

**Appointment, Responsibilities, and Review of  
Academic Department Chairs/Directors and Coordinators**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1.** To document and clarify the authority, responsibilities, compensation, and review of the leaders of academic units within colleges. This policy applies to department/division chairs, school directors, and faculty program coordinators/heads/directors that perform the duties as described below (excluding any coordinators within a departmental subdivision such as a graduate or concentration/option coordinator), hereafter referred to as “department chairs” or “chairs.”
- 1.2.** To outline the procedures for the selection of department chairs.
- 1.3.** To identify fundamental orientation and professional development needs of chairs and the process of periodic chair reviews.
- 1.4.** To outline the procedures for the removal of department chairs.

**2. Policy Statement**

- 2.1.** Department chairs are recommended by the faculty through the nomination and election of a peer. The college dean and Provost shall participate in the process of chair selection as outlined in the procedure below. Chairs are formally appointed by the President of the university and are delegated such authority necessary for the fulfillment of their duties and responsibilities.
- 2.2.** Department chairs report to the deans of their college with responsibility for the proper functioning of the department and progress toward department goals that support the programs, school, college, and university.
- 2.3.** The individual appointed to the chair role retains the rights and responsibilities of a faculty member, consistent with the terms of that appointment.
- 2.4.** Department chairs serve as the liaison between the department and the administration, provide academic leadership, and facilitate the affairs and governance of the department.
  - 2.4.1.** Chairs may assign tasks to faculty with consultation, and to staff. Faculty

are expected to participate in accomplishing the work of the department to meet their service obligation.

- 2.4.2.** Designated office hours of availability shall be established based on the chair workload fraction in consultation with the Dean.
- 2.4.3.** Chairs are to consult the members of their department on matters affecting the department with a spirit of shared governance, except for sensitive and confidential matters.
- 2.5.** Deans, in conjunction with the Provost, will proactively support ongoing performance of the chair as a faculty member in teaching, scholarship, and professional development as specified in the faculty appointment.
- 2.6.** It is the responsibility of Colleges and Academic Affairs, in consultation with the chair, to ensure that programs and departments are adequately supported by staff.

### **3. Procedure for the Selection of Department Chairs**

- 3.1.** The Office of Faculty Affairs and Development shall keep a master list of the department chairs and the dates of their appointment. Annually, this office will notify the respective deans of the department chairs whose terms will be expiring the following year.
- 3.2.** In the fall semester of the final year of the current chair's term, the college dean will give formal notification to the department faculty to begin a call for chair nominations.
- 3.3.** Each department will determine the period of the term of the department chair within a framework of a two-year minimum and four-year maximum. Subsequent service may be for a shorter period. Chairs' Appointment Letters issued by the deans and approved by the provost will indicate the duration of the chair appointment.
- 3.4.** Department chairs shall normally be selected from the list of tenured or probationary faculty employees recommended by the department for the assignment.
- 3.5.** Department recommendation of candidates
  - 3.5.1.** Each department shall establish a schedule for the process of recommending candidates for department chair. These processes should be placed on file with Faculty Affairs and the deans' offices and updated periodically.

- 3.5.2.** Recommendations may be made at any time during the academic year, provided that the departmental nomination process concludes by the 11<sup>th</sup> week of the spring semester of the year preceding the year the chair will assume office.
  - 3.5.3.** In cases where a chair resigns or is removed from office, the usual nomination process is to be used to recommend a replacement.
  - 3.5.4.** Under circumstances such as unexpected leaves, sabbaticals, and other cases, an acting chair will be appointed by the Dean in consultation with the department faculty.
  - 3.5.5.** Department faculty will determine the method of nomination in consultation with the college dean. The respective dean will determine compliance with university policy, ensuring that all faculty are able to participate in the nomination process, and provide approval of the procedure.
  - 3.5.6.** Departments will allow all faculty, including lecturer faculty, to vote on an equal basis.
  - 3.5.7.** The department will forward their single choice of candidate from the vote with the recommended period of the term of the department chair to the dean for approval.
  - 3.5.8.** If a department and dean cannot reach agreement on a mutually acceptable candidate, each shall transmit their assessment of the Department's candidate to the Provost / Vice President Academic Affairs. Through consultation between the provost, dean, and department, all three may separately forward their recommendations regarding the candidate to the President or designee. If the candidate recommended by the department is not acceptable to the President or designee, the department will be asked to select another nominee.
  - 3.5.9.** If a department is unable to identify a willing and eligible candidate, the dean will meet with the faculty of the department to discuss the situation whenever possible. If there is no mutually agreeable resolution, then the dean may, in consultation with the department, recommend to the Provost a plan for the appointment of an acting chair, who ideally but not necessarily is a member of the department, until a successful chair selection process occurs. An acting chair from outside the department should be from a related field whenever possible. Normally, an acting chair should not be appointed for more than one year.
- 3.6.** When an external search for a chair is approved, the university's tenure-track

faculty search process will be used; the position description will indicate the chair's role. Externally hired chairs no longer serving as chair will be Academic Year or 12-month faculty in the department of appointment as required by programmatic needs; these terms will be indicated in their appointment letter.

#### **4. Department Chair Duties and Responsibilities**

- 4.1. Department Leadership** – Works with department colleagues to develop a vision and strategic planning for the department. Coordinates and guides department planning and the work of faculty committees. Responds to reasonable requests from the administration to carry out department work including but not limited to Program Review, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, accreditation needs, and other activities in support of student success. Holds regular meetings of the department. Encourages participation of the faculty, staff, and students in departmental, college, and university activities. Promotes the free exchange of points of view among faculty members and workplace collegiality. Uses best efforts to resolve disputes between the faculty. Mediates student or staff concerns. Functions according to established policy and escalates situations as warranted to the college dean or other appropriate administrators. The incumbent chair provides for an orderly transition to the subsequently appointed department chair.
- 4.2. Curriculum** – Facilitates the timely development and delivery of curriculum in consultation with the faculty and department curriculum committee, including effective pedagogy. Ensures the integrity of the curriculum and achievement of the program learning outcomes, Student Learning Outcomes Assessment, and accreditation needs. Facilitates the routine assessment and reporting of student learning outcomes. Engages the department in a process of periodic curriculum review. Leads the program review and accreditation review processes. If applicable, develops and maintains programs that meet accrediting and licensing standards.
- 4.3. Instruction and Course Scheduling** – Builds the schedule of course offerings, informed primarily by data on student enrollment needs so that schedules are optimized for student success. With due consideration of principles and priorities established in consultation with department members, the dean, and in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the California State University and the California Faculty Association (CBA), distributes the teaching assignments and schedules in a timely manner. Has oversight of all departmental instruction, clinics, and labs.
- 4.4. Student Engagement** – Leads recruitment and retention of students in the department's programs. Facilitates student orientation and department-level participation in student success initiatives. Oversees the advising of students at the department level and liaisons with centralized advising functions. Coordinates departmental extracurricular programming/activities.

- 4.5. Personnel Processes** – In consultation with faculty, recruits and screens faculty for tenure-track appointments, temporary faculty assignments, and staff positions. In accordance with university policy and the CBA, makes recommendations for the reappointment, tenure, and promotion (RTP) of tenure-track faculty and the reappointment of lecturers. In consultation with the dean, notifies lecturer faculty of the evaluation process and materials to be submitted for review per university policy and the CBA. Oversees the periodic revision of the department’s RTP standards document. Directs the work and evaluates the performance of departmental support staff.
- 4.6. Represents the Department** – Serves as the key liaison between students, faculty, administration, and the community. Represents the department at the college, University, and external levels (e.g., alumni, benefactors, professional organizations).
- 4.7. Professional Development** – Ensures the orientation of all new faculty and staff. Supports the mentoring and development of faculty and staff. Assists probationary faculty in understanding the evaluation process and the criteria for retention, promotion, and tenure, and in presenting accurate and effective materials for review.
- 4.8. Budget and Resources** – Upon consultation with the faculty, requests of the dean appropriate department financial resources, appointment of new faculty and staff, purchase of capital equipment, and acquisition of space reflecting the programmatic needs of the department.
- 4.9. Policy Administration** – In consultation with faculty, oversees the development and modification of department policies and procedures consistent with university policy and the CBA. Has department-level authority for student requests (e.g., petitions, leaves, course/major changes) and faculty or staff requests (e.g., travel, leave, purchase orders, etc.). Oversees the retention of appropriate files, records, and data pertaining to departmental operations.

## **5. Orientation and Professional Development for the Chair Role**

- 5.1.** The duties and responsibilities of the department chair as outlined above differ significantly from the teaching, scholarship, and service activities expected of other faculty members; therefore, specific training is needed for the role. These shall include, whenever possible:
  - 5.1.1.** Orientation and regular professional development activities conducted by the college dean, AVP Faculty Affairs and Development, and as needed, by the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and others.
  - 5.1.2.** Support to attend the CSU system-wide Department Chair's Orientation, discipline-specific chair meetings, and other professional development events for new and continuing chairs.
  - 5.1.3.** Opportunities to attend leadership conferences and professional development sessions hosted by outside agencies and organizations.
- 5.2.** The university will provide timely access and training for new chairs to use campus software crucial for their success. Examples include the PeopleSoft Student Administration System, class scheduling modules, data dashboards, advising software, admissions software (if applicable), program assessment and review software, and digital signature programs. Required access and training will be made available before the chair's term begins, whenever possible.

## **6. Department Chair Review**

- 6.1.** During a faculty member's service as a department chair, performance of the chair's duties and responsibilities shall be evaluated beginning the Fall of the second year of service and every year of service thereafter. The purpose of the chair review is primarily formative or developmental, providing goals and feedback to the chair based on input from department stakeholders and the dean, and supporting the effective leadership and administration of academic programs.
- 6.2.** Participants
  - 6.2.1.** The college dean is responsible for the development, mentorship, and review of department chairs.
  - 6.2.2.** The Office of Faculty Affairs and Development shall provide the evaluation tools, based upon the specific duties/responsibilities of department chairs described in this policy. One of the evaluation tools will be a survey for the purpose of gathering input from faculty and staff about a chair's performance in the role.

- 6.2.3.** All faculty and staff within the department may provide input via the survey. Other key constituents outside the department (e.g., college scheduler, Graduate Studies Coordinator) may also participate.
- 6.2.4.** The department chair is expected to complete a narrative self-evaluation to address the nine areas of duties and responsibilities, highlight progress toward goals, and reflect on how the chair work is impacting the chair's other activities in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service. No evidence is required or expected to support the self-evaluation.
- 6.3.** Process – The department chair review shall be initiated by the dean no later than week 3 of the Fall semester of the Academic Year in which the chair's term ends.
  - 6.3.1.** The department chair performance survey tool shall be given to all faculty/staff within the department and other key constituents. The survey results shall be provided to the chair by week 6 of the semester.
  - 6.3.2.** Should the chair choose to produce a narrative self-evaluation, the document shall be transmitted to the dean no later than week 9.
  - 6.3.3.** By week 12, the dean shall meet with the chair to conclude the review with a discussion of the self-evaluation (if provided), survey results, and past and future goals. The chair review, which documents the development, mentorship, and performance, shall be provided in writing from the dean to the chair. Per university policy, activities for which faculty receive assigned/reassigned time shall be evaluated on the same basis as teaching, scholarship, and service. Thus, to assist such evaluation the chair or dean may propose to add the written chair review to the chair's personnel file, following procedures specified in the CBA for addition of such material.

## **7. Department Chair Compensation**

- 7.1.** In recognition of the additional responsibilities, chairs receive a reduction in teaching responsibilities (reassigned for a fraction of their faculty appointment).
- 7.2.** Compensation shall be provided that allows the chair to be successful in the execution of their duties, including tasks that are performed in between semesters and during the summer.
- 7.3.** Guiding principles for the determination of chair reassigned time are grounded in the need for flexibility and internal equity across the campus. Reassigned time and stipends for chairs shall consider the responsibilities and requirements of the role for that specific academic unit.

## **8. Procedure for Removal of a Chair**

### **8.1. Recall by faculty**

- 8.1.1.** If there is dissatisfaction with a chair and informal attempts involving faculty and the dean to resolve the difference have failed, a petition signed by a simple majority of the department faculty may be forwarded to the dean.
- 8.1.2.** Within two weeks of receiving the petition, the dean will call a department meeting to discuss the issue. Following the meeting, the dean will make a recommendation to the President or designee for removal or retention of the chair.
- 8.1.3.** The President or designee will be responsible for informing the dean of their decision. The dean will communicate this decision to the department.
- 8.1.4.** If the President or designee concurs with a recall recommendation, the department will institute procedures for the selection of a new chair.

### **8.2. Administrative removal**

- 8.2.1.** Department chairs serve at the pleasure of the President.
- 8.2.2.** Prior to any decision for administrative removal of a chair, the dean will review the chair's Personnel Action File and any chair reviews and other available information.
- 8.2.3.** If the dean determines that a chair should be removed from their position due to chair performance concerns, the dean shall hold a meeting with the department chair. The dean will then make a recommendation to the Provost.
- 8.2.4.** The Provost shall review the matter and make a recommendation to the President, and will then notify the college and department of the President's decision.
- 8.2.5.** If the chair is removed, then the department will institute procedures for the selection of a new chair.

## **9. Related Information**

- 9.1.** [Unit 3 Collective Bargaining Agreement](#) – Article 20 Workload, Section 20.30-20.32  
Department Chair Assignments and Article 31 Salary, Section 31.27-31.28  
Department Chairpersons



- 9.2. Guidelines for Department Chair Assigned Time, from the Working Group on Chair Appointments, convened Spring 2019 by the Provost.
- 9.3. [Definition of Terms](#)
- 9.4. [Roles, Responsibilities, Resources, and Rewards for Department Chairs](#), A Report to the Academic Senate, California State University from the Task Force on Roles and Responsibilities of Chairs (2014)
- 9.5. Evaluation of Assigned/Reassigned Time Activities in the RTP Process - [AA 2006-03](#)
- 9.6. Terms and Conditions of Appointment - Department/Division Chair and School Director – [AA 2005-17](#) and 2016 version AAPS004.001
- 9.7. Selection and Review of Chairperson/Coordinators for Departments and Programs which Constitute Primary Teaching Service Areas – [PM 2017-02](#)

**Approved:** Dr. Michael E. Spagna, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

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