

## **Guidelines for the Appointment and Review of Department Chairs**

**November 7, 2019**

### **1. Authority and Responsibility of the Department Chair**

The position of department chair is one of the most critical in the university. Department chairs are the essential link between the administration and department faculty. When chairs fulfill their role effectively, there is clear and collegial communication between faculty and administration. When chairs are ineffective, there is often misunderstanding and miscommunication, which can have serious repercussions on program quality, faculty retention and satisfaction, and the university as a whole.

A department chair plays multiple roles within the university, serving as the department's primary spokesperson and advocate as well as the administration's representative to the department. A department chair is the chief academic and administrative officer for an academic department and is accountable to the dean of the school for all aspects of the operation and development of that department. The chair is responsible for the overall proper functioning of the department and for demonstrating effective leadership in developing strong academic programs.

The quality of a chair's leadership is reflected in many ways, from the strength of the faculty recruited and retained, the quality of the department's academic programs, and the programs' standing with faculty and students, to the ability of students and faculty to effectively describe the mission and vision of the department, the visibility and reputation of the department with external audiences, and the maintenance of high ethical and professional standards.

The responsibilities and duties of the Chair include, but are not limited to, the following:

#### **Department Governance and Office Management**

- Provide effective leadership for the department. This includes working with the faculty to shape the department's vision, mission, and strategic plan; developing consensus around shared goals, encouraging faculty members to invest in planning; collaborating with faculty on important decisions; updating and discussing with faculty the actions and decisions taken by the Dean and other university administrators; and developing and leading the implementation of long-range plans, goals, and policies.
- Ensure that the department is effectively administered. This includes ensuring the department is appropriately and effectively staffed, ensuring that departmental records are managed in accordance with university policy, submitting required plans and reports for official university publications in a timely manner, and managing conflict and mediating disputes.
- Work to create a climate of trust, mutual support, teamwork, respect for differences, and dedication to the highest ethical standards of the profession and the university.

## **Curriculum and Program Development**

- Lead the development and implementation of high-quality curricula, programs, teaching methods, courseware, and effective outcomes assessment. This includes guiding and coordinating assessment and accreditation activities, managing reviews of course syllabi on a regular basis, collecting and sharing data to guide discussions to improve effectiveness, and creating a collegial, transparent and effective environment that recognizes and strives for excellence.
- Schedule classes, in cooperation with the University Registrar, establish teaching schedules, assign faculty to classes, and ensure an equitable distribution of teaching loads to meet the needs of the curriculum.
- Demonstrate understanding and interest in faculty research, support faculty members in securing resources for research, and ensure that faculty members understand guidelines on research and scientific standards. This includes encouraging cooperation and linkages between faculty within the department, within the university, and with relevant external researchers and programs.

## **Faculty Responsibilities**

- Recruit qualified faculty, promote and oversee the training and mentoring of faculty and create an environment that will encourage faculty productivity and retention. This includes promoting and assisting the professional development of faculty, encouraging faculty participation in department activities, assigning committee work, and managing faculty work assignments in a way that builds on the individual strengths of faculty members and meets teaching, research, and service goals.
- Identify clear role, responsibilities, and accountabilities to the associate chair when the department has any.
- Communicate the criteria for faculty evaluation clearly and transparently, meet with faculty and discuss the results of faculty evaluations, and use the results to help faculty members improve their performance.

## **Student Responsibilities**

- Lead department efforts to recruit and retain students. This includes establishing effective communication with student organizations, including, where applicable, student advisory groups to facilitate open communication.
- Oversee graduate student recruitment activities carried out by the graduate program director where applicable.
- Adjudicate student petitions and other requests for action in accordance with department and university policy.
- Collect aggregated data regarding student progress and success and communicate and discuss this data with the department. These data include the results of the program and course learning outcomes assessment, graduation rates, survey results, and other evaluations.

## **Communication with External Audiences**

- Serve as a liaison between the department and internal and external constituencies. This includes communicating department needs, achievements, and activities to the dean and being an effective advocate for the department with external audiences,

persuasively communicating the department's mission, vision, goals, and achievements.

- Ensure that the department's visual communication (website, publications, etc.) are effective, persuasive, accurate, and adhere to AUC's branding guidelines.

### **Resource Management**

- Prepare and monitor the department's budget to ensure that there are adequate resources to carry out the department's mission and the department's budget is not overspent.
- Communicate to the faculty and the dean the relationship between the budget, the department's strategic plan, and the school and university's strategic plans.
- Adhere to the highest ethical and professional standards in allocating and spending department funds and ensure that all financial transactions are conducted in an objective, transparent manner and in accordance with university regulations.

**Other expectations:** As faculty members, department chairs are expected to teach in addition to their administrative duties and engage in university service and research or creative work, as appropriate to their field and in accordance with the policy of their school.

## **2. Compensation and Length of Term**

The job responsibilities for chairs typically require greater effort devoted to service functions; thus, chairs receive a reduction in their expected teaching load each academic year during their term as chair. Department chairs are expected to teach two courses per semester.<sup>1</sup>

Additional compensation is extended to chairs in recognition of the responsibility they have taken on. Department chairs receive 11 percent annual compensation.

The chair's position is deemed a year-round appointment, which signifies that the chairs are responsible for their duties even while their faculty colleagues may be away from campus.

The department chair holds a renewable three-year term. No faculty member may serve more than two consecutive terms as chair; however, there are no limits on non-consecutive terms. Chairs may be removed at the discretion of the dean, following consultation with the Provost and faculty of the department.

## **3. Eligibility Criteria for Appointment of Department Chair**

Candidates for department chair/interim chair positions should preferably be faculty members who

- are tenured at the rank of associate professor or professor;
- have successful records as scholars and teachers; and

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<sup>1</sup> Some departments due to the unique nature of their activities, will be granted release time that deviates from the unified one described above.

- have demonstrated a commitment to leadership through their service activities at the departmental, school, and/or university levels.

For the Academy of Liberal Arts, eligible instructors for department chair/interim chair positions are at the rank of senior instructor.

The positions of Professors of Practice are eligible for Department Chair, provided they have sufficient experience with academic life.

#### **4. Selection and Appointment of Department Chairs**

Deans may at their discretion, following consultation with the Provost and faculty of the department, in a duly constituted department meeting, determine whether to conduct an external search for a department chair, solicit nominations for a chair from the department's faculty, or consider both internal and external candidates. The search can only be open for external candidates if the department has a substitutional or incremental line to use for this purpose.

When a dean determines that an open search for external candidates is to be conducted, the department will conduct that search in accordance with standard university hiring procedures and a search committee must be formed (refer to Section 5).

If the search is only open for internal candidates, deans solicit nominations for the Chair position from the faculty. Nominees may present their strategy to realize the vision of the department and their previous work in committees and department projects in a departmental meeting or the department may use other means to identify the most qualified candidate. Selection documentation is necessary and must be provided to support the selection made. The dean of the school in consultation with the department appoints the chair. In exceptional cases where the dean has reservations about the department's selection, s/he will consult with the department to find an alternative candidate whom s/he feels would be suitable for the position.

#### **5. Department Chair Search Committee**

Whenever a vacancy occurs, or is anticipated, in the Chair position of an academic department, the school dean shall inform the Provost of her/his intent to initiate a search for a new department chair, open either to i) internal candidates; ii) external candidates; or iii) both external and internal candidates, subject to consultation with the department in a duly constituted department meeting.

If the search for a new department chair is open to external or both external and internal candidates ((ii) or (iii) above), the school dean shall appoint a Department Chair Search Committee that is comprised of a minimum of three members, at least one of which is a member of another department. The dean should solicit nominations for the committee members from the department faculty, and select its members from that pool of nominees. It is expected that the membership will reflect the department's composition. No applicant for the position of department chair will be appointed to serve on the search committee.

The school dean will call the first meeting of the search committee. S/he will give the committee its charge and will preside while the committee chooses its chairperson.

If the position is also open for internal candidates and an internal candidate applies for the position, it is important that s/he does not have an unfair advantage over external applicants to ensure the integrity of the process. When internal candidates are granted interviews, these interviews should take place before those of external candidates. Internal candidates should not be involved in the search process in any way.

The selection process shall include the candidates' interviews by the search committee; meeting with the department faculty to present and discuss her/his scholarship accomplishments (when applicable) and vision for fulfilling the duties of department chair, teaching philosophy, a teaching presentation to students, meetings with the school dean, and the Provost. The selection committee shall solicit feedback from all constituencies.

The selection committee should preferably nominate at least two candidates to the school dean, accompanied by a complete report describing the process and findings. The selection committee shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding all applicants, with the exception of those recommended to be invited to on-campus interviews.

If none of the applicants recommended to the school dean is acceptable, or if the recommended applicant(s) withdraw their candidacy, the search process will continue until an acceptable candidate is selected and approved by the dean. Subject to consultation with the department, the school dean may consider renewing the charge of the current selection committee or appoint a new selection committee, following the procedures described above.

## **6. Interim Department Chair**

In the event a permanent chair cannot be appointed or hired and a vacancy occurs, or is anticipated, in the position of chairperson, an interim chair will be appointed. The dean will be expected to solicit input from the department faculty in making an interim chair appointment. The maximum length of the term of interim chair is one year, with possible renewal for another year. Should the chair position become vacant prior to the end of the academic year, the dean is tasked with appointing an interim chair and initiating the selection process of a new chair, with the understanding that the new chair is appointed for a period of three years with a start date of July 1.

## **7. Reappointment of a Department Chair**

In the fall semester of the third year of the chair's first term, the dean will conduct a review of the chair. See Section 9 for details on the performance review process of department chairs. The dean will consider the committee's recommendation along with her/his observations of the chair's overall performance in reaching a judgment concerning the reappointment of a chair. The dean sends her/his report with the report of the committee to the Provost before the end of the fall semester.

Since the Department Chair serves at the pleasure of the dean of the school, the final decision on reappointment will be made by the dean. No reappointment will be

approved unless the final contract-year performance review has been completed following the procedures described in Section 9.

If the school dean decides to continue or terminate the service of the Department Chair in contradiction to the recommendation of the review committee, s/he will consult with the department, in a duly constituted department meeting, about her/his decision.

In case the Department Chair is not to be reappointed for another three-year term, the Department Chair may continue in her/his position to the end of the current three-year appointments and the search process of a new chair follows the procedures indicated in Sections 4 or 5.

If it becomes necessary to appoint a new interim Department Chair, the dean will be expected to solicit input from the department faculty in making an interim chair appointment.

## **8. Annual Evaluation of Department Chairs**

The Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness (SMIE) manages the chair evaluation survey through which the department's faculty confidentially evaluate the department chair each year. SMIE sends the survey results for continuing chairs directly to the dean by mid-March every year to be aligned with the annual faculty review by school deans. These evaluations are designed to provide chairs with feedback that will allow the chair to improve her/his performance and validate those areas that are going well. Chairs receive the survey results from SMIE and the dean may meet with the chair before the end of the academic year on June 30 to discuss the evaluation results and provide the chair with useful insights and constructive feedback that can help strengthen the department and improve its administration.

## **9. Performance Review of Department Chairs**

In the fall semester of the final year of the three-year contract of the department chair, the dean will conduct a review of the chair whether or not s/he is up for reappointment.<sup>2</sup> A review may be conducted at an earlier time at the prerogative of the school dean, at the request of the Provost, or in response to a faculty petition signed by at least two-thirds of the voting members of the department.

At the start of the fall semester of every academic year, the associate provost for assessment and accreditation, who oversees the review process sends SMIE the list of department chairs in the third or sixth year of their appointment. SMIE manages the chair evaluation survey through which the dean solicits faculty opinion regarding the chair's performance of her/his duties. SMIE sends the survey results to the dean by November 1st. Survey results are kept confidential and never associated with faculty member name.

The dean shall appoint a department chair performance review committee that is comprised of a minimum of three members, at least one of which is a member of another

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<sup>2</sup> If this review coincides with the contract renewal or promotion of the department chair, this review process may be combined with the other.

department. The school dean will call the first meeting of the review committee. S/he will give the committee its charge and will preside while the committee chooses its chairperson. The school dean will then withdraw from the committee, but will be available for consultation during its deliberations if necessary.

The committee receives the chair survey results from the dean, conduct its review and submit its final written report to the school dean before the end of the fall semester. This report will include a description of the committee's mode of operation, the criteria used in conducting the review, its findings and recommendations, excluding all confidential information. The school dean should submit a summary for the report including major concerns to the department chair who has the right to respond within five working days of receiving the dean's summary report if s/he wishes to do so. The dean sends her/his report with the report of the committee and the response of the chair (if any) to the Provost before the end of the fall semester.

## **10. Review Criteria of Department Chair**

The department chair search and review criteria are to be set by each school and department in writing. The following criteria, offered as examples, can be adapted for the needs of each academic department. This list does not represent a job description; rather it is provided to guide a robust review process and should be customized to the needs of each academic department. Recommended areas for review include the following:

### **1. Strategic Planning**

- a. Leading the process of strategic planning.
- b. Setting clear and appropriate goals and objectives for the department and aligning them with those of the school and the University.
- c. Effectively communicating these goals and objectives, inside and outside the department.
- d. Facilitating the accomplishment of these goals and objectives.
- e. Facilitating the improvement of the department ranking and other quantitative indicators.
- f. Establishing an external advisory committee when relevant.
- g. Representing the department and affecting its perceived external image.
- h. Establishing cross-disciplinary collaborations within and outside of the University where deemed useful.

### **2. Educational Programs and Assessment**

- a. Enhancing the quality of undergraduate and graduate educational programs.
- b. Supporting AUC's Program internal assessment and review process as applicable.
- c. Abiding by the evaluation criteria and processes set forth by programmatic accreditors or other external regulators.
- d. Ensuring that evaluation of teaching involves triangulation which includes multiple types of data including faculty self-report, peer input and student voices.
- e. Promoting innovation in instructional approaches.

- f. Addressing student needs.
- g. Enhancing student retention and graduation rate.

### **3. Management and Stewardship**

- a. Managing income and expenditure in a prudent and impartial manner.
- b. Effectively managing the department's operations, including staffing, scheduling, marketing, and fundraising.
- c. Advocating for faculty members to have the resources needed (space, equipment, workload, funding) for their scholarly work, research, and/or creative activities as per the set department strategic plan.
- d. Allocating resources in a strategic and equitable manner, according to principles designed to elicit the greatest impact, among the faculty members and, if applicable, separate areas of the department.
- e. Distributing equitable workload among its tenure track, tenured, and contract faculty.
- f. Demonstrating impartiality in dealing with faculty, in terms of workload, assigning responsibilities, research support, merit raises, etc., and abiding by the University Policy regarding discrimination and workplace harassment.

### **4. Faculty Recruitment, Retention & Advancement**

- a. Strategic recruiting of excellent faculty to support and build the department's academic programs.
- b. Fostering diversity and equity among faculty and staff.
- c. Creating a welcoming, collegial, and equitable climate and work environment.
- d. Encouraging an open exchange of ideas and diverse viewpoints regarding the progress of the academic department.
- e. Promoting faculty development in teaching and mentoring programs through workshops, and career development opportunities.
- f. Participating in AUC sponsored, external, or self-directed programs to develop leadership skills.
- g. Responsiveness to faculty needs.
- h. Offering feedback on faculty performance, accompanied by recommended improvement, if necessary.
- i. Effective management of the tenure/promotion process of tenure-track faculty.
- j. Effective management of the promotion process of full-time faculty.
- k. Supporting the inclusion, as appropriate, of full time and adjunct faculty members in departmental affairs.

### **5. Scholarly Work, Research, & Creative Activity**

- a. Supporting faculty members to build their portfolio, to develop a body of significant scholarly or creative work, in alignment with the department, college/school, and University priorities.
- b. Fostering research productivity.
- c. Facilitating the identification and strengthening the department research strategic priorities.

### **6. Shared Governance, Collaboration, and Department's Culture**

- a. Enabling all faculty members to take part in the decision-making process according to established departmental procedures and guidelines.
- b. Maintaining and adhering to established departmental procedures and guidelines, to guide the decision-making process on all key matters enumerated above.
- c. Soliciting advice from the department faculty and its advisory committees and seeking consensus about departmental goals and important decisions.
- d. Effective delegation and empowering others to meet departmental goals.
- e. Conducting productive, efficient and collegial department meetings.
- f. Maintaining and respecting academic freedom and University policies.
- g. Reaching decisions in a timely manner, bringing issues to closure.
- h. Facilitating collaboration with other academic units in the school and University.
- i. Working effectively with the dean to meet school goals.
- j. Communicating clearly and consistently the policies and vision of the school and University to the department faculty.