

Guidelines for Decanal Review & Selection (February 2016)

1. **Overview:**

- a. Not more than 18 months, and not less than 12 months, before a sitting Dean's term expires, the Provost & Vice-President (Academic) will explore the Dean's interest in being considered for re-appointment.¹ Following this discussion, the Provost will set in motion the processes for striking a Decanal Selection Committee. At this time, the Provost will also ask the Dean to prepare a Dean's Report (see **3. Documentation**).
- b. The composition of Decanal Selection Committees (see **2. Selection Committee Composition and Principles** below), which are charged with undertaking the decanal review and appointment process, is established through University Senate and Board policy, as specifically outlined in [Section M of "Appointment Procedures for Senior Academic and Administrative Officers of the University."](#)
- c. In instances where the sitting Dean is to be considered for re-appointment, the University's normal practice is to invite members of the Faculty community to provide written comment on the Dean's leadership and administrative performance, and to consider engaging External Reviewers to review the leadership of the Dean (as well as the challenges and opportunities facing the Faculty) during the next five-year period.
- d. Where the Dean is in his/her second term or has indicated s/he is not interested in a second term, Western's normal practice is for the Selection Committee to consider the merits of engaging External Reviewers to undertake a review of the state of the Faculty and the challenges and opportunities facing the Faculty during the next five-year period. If External Reviewers are engaged, the Provost, as Chair of the Decanal Selection Committee, may determine the number and identity of the External Reviewers in consultation with the Committee, Dean and other members of senior administration. In some instances, it may prove more practical and timely for the Selection Committee to conduct the decanal review internally.
- e. It should be noted that Senate Subcommittees on Undergraduate Program Review (SUPR-U) and Graduate Program Review (SUPR-G) review the academic quality of Western's undergraduate and graduate programs on a regular basis in accordance

¹ Normal practice at Western is to limit Deans to two 5-year terms.

with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP). In Faculties offering professional degrees extensive accreditation reviews also take place on a regular basis. Executive summaries of the most recent program and accreditation reviews, combined with other key documents as outlined below, play an important role in informing the decanal review and selection process.

2. Decanal Selection Committee Composition and Principles:

- a. Each Selection Committee has a specific composition, set out in "[Appointment Procedures for Senior Academic and Administrative Officers of the University](#)." This document also includes information on Committee procedure and the terms of the academic administrative post. Committee members should be familiar with the appropriate clauses of the document. To facilitate this, the Chair (i.e., Provost) should provide each member with a copy.
- b. In nominating and electing members to serve on Selection Committees, it is important that all qualified persons be considered. Members of designated groups on campus (including women, visible minorities, aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities) should be encouraged to take an active role in seeking election to the Committees, and those who elect Committee members should ensure they have duly considered such prospective members at the time when the choice is made.
- c. Selection Committee members do not, and cannot, represent a constituency in their role on the Committee. This is true even if they have been elected to their position, for example, by a vote of their Faculty Council. Each member is expected to serve the broad interest of the University in identifying and recruiting the best possible candidate to fill the post. Placement on the Committee reflects the trust that others have in that individual's judgment and capacity to make the best decision for the benefit of the Faculty and University as a whole.
- d. Selection Committee proceedings are strictly confidential. This means conversations and documents exchanged in Committee meetings are not to be reported to others, and are not to be shared outside the Committee room. Confidentiality is necessary so that the Committee can receive advice, both from inside and outside, frankly and without restraint. Further, all Committee members must feel free to express themselves fully and openly to the rest of the group, with complete assurance that any remarks will be held in the strictest confidence.
- e. It is essential that bias be prevented, and eliminated if identified, in Selection Committees. Bias may be thought of as a propensity or predisposition that could unduly weight a Committee member's judgment in such a way as to impair his or her ability to make an impartial, objective assessment of a candidate.

- f. Any member of a Committee aware of any reason why the impartiality and objectivity of his or her judgment might be cast in doubt should make this known to the Chair and ask to withdraw from deliberations. That is, a Committee member should act on the principle that, should his or her presence create a reasonable apprehension of bias, he or she should withdraw. However, to make certain that the element of bias does not go formally unchallenged prior to the Committee's deliberations, the Chair should pose the following question: "*Does any member of this Committee know of any reason why he or she or any other member of the Committee should not be party to these proceedings?*" If a person is identified, the Chair shall advise whether that Committee member should withdraw and, if so, determine the need to initiate the process for electing a new Committee member.

3. Documentation:

The following documents shall be compiled by the Provost's Office in partnership with the Dean's Office to inform the work of Decanal Selection Committees:

- a. Faculty Academic Plan, and Strategic Research Plan where one has been developed
- b. Most recent position profile for the Dean
- c. The last External Reviewer's Report and Dean's Response produced for the Faculty
- d. Data on Faculty budgets, research revenue, enrollments and staffing for the previous five-year period
- e. Executive Summaries of SUPR-U and SUPR-G program reviews, accreditation appraisals, and, in the case of departmentalized Faculties, Department/School reviews conducted as part of the Chair/Director review and selection process.
- f. Comments solicited and collected from members of the Faculty community on the sitting Dean's administrative and leadership qualities.
- g. Dean's Report

For Deans being considered for re-appointment, the Dean's Report shall be up to 10 pages in length, with the first half of the report focused on describing the Faculty's progress in pursuit of its stated goals (as articulated in the Faculty Academic Plan), and how the incumbent has contributed toward the Faculty's achievements.

The first section of the report should provide commentary on aspects of the incumbent's leadership skills and style, such as: communicating and building

support for vision; facilitating collegiality and influencing workplace culture; managing fiscal and human resources; engaging key stakeholders and fundraising; etc. The latter section should focus on opportunities and challenges facing the Faculty, and the incumbent's aspirations for the Faculty if re-appointed.

For Deans not being considered for re-appointment, the Dean's Report shall be 5 to 10 pages in length, focused on a summary of recent Faculty achievements, combined with a description of the opportunities and challenges facing the Faculty.

4. Scope of External Reviews:

- a. As noted above, there may be a significant amount of documentation arising out of a wide range of assessments and reviews of the Faculty's departments and programs that will inform the decanal review and selection process. Therefore, it is not expected that External Reviewers will duplicate program or accreditation review efforts, but rather that they will focus primarily on the assessment of three matters:
 - i. Where the Dean is interested in a further term, the leadership and administrative performance of the incumbent Dean;
 - ii. The level to which a research-intensive culture has been promoted and supported, including an assessment of the success and impact of the Faculty's research/scholarship activity;
 - iii. Leadership characteristics and experience of the ideal candidate best suited to serve as Dean during the next 5 to 10-year period, given the state of the Faculty and the challenges and opportunities it faces.
- b. Other issues to include in the scope of the work of the External Reviewers in a particular case will depend on the Faculty concerned, other types of reviews that have been conducted during the Dean's term, and the Selection Committee's own assessment of the Dean's performance.
- c. After identifying and recruiting External Reviewers, the Provost will provide terms of reference and timelines for completing the review. The Provost's Office will also coordinate all aspects of the External Reviewers' site visit. Once charged, the External Reviewers will receive the following documentation:
 - i. Terms of reference specific to the requirements of the External Review
 - ii. External Reviewers' report and Dean's response from the last decanal review

- iii. The University's Strategic Plan and Research Plan
 - iv. Most recent academic and strategic research plans of the unit
 - v. Executive summaries of program/accreditation/dept./school reviews
 - vi. Data on Faculty budgets, research revenue, enrollments and staffing for the previous five-year period
 - vii. Dean's Report, described above
 - viii. Most recent position profile of the Dean
 - ix. A summary of written comments solicited/collected from the University community in relation to the decanal review process.
 - x. Tentative schedule of meetings
 - xi. Other documentation as may be requested by the External Reviewers and agreed upon by the Provost in consultation with the Decanal Selection Committee
- d. The scope and structure of the site visit will be outlined by the Provost's Office, in consultation with the sitting Dean and Selection Committee, and the Provost will ensure representatives of the Faculty's key stakeholder groups (e.g., faculty, staff, students, university leaders, etc.) are invited for an opportunity to provide input.
 - e. At the end of their visit, External Reviewers will provide a preliminary oral report of their initial impressions to the Selection Committee, pending later submission of a formal written report.
 - f. The External Reviewers' written report will be due within two weeks of the site visit. The report will be submitted to the Provost, and may contain recommendations, criticisms, suggestions, and comments within the scope of the invited review.
 - g. As the report may also contain comments that identify specific members of the Faculty, including the Dean, or reference to other highly sensitive matters, the report will be made available only to the Provost and members of the Selection Committee.
 - h. In some instances, the Provost may request to receive a separate private report from the External Reviewers that will remain confidential to the Provost.

- i. The Provost will also invite the Dean to provide a response to the External Reviewers' report as a means to providing further context that will inform the Selection Committee's next stage of deliberations.
- j. As the External Reviewers' report and Dean's response are documents intended to be advisory in nature to the Provost and the Selection Committee, the two documents will be combined as a single document that remains strictly confidential to the Provost and Selection Committee.
- k. The Dean is ultimately responsible for the consideration and, where appropriate, implementation of recommendations advanced during the External Review process. The accountability for acting upon the results of the review forms part of the annual Planning Process for Faculties, as is described in the Planning Guidelines provided to Deans in the fall term of each academic year.

5. Advertising Decanal Positions:

- a. Upon completing its review, if the Selection Committee determines a full external search should be undertaken, the decanal position shall be advertised internally (within Western's campus community) and externally. Advertising is part of a more general principle that all suitable candidates — including Deans from smaller schools, associate deans, department heads and others with significant leadership experience — should be actively pursued and encouraged to let their names stand for the position.
- b. University policy requires that an incumbent be considered a candidate until s/he indicates a disinterest in serving another term by standing for consideration as part of the external decanal search process. The status of the incumbent Dean must be considered in the early stages of the process.
- c. The Provost will ensure that all the appropriate advertising for any position has taken place and that all pertinent information has been included within the advertisement, including a clearly specified deadline for receipt of applications. The advertising copy shall be forwarded by the Office of the Provost for inclusion in *Western News*, and the University's website. Advertising in external media such as *University Affairs*, *Globe and Mail*, and relevant academic journals, will also be placed by the Provost's Office.

It is essential that no suitable candidate be excluded from serious consideration. A special effort should be made to identify candidates who might not immediately come to the minds of the Committee members, and conscious effort should be

made to encourage members of designated groups who have suitable qualifications to stand. In accordance with University policy, advertisements will contain the following statement: “Western is committed to employment equity and welcomes applications from all qualified women and men, including visible minorities, aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities.”

6. Candidate Identification and Interviews:

- a. At the Provost’s discretion, an external search consultant may be engaged to support the Selection Committee’s work in identifying and interviewing suitable candidates, including position profile and advertising development.
- b. Once a comprehensive pool of potential candidates has been identified through advertising and the work of the Committee and search consultant, the Committee will typically review the CVs of all viable applicants with a view to identifying a “long list” of candidates (3-5) to invite to a closed interview with the Committee **only**. This first round of candidate interviews with the Committee will be held in strict confidence; the identity of the candidates will not be shared or publicized with anyone outside the Committee. Typically, these first-round interviews will all be held on the same day, at an off-campus location, and on a weekend to facilitate confidentiality as well as the availability of candidates and committee members.
- c. On the basis of the candidates’ first-round interview performance, the Selection Committee will deliberate who from the “long list” will be invited back for a second round of public meetings with a wider cross-section of the campus community—including faculty, staff, students, members of senior administration, and a second interview with the Selection Committee. Typically, the second-round interviews will span two days to ensure relevant stakeholder groups have an opportunity to engage with the candidates.
- d. Immediately following the second-round meetings, members of the campus community will have an opportunity to share written comments about their impressions of the candidates to the Selection Committee. These comments will be received by the Committee in strict confidence, and the comments will be used to inform the Committee in its next stage of deliberations.

7. Decanal Appointments and Announcements:

- a. Following the second-round interviews, the objective of the Selection Committee’s next stage of deliberations is to reach consensus on a preferred candidate that would be recommended for appointment to the Board of Governors—through the President & Vice-Chancellor, at the request of the Provost & Vice-President

(Academic)— **or** to reach consensus that the Selection Committee needs to continue its search for a suitable candidate.

- b.** The Provost will conduct negotiations with the successful candidate, facilitate the appropriate approval of the appointment through Western's Board of Governors, and coordinate the public announcement to the campus community and media.

8. Critical Path:

TIME FRAME	TASK
December-January	Provost discusses pending review/selection process with sitting Dean
February-March	Provost initiates the Selection Committee members election process
April-May	Decanal Selection Committee members nominated and appointed by Senate and Faculty Council; Provost requests Dean's Report
May-June	Committee meetings begin; unit review documents gathered; Dean's Report submitted; consultations with campus community begins; decision to proceed with or forgo External Review
August-September	Consultations with campus community concludes; External Review completed
October-November	Decision to re-appoint the sitting Dean and announce, or proceed to external search; external consultant selected and engaged by Provost; advertising and candidate identification initiated
December-January	Candidate identification completed; candidate interviews initiated (closed and public rounds)
February-March	Candidate interviews completed; Committee deliberations conclude and preferred candidate recommendation made to President/Board or decision made to continue search for suitable candidate; Provost negotiations with candidate; Board of Governors review and approval
March-May	Decanal appointment publicly announced
July-September	Decanal appointment comes into effect