

## 2.6 Department Chairpersons: Responsibilities

For the purposes of this discussion the word ‘department’ refers to an academic department or program that oversees a curriculum of study taken by students as a major.

The Chair of a department is the chief academic and administrative officer for that department and is accountable directly to the Provost. (S)he is responsible for the proper functioning of the department/program with respect to curriculum, facilities, budgets, hiring, faculty development, student concerns, and engagement in the broader community.

The Provost, following consultation with all continuing full time faculty in the department, appoints the Chair for a four-year term, which may be renewed for up to one additional four-year term. Selection criteria include: experience in leadership positions; the point in a person’s career with respect to sabbaticals, research plans, etc; placement of sabbaticals within the department; and tenure status—under normal circumstances only tenured faculty will be asked to serve as Chair of a department. Chairpersons serve at the pleasure of the Provost, who will evaluate the Chair’s work regularly, and assist when appropriate. Near the end of the first four-year term the Provost, after meeting with continuing full time faculty, will determine if reappointment is mutually desirable.

Under ordinary circumstances, the Chair is relieved of one course per year as compensation for Chair duties and responsibilities. In rare cases, this allowance may increase, at the discretion of the Provost. To receive a second course release, the Department Chair must request it in writing to the Provost by January 15. A second course release is not automatically renewed from one academic year to the next, which means the Chair must write each year he or she believes circumstances warrant a second release. Factors to be considered for increasing the course allowance include departmental size, sabbatical leaves, departmental searches, personnel matters, or other issues that may result in large departmental time demands placed upon the Chair. If circumstances prohibit a Chair from taking a course reduction, a stipend can be negotiated.

Outlined below is a list of the specific duties of the department Chairperson. This list is meant to provide direction in administering the responsibilities of this position, which may vary somewhat from department to department. Departments should maintain a list of specific job duties to ensure the smooth operation of departmental business.

- 1. Leadership:** The Chair is responsible for fostering a climate of respect, collegiality, and interaction within and among departments so that student learning, faculty development, and programmatic and interdisciplinary successes are fostered and encouraged. Facilitating an ongoing program for long-range planning and innovation, including curriculum, within the department is also the Chair’s responsibility. This plan should reflect balance between departmental goals/mission/needs and those of the college.
- 2. Departmental Representative and Liaison:** The Chair acts as the spokesperson in all official transactions with department members, as well as with other members of the college and community-at-large (off-campus contacts). (S)he oversees department policies and practices, guides planning, and serves as the “certifying officer” of the department on official matters. The Chair also facilitates communication with other academic departments and programs where concerted efforts would be of mutual benefit.

- 3. Personnel:** The Chair has oversight responsibility for department staff, including building coordinators, technicians, program assistants, and all other personnel whose duty lies within the department. The Chair is the first point of contact and has primary responsibility for mediating conflicts among department staff as well as handling student and parental concerns or complaints. The Chair has principal responsibility for all department personnel searches and serves as the chief coordinator for recruitment into the department; (s)he may delegate this responsibility where appropriate. The Chair should work closely with new faculty to ensure proper orientation to departmental policies. First-year faculty should not be expected to provide academic advising for students or serve as a first reader on senior projects. Exceptions may be made for the senior project, in consultation with the Chair and the Provost. A first-year faculty member may be asked to serve as second or third reader on a small number of senior projects.
- 4. Handling and Keeping of RSE Narratives:** All narratives will be sent to the chair of the faculty member's home department/program. In the event that there is no home department/program, a department/program chair will be designated upon consultation between the faculty member, the Provost, the Registrar, and the chair in question. The chair should provide copies of narrative evaluations to untenured faculty but must retain the original narratives. Copies of narratives should be provided to tenured faculty upon their request. Narratives should only be destroyed under one of the following circumstances:

  - The instructor has left the college and is not expected to return, or
  - The instructor has achieved the rank of full professor and at least five years have elapsed since the course was taught.
- 5. Faculty Development and Evaluation:** The chair ensures that the faculty are aware of the department's expectations and that each faculty member's own expectations and concerns are addressed when appropriate. Chairs provide opportunities for ongoing conversation with department colleagues about their professional responsibilities and development and shall hold such conversations with tenure-track faculty members annually. The chair will coordinate all departmental evaluations; and when the college considers faculty for promotion or tenure, the chair (with contributions from other faculty members as appropriate) will be the primary author of department faculty evaluations.
- 6. Departmental Meetings:** Chairs are responsible for calling regular department meetings; a minimum of three meetings per semester is required. The Chair insures that agendas are made available to department members and that department business is recorded as appropriate.
- 7. Course Scheduling:** The Chairperson is responsible for organizing class schedules, subject to approval by the Provost. Although the task of actually coordinating schedules may be delegated, untenured faculty members should not be asked to perform this task. It is the Chair's right to ensure that scheduling burdens are equitably shared by department members, who must be aware that it may be necessary to teach a five-day schedule one semester per year.
- 8. Certifying Minors and Transfer Credit Approval:** It is the Chair's responsibility to certify that requirements for minors have been met and to approve credit for transfer and off-campus courses. Although the task of certifying minors may be delegated, primary oversight belongs to the Chair.

**9. Physical Operations:** The Chair is responsible for the general management and oversight of departmental facilities, including office-classroom-lab-studio space and equipment. The Chair should be aware of department needs with respect to facilities, and represent those needs to the administration.

**10. Budget:** The Chair is responsible for planning and maintaining the department operations budget.

**11. Classroom Observation Policies:**

Every academic department and program at the college is expected to establish a written policy by which the regular classroom observations of untenured faculty will be conducted. Reasons for such a policy are manifold. For the evaluative work tenured faculty must do, direct observation of colleagues' teaching is an irreplaceable feature of the accurate and fair assessment of pedagogical practice. Formalizing such policies in writing ensures their routine implementation and demonstrates an institutional commitment to teaching that is both thorough-going and equitable.

Each department's and program's specific classroom observation policy should be designed to fit its particular nature—its size, its culture, its pedagogies—but all such policies should be consistent with the following expectations:

- **Frequency.** Every tenure-track colleague should be observed teaching by at least one tenured colleague each year, for formative or summative purposes (depending on when the observations take place in the observed faculty member's review schedule);
- **Sequence.** Classroom observations should happen on two sequential classes or as close together in the calendar as circumstances allow;
- **Scheduling.** The observed faculty member should help determine the dates of the visits at least a week ahead of time (no surprise visits). If the observed faculty member is visited by more than one tenured colleague in a semester, every effort should be made to avoid having more than one or two faculty observing the same class meeting;
- **Before-and-after meetings.** The observer should meet with the observed colleague both before the class observation sequence to put those classes into context, and afterwards (one day or at most a week after the last observed class). These before-and-after meetings should be understood as occasions during which the colleague getting observed can inform the observer about the course in general, what he or she is trying to accomplish in these particular class meetings, and what he/she would like the observer to look for. After the classroom visits, the observing faculty member should describe what he or she observed in the areas the observed faculty member designated beforehand and in other areas where the observer discerned noteworthy strengths and challenges. A written report of classroom observations must be placed annually in both the Department's and the Provost's file.

Each classroom observation policy should represent the consensus of the department or program creating them and should be reviewed by the department/program every five years. A copy of a department's or program's new policy should be sent to the Provost's Office. In the spirit of making these documents consistent with the college's minimum expectations described above, the Provost or Associate Provost may on occasion discuss possible revisions in a department's or program's

guidelines. Each department/program's guidelines will also be posted on the Faculty Resources website (<http://sites.allegheny.edu/facultyresources/>) when available.

Additional resources related to classroom observations can be found on-line at <http://sites.allegheny.edu/facultyresources/principles-of-classroom-observation/> and <http://sitesmedia.s3.amazonaws.com/facultyresources/files/2011/02/A-Class-Visit-Model.pdf>.

*(Spring, 2002;  
Revised Spring, 2004; Spring, 2011; Spring, 2012)*

## **2.7 Faculty Input into the Reappointment of the Provost and Dean of the College**

The Provost and Dean of the College serves at the pleasure of the President and may be reappointed for one or more subsequent terms. If the Provost is to be considered for reappointment, faculty input about her or his performance shall be collected by Faculty Council during the fall of the final year of the Provost's current appointment. By September 15, Council shall solicit written input from all department chairs and program directors and also invite letters from any other faculty members, including non-tenure track and part-time faculty. All faculty input into the review process must be submitted to Council by October 1. Council shall then review, discuss, and share its findings during a meeting with the President by October 15. The contents of all letters and other communications will be treated as confidential by both Council and the President. This process shall be discontinued if the Provost indicates that she or he does not wish to be considered for reappointment.

*(Spring, 2012)*

## **2.8 Faculty Input into the Reappointment of Associate Deans and Associate Provosts of the College**

The President or the Provost and Dean of the College will consult with Faculty Council before reappointing an Associate Dean or Associate Provost of the College.

*(Spring, 2012)*