Department Chair Handbook

Rev. Summer 2018

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Welcome

Serving as a department chair is an opportunity to explore, expand, or strengthen administrative skills, especially in organizational and personnel matters. It is also an opportunity to formulate and lead department initiatives. Most significantly, it is a position that contributes meaningfully to the vision and ethos of the college. The service of individual department chairs collectively shapes the experience students encounter; when performed with conscientiousness and diligence, students prosper.

The primary responsibility of the department chair is to work collegially to ensure and facilitate the effective, efficient operation of the department, and to serve as liaison with administration. The department chair is accountable to his/her departmental colleagues and dean.

It is understood that department chair responsibilities vary slightly among departments according to specific program operations, instructional support, equipment and facilities, and staffing. Individual departments may offer supplemental information to this handbook.

This handbook can be found online on the Full-time Faculty Information page.

For information on department chair election and terms, evaluation, reassigned time, and summer compensation, see the current District/Faculty Assembly Agreement.

> *Reference*:
> Full-Time Faculty Information
> Portal Homepage
> - Links to the ***Associate Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement*** and the ***District Faculty Assembly Agreement*** can be found in the Portal… *Departments →Human Resources→HR Home*, then click the *Employee Manuals/Labor Agreements/MOUs* link on the left side of that page.

Areas of Responsibility

Hiring Recommendations

One of the most critical functions fulfilled by department chairs is to make recommendations for hiring to deans. Personnel matters require great care and skill to ultimately deliver high quality teaching, learning, and instructional support. Significant time, attention to detail, and due diligence should be devoted to this particular duty in order to ensure respect, fairness, and consistency.

Associate Faculty
When new associate faculty need to be hired, the department chair works with his/her dean and Human Resources to coordinate advertising, reviewing applications and arranging interviews.

In hiring associate faculty, the chair must follow the procedure detailed in Administrative Procedure 7120.5. Associate faculty are hired on a semester-to-semester basis. The chair submits the hiring recommendation to the dean by completing the New Associate Faculty Notification (NAFN) form, which includes the chair's recommendation for the specific teaching assignment for the semester.

> *Reference*:
> AP 7120.5: Recruitment and Hiring – Associate Faculty
> New Associate Faculty Notification (NAFN)

Instructional Support
The chair also makes recommendations to his/her dean for hiring temporary instructional associates, student workers, and substitute instructors.

> *Reference*:
> Hiring Student Workers
> Manual for Supervisors of Student Workers

Full-time Faculty
Requests for new full-time faculty -- growth positions as well as replacement positions -- are incorporated in the Program Review process for each discipline within the department.

If the request for a full-time faculty position is approved, the department chair works with his/her dean and Human Resources to coordinate the hiring process, as outlined in Administrative Procedure 7120.4.

Reference:
[Program Review Handbook](#)
[AP 7120.4: Recruitment and Hiring – Full-Time Faculty](#)

Equivalency
Whether for an associate or full-time faculty position, if a candidate requests equivalency, the department chair responds to the request from a discipline perspective, coordinating with Human Resources to submit the request to the Equivalency Committee.

The chair also submits requests to the [Equivalency Committee](#) for annual updates to the [list of Comparable Degree Titles](#) for each discipline, within the department.

Reference:
[AP 7211.2: Minimum Qualifications and Equivalencies](#)
[Comparable Degree Titles](#)

Department Orientation
The department chair orients new associate and full-time faculty regarding:
- departmental resources
- textbook orders
- professional development opportunities
- Course Outlines of Record
- student learning outcomes and assessment work
- any other departmental projects or initiatives

The dean's office orients new faculty to institutional requirements (such as FLEX) and institutional resources such as keys, email access and distribution lists, SURF access, office hours, and mailboxes.

Faculty Contracts
Department chairs should be familiar with working conditions outlined in the current Associate Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement and the District/Faculty Assembly Agreement.

Reference:
[Portal Homepage](#)
- Links to the **Associate Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement** and the **District Faculty Assembly Agreement** can be found in the Portal… *Departments →Human Resources→HR Home*, then click the *Employee Manuals/Labor Agreements/MOUs* link on the left side of that page.

Associate Faculty Evaluations

Guidelines for evaluating associate faculty are outlined in the Associate Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement, Article 9.

Evaluations are required in the first semester of employment, and thereafter at least once every six semesters of employment. However, evaluations may be conducted more frequently at the discretion of the department chair, lead instructor, dean, or vice president. Department chairs may likely consider circumstances such as new preps, online assignments, or previous concerns.

The timeline and tracking of associate evaluations is monitored by the dean's office, and department chairs must be responsive to deadlines and directions from the dean's office. Department chairs may delegate the evaluation of associate faculty to full-time faculty, within the department, who have particular discipline expertise. The dean is required to notify the associate faculty who their assigned evaluator is prior to the commencement of the evaluation, and so the department needs to provide its list of evaluators to the dean once the assignments have been worked out. If the associate faculty member believes the proposed evaluator is biased against them then they may ask the dean to assign an alternate evaluator.

Since student surveys are a component of the evaluation, the evaluation should not be finalized until the evaluator has reviewed the student surveys, and incorporated their feedback to any extent that is appropriate. Since the evaluator receives copies of the comments, but the faculty member will not see them until after the semester is over, the evaluator needs to be mindful of this distinction. If the student comments have a strong bearing on the evaluation as a whole, then the evaluator is encouraged to discuss with their dean to explore an appropriate approach prior to finalizing the evaluation.

> *Reference*:
> Portal Homepage
> - Links to the **Associate Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement** and the **District Faculty Assembly Agreement** can be found in the Portal… *Departments →Human Resources→HR Home*, then click the *Employee Manuals/Labor Agreements/MOUs* link on the left side of that page.

Full-time Faculty Evaluations

Currently, the role and duties of department chairs in the evaluation processes for tenure candidates and tenured faculty members are outlined in the respective handbooks on the [Professional Growth & Evaluation (PG&E) webpage](#) and in the District/Faculty Assembly Agreement. However, the District and Faculty Assembly are negotiating possible changes to the evaluation process for *new*, probationary faculty. Chairs should be aware that changes are likely pending. Any such changes would only affect the newly hired, tenure-track faculty who are starting in Fall 2018.

Close attention to deadlines, responsibilities, and sequential steps in each of the evaluation processes is imperative.

> *Reference*:
> [Professional Growth & Evaluation (PG&E)](#)
> [Tenure Candidate Information](#)
> [Tenured Faculty Information](#)

Tenured Faculty
The department chair is a member of the Peer Review Committee (PRC) for a faculty member undergoing either *Evaluation: 3 Year* or *Evaluation: 6 Year*.

The dean's office will notify department chairs which faculty are scheduled for either *Evaluation: 3 Year* (typically in the fall semester) or *Evaluation: 6 Year* (typically in the spring semester).

For *Evaluation: 3 Year*, the department chair may be asked by the tenured faculty member to serve as PRC Chair.

For *Evaluation: 6 Year*, the department chair provides input to the tenured faculty member on PRC membership, but preferably does not serve as PRC Chair.

> *Reference*:
> [Tenured Faculty Information](#)

Tenure Candidates
Composition of a Tenure Review Committee (TRC) is determined by the end of the semester prior to the arrival of a new Candidate.

The department chair may or may not be a member of the TRC. The department chair is not required to serve as TRC Chair.

> *Reference*:
> [Tenure Candidate Information](#)

Classified Staff Evaluations

Department chairs coordinate and often conduct evaluations of classified staff working in their department, and forward these evaluations to the dean. Department chairs will be notified by Human Resources and their dean when these evaluations are due, and must complete the evaluations by the deadline. It is critical that these evaluations are thoughtful, complete, accurate, and timely. The evaluations should only be completed by the supervisor who has been assigned to oversee the work of staff who are assigned to this position, and it is not within the department's discretion to change such assignments. Any questions or requested changes should be directed to the dean.

Department chairs who conduct evaluations are encouraged to include comments on the evaluation form for a plan supporting professional development. Evaluators need to note that, if the overall rating indicates the employee's performance does not meet expectations, then the assessment *must* be forwarded to the Manager of Human Resources Operations *prior* to being discussed with the employee. The supervisor and the Manager of Human Resources Operations will draft a written performance improvement plan, which will then be shared with the employee as part of the evaluation.

> *Reference*:
> [Portal Homepage](#)
> - Links to the **Associate Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement** and the **District Faculty Assembly Agreement** can be found in the Portal… *Departments →Human Resources→HR Home*, then click the *Employee Manuals/Labor Agreements/MOUs* link on the left side of that page.

Course Scheduling and Enrollment Management

Scheduling is one of the most important and time-consuming tasks that department chairs undertake. Scheduling decisions are most effective when they serve the best interests of students. Department chairs and deans work very closely together to make these important decisions.

Each year deans outline scheduling parameters, and distribute schedule templates and a timeline for submitting drafts and proofs.

The nature of this task is complex; department chairs must remain highly attentive to detail and to deadlines. Recommendations and decisions must be data-driven, and informed by the college's enrollment management system.

With input from department members, the department chair recommends to the dean course schedules, room placement, schedule growth or reduction, and class cancellations.

"Room rentership" is used in the early stage of schedule development, when departments have first access to specified rooms at specified times in which to place classes as they consider most productive. After this period of time, room placement for classes is managed by the Office of Instruction.

The department chair makes recommendations for full-time and associate faculty teaching assignments, but the right of assignment remains with the dean and the Office of Instruction.

Department chairs should be aware that an associate faculty member who has taught for six or more consecutive semesters (or one semester in each of six consecutive years) must be notified by the dean's office as soon as it appears that he/she may not be offered an assignment for a class that he/she has typically taught. A department chair should bring to the dean's attention names of any associate faculty who are not being recommended for an assignment after teaching six or more consecutive semesters (or one semester in each of six consecutive years).

Department chairs and deans collaboratively discuss decisions to cancel classes, however the final decision remains with the dean.

The following terms are regularly used when making decisions about course scheduling and enrollment management:
- **FTEF** - Full-Time Equivalent Faculty

- **FTES** - Full-Time Equivalent Students
- **% of Cap/Fill Rate** - Percentage of Enrolled Students Per Enrollment Capacity (e.g. fill rate)
- **LHE** - Lecture Hour Equivalent (e.g. weekly student contact hours modified by performance/load factors)
- **WFCH** - Weekly Faculty Contact Hours
- **WSCH** - Weekly Student Contact Hours

This data is captured in [EDDI](#). This terminology is explained in the [Program Review Primer](#) found on the portal.

Reference:
[Program Review Primer](#)

Curriculum

As a leader of faculty, the department chair plays a critical role in supporting and encouraging curriculum review and development – one of the fundamental tenets of academic and professional matters. The department chair must communicate closely with his/her dean in all matters of curriculum to ensure that instruction remains responsive to students' needs, including issues of resources and facilities.

According to the Courses and Programs Committee (CPC) Handbook, department chairs coordinate and manage curriculum within their respective departments. As such, department chair responsibilities include the following:

- Receiving and disseminating information related to curriculum from the Office of Instruction and/or the CPC committee chair to appropriate faculty members in the department.
- Reviewing curriculum proposals for discipline and departmental-specific "impact," encroachment, and, when appropriate, local workforce need.
- Reviewing curriculum proposals for accuracy and completeness.
- Confirming that all curriculum proposals have been fully vetted by the discipline and department.
- Reviewing courses on probationary status to determine whether or not they warrant a rationale for keeping active.
- When a department does not want to deactivate ("sunset") a course on the probationary list, the department chair is required to complete and submit a Sunset Deferral Request form, which provides CPC the department's rationale and supporting documentation for keeping the course active.
- Reviewing and approving instructional materials fees.
- Forwarding curriculum proposals from the department chair stage to the instructional dean stage in CurricUNET Meta.
- Approving the addition, deletion, and modification of course and program SLOs.
- Reviewing CTE course requisites in January (odd-numbered years only) and submitting a requisite review form by March 1 to the instructional technical support specialist. (The form indicates whether each requisite continues to be appropriate or requires a change to be submitted the following fall semester.)
- Ensuring Academic Maps are up-to-date.

  Reference:
  Courses and Programs (CPC) Committee Handbook 2017/18, Section 5.9
  CurricUNET Meta User Manual

Program and Course Approval Handbook 6th Edition
Curriculum Management System Homepage

Reviewing Catalog Pages

The College Catalog is the result of curricular work and should reflect changes and updates from the annual curriculum cycle.

Each spring, chairs review their department's discipline and program catalog pages for accuracy; this review is time-sensitive.

Any errors related to courses, degrees, and/or certificates should be reported to the Office of Instruction and to the dean.

Department Meetings and Activities

Department chairs are responsible for organizing, conducting, and/or attending a variety of meetings and activities for the department or the district throughout the year.

Department Chair Meetings

Four department chair meetings are scheduled per semester, at the direction of the dean. The meetings are currently scheduled in the afternoon of the first Thursday of the month, although the Vice President of Instruction may request a meeting on the third Thursday of the month. *Department chairs must keep first and third Thursday afternoons available in their schedules.*

A Department Chair Retreat may be scheduled each semester by the Vice President of Instruction.

All department chairs are expected to attend these meetings and the retreat, as well as contribute agenda items before the meetings, represent the department and the views of department members during the meetings, and disseminate information to department members after the meetings.

Department Meetings

The chair is responsible for organizing and conducting department meetings. A meeting that includes both full-time and associate faculty may be held at any time during the semester at the discretion of the chair.

During Flex Week each semester, Wednesday mornings are reserved for department meetings so that chairs may conduct a meeting without conflicting with Flex activities or class schedules.

Department Activities

Department chairs collaborate with faculty in their department and with their dean to facilitate department retreats, workshops, conferences, and poster sessions. For these types of activities the department chair's responsibilities include:
- monitoring expenditures;
- communicating with other departments if there are opportunities for collaboration;

- communicating needs to the dean's office for work orders, personnel or purchase requisitions, and promotional materials;
- acquiring, in advance, any approval or liability forms with appropriate district departments.

Administrative Procedure 6304 outlines procedures for food and beverage purchases for certain, pre-approved activities. Typically, department funds are used for these expenses, but must be pre-approved by the dean.

Reference:
AP 6304: Actual and Necessary Business Expenses

Other Duties in Collaboration with Dean

Budget

Each department has a two-part budget with allocations for personnel, departmental operations, and travel for professional development. Deans are responsible for budget management and deans approve all expenditures; they work closely with department chairs to monitor the budget throughout the year.

Budget 9211 is the fixed budget for the department that includes permanent or required expenditures for the department. Funding includes the salaries and benefits of permanent staff and faculty.

Budget 9811 is the operational budget for the department that includes funding for temporary staff as well as funding for travel, supplies, printing, and any other operational expenses unique to the department.

A department chair may also monitor other funds in addition to 9211 and 9811 if a department has a grant associated with one of its programs, or has other revenue (e.g.,. from ticket sales or Foundation funds).

Each spring deans and department chairs collaborate to develop department and program budgets for the upcoming fiscal year.

> *Reference*:
> PeopleSoft Financials Login
> Business and Administrative Services Homepage
> Fiscal Services Contact Information

Travel

Travel procedures are outlined in Administrative Procedure 7400.

Out of state travel requires a statement to justify the expense (i.e., instructional improvement or professional development with no reasonable alternative within state).

> *Reference:*
> AP 7400 Employee Travel

Program Review

The department chair is responsible for coordinating and submitting the Program Review for each discipline or program in his/her department. Program Review is conducted through a series of stages where involvement and feedback broadens from the initial program author, to the department, to the dean. This process is significant not only to facilitate reflection on existing programs, resources, and facilities, but also to envision possibilities for growth, collaboration, and innovation. The Program Review process and timeline is in the process of being changed, and faculty will be apprised of updates as they occur.

> *Reference:*
> Program Review Handbook
> Institutional Program Review Committee Homepage

Student Learning Outcomes and Service Area Outcomes Assessment

In addition to program review and planning, the ongoing assessment of student learning outcomes and service area outcomes (in the case of departments who provide services outside of classroom instruction) is a cornerstone of the college's continuous improvement efforts.

Departments have a collective responsibility to assess outcomes, review and discuss results, and use them to inform appropriate improvements to student learning and services. Departments then evaluate how well any such improvements are working, and document the discussion process and findings. All full-time faculty should actively support such efforts. Input and participation from associate faculty should be encouraged whenever possible, so it is a good idea to set up Flex-eligible meetings for them.

Different programs may have very different ways of sharing this work, and the department may have individuals assigned to serve as leads in one or more areas. Whatever the model, the department chair plays an important role by assuring that efforts are coordinated so that course, program, and/or service area outcomes are regularly assessed (a bare minimum of once every 6 years), and that the results are appropriately discussed each year and used to foster continuous improvement.

The Outcomes Assessment Committee maintains a Program/Departmental SLO Assessment Analysis Form which chairs should use to foster robust practices and

documentation. During summer 2018, the college is in the process of migrating its SLO database to a new platform (Campus Labs), and will be discontinuing the use of TracDat. Instructions will be provided during the 2018/19 academic year to inform effective use of the new platform.

> *Reference:*
> [Student Learning Outcomes Handbook](#)
> [Outcomes Assessment Committee Homepage](#)

Instructional Equipment Requests

If funds are available from the Office of Instruction for equipment purchase (separate from Program Review), a call for requests is sent to department chairs by the deans. The department chair then consults with department members and works with his/her dean to submit requests for instructional equipment in a timely manner.

Textbook Orders

Individual instructors are responsible for submitting textbook orders for their course(s) directly to the bookstore in a timely manner, as prompted by department chairs and/or discipline leads.

The college bookstore provides a webpage to facilitate the timely and efficient submittal of textbook orders; deans and department chairs encourage faculty to be mindful of the need for this information sooner rather than later so cost savings may be passed on to students, and so that our online schedule is compliant with state regulations regarding textbook costs.

Faculty Absences

A department chair is often notified by his/her dean's office when a full-time or associate faculty member is absent. (If a department chair is contacted directly by a faculty member who will be absent, they should remind the faculty member to notify the dean's office of the absence; it is advisable for the department chair to then follow-up with the dean's office on this absence.)

If an absence is planned, the department chair and dean work together to secure substitute instructors, as appropriate. Substitute instructors must be pre-approved by the dean.

> *Reference:*
> [Full-Time Faculty Absence Report Form](#)
> [Associate Faculty Absence Report](#)
> [Payroll Forms and Links](#)

Intradepartmental Faculty Complaints

Department chairs attempt to initially address and resolve complaints between faculty and should inform the dean of their effort to do so. If the department chair is unable to resolve these interpersonal concerns or complaints, then the complainant may take the matter to the dean. The dean will following up on the matter in collaboration with the department chair in order to resolve the complaint.

Student Interactions

Department chairs are urged to consult their dean on all matters of a sensitive, serious, or potentially acute nature.

If a faculty member reports to the department chair an interaction with a student that raises questions or concerns – whether immediate or subtle -- the department chair should urge the faculty member to submit a [Maxient CARE Referral Form](#) online.

To effectively respond to academic student matters, department chairs must carefully follow appropriate Administrative Procedures for:
- [Prerequisite Challenges (AP 4260)](#)
- [Grade Change Requests (AP 4231)](#)
- [Academic Integrity (AP 5505)](#)

Department chairs must be good listeners and effective communicators to effectively handle interpersonal student matters. When a student is unable to resolve a complaint with an instructor directly, the Department Chair will conduct informal conflict resolution to address the complaint as constructively as possible. If it is not resolved, the student may take the issue or concern to the dean.

> *Reference:*
> [Maxient Care Referral Forms](#)
> [AP 4260: Prerequisite Challenges](#)
> [AP 4231: Grade Change Requests](#)

AP 5505: Academic Dishonesty-Discipline Appeal Process
AP 5520: Student Discipline
AP 5530: Student Rights & Grievances
College Catalog
Maxient CARE Referral Form

Appreciation

Thank you in advance for demonstrating excellence in this important institutional role. Every issue and every responsibility handled by a department chair is an issue of student success. Your conscientious service is invaluable in realizing the goals and vision of the college.