chair role. Third, the Dean should constitute a special PRC made of a majority of members drawn from the tenured faculty/librarians of other departments. This special PRC will evaluate the untenured chair at each point of the reappointment and promotion process until the chair has earned tenure. The modified disciplinary standards and special PRC will be constituted before the person assumes the role of chair (the modified disciplinary standards and special PRC should be constituted as soon as possible for any untenured faculty who assumed a chair role prior to the Fall 2020 semester).