

University of Michigan-Flint

Responsibilities, duties and expectations of Chair, College of Arts and Sciences

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Chairs of Departments are members of the faculty who, for a period of time, are entrusted by their faculty colleagues, the Dean and CAS Executive Committee, and the Regents of the University with significant administrative and leadership responsibilities. Chairs are responsible for administering the work of their Department in an orderly, fair and ethical manner. High standards of ethical conduct should be in evidence in their administrative decision-making, their practice as teachers and scholars, and their interactions with college and university colleagues. More generally, Chairs should provide effective leadership for their Departments. Effective leadership can be exercised in many ways, but, generally, chairs should be concerned with promoting, and acting as advocate for the Department and its program(s), its faculty, and the needs of its students.

The following list of responsibilities, duties and expectations of chairs defines a position that is challenging and appears daunting. The list constitutes a summary of the procedures, tasks, and processes that must be accomplished in order to have a robust and smoothly functioning department. It is understood that it is difficult if not impossible for a chair to perform these functions without the aid of the other faculty and staff in their department. This work must be prioritized and delegated when possible. Other faculty and staff must be cognizant that aiding the Chair with this work will help ensure the health of the department and, as required department service, is also an expectation.

Responsibilities, duties and expectations:

- 1) Chairs demonstrate leadership by regularly attending College and University-level meetings, and by encouraging all colleagues to do likewise. Chairs also preside over Department meetings and attend bi-weekly Council of Chair's meetings.
- 2) While the majority of a Chair's duties are performed during the 9 month academic year, a Chair must be willing to meet the range of responsibilities expected throughout the calendar year. In the event of temporary absence during the regular academic semesters, the Chair shall designate an Acting Chair. In the event of the Chair's absence during the spring and/or summer terms, the most senior full-time faculty member teaching in those semesters will assume temporarily the duties and responsibilities of the Chair. If there are no full-time faculty available to take on these duties in a spring and/or summer term, a temporary Chair will be determined in consultation with the Dean.
- 3) Budget preparation and monitoring. This is a serious task in all Departments but even more so in those with more complex budgets. Nonetheless, all Chairs are responsible for the efficient administration of their Department budget, as well as preparation of annual budget and equipment requests, monitoring of lab/course fees and the expenditure of any special additional funding in accordance with University guidelines.
- 4) Chairs will be increasingly engaged in various aspects of alumni relations and development activities within their respective Departments. They are often asked to meet

donors and attend functions representing the department. Chairs should make sure the department is ably represented when these requests are made.

- 5) Course scheduling. Chairs are responsible for developing an efficient schedule that puts students' needs first and is also fair to faculty. In many departments the preparation of the schedule, or parts of the schedule, is delegated to other staff or faculty, but the Chair should proofread, approve and submit the final schedule and all schedule related documents such as prerequisite codes. All subsequent scheduling changes also are submitted to the Associate Dean by the Chair. Chairs are also expected to revise and approve catalogue copy. When programs with directors reside within a department, the Chair should work to have an effective relationship with the director resulting in a working relationship mutually beneficial to the department and program(s).
- 6) While duties may be delegated within Departments, Chairs are responsible for monitoring their program(s') assessment plan(s).
- 7) Chairs demonstrate leadership by coordinating curriculum revisions and program development. Chairs should seek to identify areas of opportunity for their programs and advocate for appropriate resources for them.
- 8) Chairs coordinate and respond to requests for information in a timely fashion and are also responsible for the preparation of a variety of reports. These include, but are not limited to, post and visiting faculty requests, scheduling and equipment requests, program review, prerequisite checking, and the like.
- 9) Promotion and Tenure and Two and Four Year Reviews. Chairs should take a leadership role in assisting, advising and mentoring junior faculty regarding tenure and promotion requirements and guidelines. Chairs will normally write the department or program letter for two and four year reviews and for the P&T notebook, assist with the preparation of a list of external reviewers of the candidate's scholarship or creative work, and should also provide assistance and clarification in the preparation of promotion and the two and four year review notebooks.
- 10) Faculty recruitment: The Chair should take a leading role in identifying faculty needs at both full-time and part-time levels, and should effectively communicate those needs to the Dean and the Executive Committee. In searches for full-time faculty the Chair should take a prominent, if not always a leading role. Searches for part-time faculty (Lecturer I's), while often admittedly difficult, are also primarily the Chair's responsibility. Such searches should be carried out actively and in a timely manner so that student needs can be met.
- 11) Unless the Department utilizes another means of annual evaluation for its tenure-track faculty, Chairs are responsible for preparing year-end evaluations that are objective, thoughtful and accurate. The need for honest and thorough evaluation of junior faculty is particularly important. The preparation of annual evaluations for secretaries and other staff members is also the responsibility of the Chair.
- 12) Chairs are responsible for recommending merit increases and equity adjustments for Department faculty and staff that reflect annual evaluations.
- 13) The Chair is the next-in-line supervisor of secretarial and P&A staff. In this capacity they work to help staff members prioritize their work, and they intercede on behalf of the staff member when the need arises. Each department is unique and the priorities for a secretary or staff member are best decided by them and the department Chair in consultation with other members of the department.

- 14) For LEO faculty, Chairs must make sure annual reviews and major reviews are completed. They should work with secretarial staff to maintain accurate seniority records for all LEO lecturers and participate in the processes related to any grievances and/or arbitration.
- 15) As good advising is one of the keys to program growth and student retention, chairs should be active advisers of majors, and if appropriate, minors and graduate students; they should similarly encourage the advising efforts of colleagues. Chairs should help train junior faculty so that they also can become effective advisers.
- 16) It is sometimes necessary for Chairs to act as mediator between a student(s) and a faculty member(s). Chairs play an important role in the student grievance procedure. If a student grievance cannot be settled by conference with the instructor, the chair works with the student, instructor and department to settle the grievance.
- 17) Chairs demonstrate leadership by coordinating curriculum revisions and program development. Chairs should seek to identify areas of opportunity for their programs and advocate for appropriate resources for them.
- 18) In many additional matters “the buck stops” with the Chair. The following duties are in some measure the responsibility of all faculty, but the burden of carrying them out may lie more heavily on a Chair. These include, but again, are not limited to, nominating faculty, staff and students for awards and making certain the department is represented at recruiting events and awards ceremonies (i.e. Honors Convocation). Other responsibilities include reviewing graduation audits for accuracy, transcript evaluation for transfer students, signing off on and clarifying the ramifications of guest applications to students, explaining to students the process of petitioning the Academic Standards Committee, remaining attentive to student concerns and complaints, and when necessary, arbitrating between a student and a faculty member, remaining equally sensitive to faculty concerns and conveying these regularly to the Dean, seeing that the Department is appropriately represented to units outside CAS, and, when appropriate, outside the University.

The College of Arts and Sciences strives to manage as efficiently and effectively as possible. To that end, there are continuing efforts to provide support to Chairs through mentoring, training and workshops. It is important for Chairs to assess their skills and ask for assistance when it is needed.