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AS Minutes 2005 12 02 Chair Duties

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Recommended Citation

"AS Minutes 2005 12 02 Chair Duties" (2005). *Faculty Assembly Documents*. 122.
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Department Chair

Definition

A Chairperson is a faculty member with administrative responsibilities for an academic department of the discipline or professional program to which he/she belongs. He/she provides leadership in academic matters and is responsible to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. In accordance with university policies and procedures, the department chairperson functions to ensure the quality of instruction, curriculum and faculty development in the department.

Eligibility for Service

To be eligible to serve as Chair an individual normally should: (a) be a tenured associate or full professor; (b) possess the terminal degree appropriate to the discipline; (c) show evidence of leadership, scholarship, and collegiality; and (d) demonstrate understanding of and commitment to the mission and character of the University and department. A record of participation in departmental operations and familiarity with departmental issues normally are expected. In the event that an insufficient number of candidates meet these criteria, other tenured, tenure-track, or term-appointed faculty may be nominated.

Length of Appointment

The length of appointment for the position of Department Chair is normally three years. A department Chair is eligible to succeed him/herself.

Selection of the Chair

In October of the third year of a chair's term, the Vice President for Academic Affairs will call for nominations of faculty to serve as department Chair for the next three-year term. The departmental vote constitutes a recommendation to the Vice President for Academic Affairs; the Vice President shall evaluate the recommendation and, if he or she approves, shall appoint the new Chair. The same process would be used to nominate a Chair when the current chair is unable to complete a three-year appointment. If after formal consultation with the department, the VPAA determines that the Chair should come from outside the University, the standard faculty recruitment process is to be followed.

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties of the department Chair shall include, but not be limited to, those listed below. The categories are listed alphabetically, not according to importance:

ADMINISTRATION

- serve actively on the Undergraduate Council
- serve as a liaison between the members of the department and the administration on mutual concerns of the department and the administration
- make recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs and to the Rank and Tenure Committee concerning promotion and/or tenure of faculty
- serve as department liaison with external accrediting agencies when relevant to the discipline
- prepare departmental plans, goals, and strategies, annual reports, Program Reviews, self-studies and accreditation reports for submission to the Vice President for Academic Affairs
- prepare a sound operating departmental budget, indicating all capital requirements for the fiscal year (July 1 to June 30), to submit this budget to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and administer the department within the constraints of the approved budget

CURRICULUM

- consult with the full time faculty of the department in all matters related to changes in the department's curriculum and the scheduling of courses
- review and evaluate existing programs in terms of objectives, content, prerequisites, method, and credit; collaborate with department faculty to develop new courses and programs when needed
- prepare recommendations on course offerings and submit them to the Undergraduate Council and the Faculty Assembly
- plan a regular cycle of course offerings and prepare or revise the departmental section of catalogs
- furnish copies of all undergraduate course syllabi to the Undergraduate Dean
- consult with other departments that might be impacted by a proposed department curriculum change

DEPARTMENT FACULTY

- with due attention to courses in the Undergraduate Catalog, make personnel recommendations for the department, and along with the Vice President for Academic Affairs, actively participate in recruiting faculty
- assist department faculty members in their continuing professional development and support scholarly research and/or creative projects within the department
- submit teaching reviews and faculty evaluations according to the Faculty Manual and make recommendations concerning continuing contracts of department faculty to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at the prescribed time
- submit to the Vice President for Academic Affairs the names and appropriate documentation for all part-time faculty recommended for teaching assignments and the names of full-time faculty recommended for assignments in excess of their contractual loads
- in consultation with members of the department, make recommendations regarding teaching schedules

- hold regular departmental meetings (at least two per semester) and submit a copy of the summary/minutes of each meeting to the Vice President of Academic Affairs and the Dean of Undergraduate Studies

EVENTS

- ensure that the department is represented at University events, such as Admissions open houses, Fall Family Weekend, Dean's List Ceremony, and Connections

LIBRARY

- designate a faculty member to collaborate with the librarians on the collection development of the library

RESOLUTION OF CONFLICTS

- attempt informally to resolve conflicts between department faculty/students, faculty/faculty, faculty/administration, and students/administration

STUDENTS

- coordinate procedures for the recruitment, admission, retention, advising, supervision, internship and field placement, and graduation eligibility of students who are department majors
- consult with departmental faculty members to make recommendations for student honor awards
- establish and maintain a general information data base and/or file system on current department majors managed in accordance with FERPA guidelines

Evaluation of Performance

An evaluation of the Chair's performance will be undertaken by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies on an annual basis. The evaluation, with the Chair's response and signature, will be forwarded to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This annual process recognizes that some departmental goals are long-term, and cannot necessarily be accomplished within a single academic year.