



Petch Procedures FAQ

Who was Howard Petch?

Howard Petch was UVic's fourth president, serving 15 years from 1975 to 1990. Prior to joining UVic, he taught in the Physics Department of McMaster University and served as the Chair of the Metallurgical Engineering Department. Dr. Petch served as the Principal at Hamilton College, and as the Vice-President (academic) and Professor of Physics at the University of Waterloo.

During his time as President of UVic, he introduced a series of democratic policies and procedures intended to repair the damage caused by a deterioration of trust among the faculty towards the administration during the 1970s. These procedures came to be known informally as the "Petch Procedures."

What are the Petch Procedures?

The Petch Procedures ensure that democratic power over the ratification of the appointment and reappointment of departmental chairs and more senior administrators stays in the hands of faculty members. The policies apply to Chairs, Directors, Deans, the Vice President Academic, the Deputy Provost, the Associate Vice President Academic Programming (previously Planning), the Vice-President Research and Innovation, the Associate VPRs and other academic senior appointments. The procedures themselves are included within the relevant policies related to the appointment and reappointment of each position, and so there is no *master* document on the Petch Procedures. Broadly put, however, they include requirements for the robust participation of faculty members on appointment committees and mean that any appointment or reappointment to these positions requires a 60% positive ratification vote from faculty members.

The Petch Procedures appear to be unique to UVic. (SFU has more limited ratification rights for Deans, but not for more senior administrators). These procedures ensure that administrators have the support of the faculty members to whom they are accountable. Rather than the process most institutions follow whereby search committees or senior administrators hold complete power to make appointments, at UVic the decisions of appointment committees must be ratified by faculty members.

When are the Petch Procedures used?

The Petch procedures (ratification) are used once the recommended appointments or reappointments for each of these positions are made public by their relevant search/reappointment committees.

Why are they important to collegial governance at UVIC?

Valuing collegial governance means valuing the shared accountability and responsibility of members to govern an institution. Over the last twenty-five years we have seen the increasing bureaucratization of universities across Canada and the US. UVic is not exempt from this larger pattern, but the Petch Procedures provide an important counterweight. They are part of UVic's principles of collegial governance. We value such principles because they ensure that the University – an institution of Research and Education – remains guided by those committed to Research and Education. The Petch Procedures



help to realize these principles in policy by ensuring that all members are involved in the process of deciding who will be in key decision-making roles at the University. As one of our members has stated, “The Petch procedures are the lifeblood of collegial governance here.”

How can we protect these procedures?

One of the best ways to protect these procedures is to ensure that you vote in ratification votes, and that you do your utmost in preparing for a ratification vote. Remain involved and informed of the nature of all the ratification processes which are relevant to you. Review candidates’ CVs and attend their public presentations or view the recorded presentations if you can not attend. Provide feedback to the hiring committee. Your feedback should discuss the candidate’s qualifications and presentation as they relate to the stated criteria for the role. This will ensure that committees take your perspective into account in selecting the candidate put forward for ratification and ensures that your ratification vote is cast with appropriate knowledge and preparation.

The Administration is concerned that many faculty members do not vote in the ratification of senior appointments, and they feel that this can undermine the legitimacy of ratification votes. When the time comes for ratification, we encourage you to vote. If you believe that a candidate recommended by an appointment or reappointment committee is not acceptable, it is your democratic right to vote against ratification.

However, it is also important that you understand the likely consequences of failure to ratify. When you are voting in a ratification vote, you are voting on the question of whether or not a candidate is acceptable. By necessity, this occurs after it has been determined that the candidate would accept the position based on negotiated terms, and all other candidates have been released. Typically, a failed ratification results in a failed search, requiring a new committee to be struck and the recruitment process to start anew, often after a significant pause in the process. Failure to ratify will not lead the committee to select the second ranked candidate, or if there is no second candidate, to eliminate the position. It will just mean that the candidate put forward for ratification will not get the position, and a new search will be undertaken.

Educate yourself on these procedures, which are an integral part of collegial governance at UVic. Get involved in searches by attending talks and reading CVs. Let us know if you have any questions about these matters. We would also like to hear from you if you believe the Petch Procedures are being undermined. The more we hear from you, the better we can advocate on your behalf and on behalf of this unique and important measure of collegial governance at UVic.

Where can I find out more?

FA Relay - [Howard Petch and the Petch Procedures](#)

FA Relay – [Some discussion of the Petch Procedures with former UVic President, Jamie Cassels](#)

CUFA BC Report – [Recalibrating University Governance](#) (the Petch procedures are mentioned on page 22 under “Good Governance”)