Department Chair Roles

The chair is responsible for facilitating the operation of a department, the fundamental academic unit within the university. Description of the chair’s roles and responsibilities must be understood in the overall context of responsibility and accountability. In doing so, the chair has three broad areas of responsibility:

A. Leadership and Facilitation
1. The chair facilitates the long-range development of the department within the context of the university vision, mission, and goals. The chair works with faculty to ensure that the department’s evolution reflects external changes in the discipline and that the department maintains a sense of its place within the university. To facilitate the fostering of congruence and interdisciplinary integration in the curriculum, the chair should maintain contact with chairs of related departments, and with other professionals in the field. Chairs should attend national meetings to facilitate interaction with other chairs in their discipline. The chair is a primary voice for communicating the UW-Superior and department vision and mission to the department.

2. A chair has numerous opportunities to help the faculty of the department shape their vision and evolution. Fundamental to activities that ultimately enhance a department’s stature and competitive position is developing a strategic plan that defines a clear sense of direction congruent with the university mission and the university strategic plan. The successful chair is able to lead the development and implementation of this plan with faculty and student support. The chair articulates the department’s goals and needs within the university, and works with the dean/provost to advance the department’s programs in the university as well as outside the institution. Because a department’s reputation is built upon the quality of its faculty and students, the chair plays a leadership role in faculty hiring and in faculty development, including working with faculty peers creating and assessing faculty development and growth plans.

B. Management:
1. The chair facilitates the management of the department. To carry out this responsibility, the chair oversees, directly or indirectly, the daily progress toward achieving teaching, research, and service goals as set out in the department’s plan. With the Chair’s leadership and facilitation, faculty members provide students the educational opportunity necessary to be prepared for meaningful personal and professional lives. To this end, the chair plays an important role in providing the dean/provost, through the budget and planning process, with class schedules, program plans and estimates of resources needed to carry out department functions.

C. Chair Development and Support:
The chair’s effectiveness in his/her leadership, facilitation, and managerial roles should be enhanced by support from the respective dean/provost. Growth of each University of Wisconsin - Superior department will be enhanced if the chair has the opportunity to devote his/her attention to long-range planning and facilitating the development of the department and faculty. This requires opportunity for the chair to benchmark his/her performance and the department’s performance in both external and internal educational contexts. Regular meetings for chairs are a valuable first step in the internal professional growth process. Leadership, facilitation, and management enrichment can contribute to the chair’s overall success. Other desirable developments include:
1. Support for chairs to attend external meetings. This will allow interaction with other chairs in related disciplines and will provide a comparative perspective regarding objectives and practices at other institutions.

2. An institutional leadership program. Speakers could include authorities on management and/or administrative practices, among others; a breakout or workshop format could enhance exploring opportunities for interdepartmental collaboration.

3. Chair meetings. The dean/provost will sponsor regular meetings for department chairs to discuss matters of mutual interest. The meetings will provide a dialogue forum for chairs to talk among themselves and with other administrators about common operational issues, policies, practices, accountability, among other topics -- and about strategies which individual chairs have discovered for dealing with issues. Presentations by chairs on activities or operational procedures they use for addressing these issues will be a regular part of these meetings. This activity can encourage cross-fertilizing useful ideas for department operation and development among all departments on campus.

4. Dean/provost/chair meetings. An annual formal meeting between the dean and each chair is expected to discuss the progress of each department in achieving its goals and to undertake a thorough review. This review will be based on clear objectives and outcomes which fulfill the mission statement.

5. The provost/dean will also offer an annual orientation for new chairs.
Department Chair Rights & Responsibilities

The department chair:

- Is the chief representative of the academic department.
- Receives at least 25% reassigned time from teaching during the academic year.
- Receives a summer stipend to compensate for administrative duties and advising in the summer.
- Facilitates the work of the department by:
  1. Providing the formal input to the administration after consultation with the departmental peers on all recommended policy and administrative changes which could affect the department’s operations.
  2. Responding to requests for departmental input from governance groups and university offices such as the Center for Academic and Career Advising, Provost’s Office, Human Resources.
  3. Effectively communicating with other academic departments to insure cooperation in maintaining an integrated university curriculum, as well as reaching the mission, goals and strategic objectives of the University.
  4. Preparing the Department’s Annual Report.
  5. Submitting the annual staffing proposals.
  6. Submitting the annual budget proposal and monitor the budget.
  7. Implementing and monitor the compliance of the department to UW System, University and Departmental Personnel Rules and Procedures and general academic policies.
  8. Facilitating departmental curriculum revisions and implementation.
  9. Facilitating the deployment of material and human resources by developing class schedules and teaching assignments.
  10. Scheduling and preside over department meetings.
  11. Serving as the primary departmental contact for institutional advancement, recruitment, and retention efforts.
  12. Coordinating the efforts of faculty search/screen committees.
  13. Promoting a team effort within the department for addressing departmental and institutional issues.
  14. Facilitating implementation of revisions in catalog copy/web sites/policies which address departmental curriculum issues.
  15. Working to maintain civility and respect among faculty, faculty/students, and faculty/university offices.
  16. Helping to informally mediate conflicts between departmental faculty
  17. Managing student grade appeal/complaints.