

Marshall University College of Science
Policy No. COS-Adm-01
Department Chair Role, Responsibilities, Evaluation, and Selection

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Pursuant to the requirements of Marshall University [Policy UPAA-26, SELECTION, ROLE, AND EVALUATION OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRS](#), this policy for the College of Science lays out the criteria for the role, responsibilities, evaluation, and selection of department chairs.

1. Duties of the Chair: The Department Chair serves as the academic and administrative leader of the department, playing a crucial role in shaping its direction, culture, and success. The Department Chair's role is multifaceted, requiring a balance of academic insight, administrative acumen, and leadership skills. Effective Chairs are instrumental in guiding their departments toward achieving excellence in education, research, and service. The role and responsibilities of department chairs are outlined in Faculty Senate Policies. The duties of a Department Chair in the College of Science include but are not limited to the following responsibilities:
 - a. Academic Leadership and Curriculum Development: The Chair ensures the academic rigor and relevance of the department's programs. This involves overseeing curriculum development, program review and evaluation, and accreditation processes. The Chair works with faculty to develop new courses, revise existing ones, support pedagogical and technology innovation, and ensure that the curriculum meets the educational standards and needs of the students.
 - b. Safety Leadership: The Chair has the leading role ensuring safety in the department, encompassing research, teaching, fieldwork and laboratory activities. Their responsibilities in this area include:
 - i. Policy Development and Enforcement: The Chair oversees the creation, regular review, and enforcement of comprehensive safety policies and procedures tailored to the department's specific risks. They ensure compliance with all relevant University and College policies and local, state, and federal regulations.
 - ii. Safety Training and Education: The Chair ensures that all students, staff, and faculty undergo appropriate safety training relevant to their activities and roles within the department. This includes regular refresher courses and updates to address new safety standards, equipment, or procedures.
 - iii. Risk Assessment and Management: The Chair must ensure that regular risk assessments to identify potential hazards within the department's operations occur. The Chair ensures that adequate measures are taken to mitigate identified risks, including but not limited to the procurement of proper safety equipment, implementing emergency procedures, and modifying activities and situations to ensure safety.
 - iv. Facilities and Equipment Maintenance: The Chair ensures that all laboratory facilities and scientific equipment are maintained in a safe, functional state is a key responsibility. This includes regular inspections, maintenance, and the prompt remediation, repair, or replacement of equipment that poses a safety hazard. They are responsible for provision and maintenance of appropriate first aid supplies, chemical spill kits, and other relevant supplies and equipment for emergency responses particular to the department's activities.
 - v. Incident Response and Reporting: The Chair establishes clear procedures for responding to safety incidents, including immediate actions to secure safety, notification of appropriate authorities, and care for those affected. They also implement and oversee a transparent system for reporting incidents to the appropriate College and University offices and investigation of incidents to prevent future occurrences.

- vi. **Safety Culture Promotion:** The Chair fosters a culture of safety within the department by leading by example, encouraging open communication about safety concerns, and recognizing individuals or teams who contribute significantly to improving departmental safety. They oversee faculty to ensure that they are taking their safety responsibilities seriously in both research and teaching is a crucial part of building this culture. The Chair actively collaborate with university-wide safety officials, other department chairs, and external safety experts to share best practices, coordinate on university-wide safety initiatives, and ensure that the department's policies are aligned with broader safety goals.
- c. **Faculty and Staff Recruitment:** The Chair leads the efforts in recruiting and hiring new faculty members and staff. They establish procedures within university guidelines for recruiting and hiring, ensuring the department attracts high-quality candidates. For faculty hires, the Chair is the main point of contact with the Dean, who makes the final hiring decision.
- d. **Faculty and Staff Development:** The Chair manages the mentoring of new faculty members by the senior faculty. They counsel and guide all faculty members. They facilitate faculty development opportunities, such as professional development workshops or sabbaticals, encourage conference attendance and participation in professional organizations. They provide and support staff training and professional development opportunities.
- e. **Faculty and Staff Evaluation:** The Chair must ensure that faculty and staff fulfill their assigned responsibilities. The Chair also conducts annual performance evaluations of faculty and staff, providing constructive feedback and setting goals aligned with the department's strategic objectives. They make recommendations to the Dean regarding reappointment, tenure, promotion, and salary adjustments. They are responsible for fostering productive interpersonal and professional relationships among faculty and staff of the department. They organize regular faculty meetings and departmental committees to address department business and foster a collaborative environment. The Chair advises the Dean on matters in the department such as leaves of absence, sabbatical leaves, and research grants, appoints faculty members to co-curricular responsibilities, and recommends reassigned time.
- f. **Budget Management and Resource Allocation:** Managing the department's budget effectively is a critical duty of the Chair, particularly within the context of the University's Incentivized Budget Model (IBM). This model allocates revenues based on specific metrics, such as Student Credit Hours (SCH) generated by the department, the number of majors, and research funding. Responsibilities in this area include:
 - i. **Strategic Enrollment Management:** The Chair must actively participate in planning and implementing strategies to increase enrollment in department courses and programs. This involves analyzing trends in course demand, adjusting course offerings to align with student needs and interests, and marketing the department's programs to attract new undergraduate and graduate majors.
 - ii. **Enhancement of Research Funding:** The Chair encourages and supports faculty efforts to secure external research funding. This includes identifying funding opportunities, facilitating the preparation of grant proposals, and managing internal resources to support research activities. Increasing research funding not only advances the department's academic mission but also contributes to the department's financial health under the IBM model.
 - iii. **Other Funds:** The Chair is also responsible for funds allocated to the department which fall outside the IBM budget. This includes gifts and income from Foundation endowments, which must be managed in accordance with donor intent while advancing the aims of the department.
 - iv. **Efficient Resource Utilization:** In an incentivized budget model, it is crucial for the Chair to ensure that departmental resources are utilized efficiently. This includes making informed decisions on the allocation of funds towards teaching, research, and service activities, considering the return on investment in terms of revenue generation and departmental priorities.

- v. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** The Chair must utilize data and analytics to inform decision-making processes related to budget management and resource allocation. This involves regularly reviewing performance metrics related to SCH, major enrollment, and research funding, and adjusting strategies accordingly to maximize revenue and minimize unproductive expenditures.
 - vi. **Collaboration and Advocacy:** The Chair should work closely with college and university administration to advocate for the department's needs within the IBM framework. This includes negotiating for resources for new initiatives, presenting the department's achievements and strategic plans, and ensuring that the department's contributions to the university's overall goals are recognized and rewarded. The Chair plans for long range financing for special programs and activities and liaises with and accounts to the Dean's office for fiscal activities such as budgets, travel, and extramural funding; and to Business offices for activities such as purchasing, personnel, and accounting.
 - vii. **Faculty Engagement and Development:** Engaging faculty in understanding and contributing to the department's financial goals is crucial. The Chair should lead efforts to align faculty research and teaching activities with strategic enrollment management and research funding objectives, providing support and incentives for faculty initiatives that contribute to revenue generation.
- g. **Student Academic Affairs:** The Chair oversees student academic affairs within the department, including advising, retention, and the resolution of academic issues. They play a key role in enhancing the student experience, ensuring that students have access to the resources and support needed to succeed. Ensure proper curricular and career advisement is available to all students within the department. Monitor and manage departmental scholarships, prizes, and awards. Respond to student grievances and grade appeals according to university procedures. Coordinate active recruitment efforts for both undergraduate and graduate students, enhancing the department's appeal and supporting student success.
- h. **Curriculum and Scheduling:** The chair develops policies in cooperation with faculty regarding curriculum content, instructional standards, and course syllabi. The Chair creates the class schedule, ensuring the right courses are available each semester with enough sections and seats to meet student demand and keep teaching costs low. Additionally, the Chair sets teaching assignments and faculty workloads, consistent with University and College policies. The chair may also assign faculty to develop new classes or to revise existing ones.
- i. **Research and Scholarship Promotion:** As a leader in the department, the Chair is expected to foster an environment that supports research and scholarship. This includes encouraging faculty research, seeking funding opportunities, and facilitating collaborations within and outside the university. Ensures ethical and safe research practices. The Chair will work with the department faculty and the appropriate research support personnel to write funding and grant proposals, particularly for shared resources such as major instrumentation, training grants, and research centers.
- j. **Strategic Planning and Implementation:** The Chair is instrumental in developing the department's strategic plan in alignment with the college and university's goals. They implement this plan, monitor progress, and make regular adjustments to the plan as goals and circumstances change.
- k. **Staff and Facility Management:** The Chair administers departmental facilities, assigns offices and research spaces, and makes sure that shared equipment is maintained. They take the lead in hiring, supervising, and evaluating departmental staff and establishing the department's office procedures.
- l. **Compliance and Accreditation:** Ensuring compliance with university policies and accreditation standards is a key duty of the Chair. This includes maintaining records, submitting reports, and ensuring that the department adheres to ethical, safety, environmental, legal, and academic standards.
- m. **Conflict Resolution:** The Chair acts as a mediator in conflicts within the department, whether between faculty or staff members or between faculty and students. They are responsible for

resolving disputes in a fair and constructive manner, maintaining a positive and productive departmental climate.

- n. Community and External Relations: The Chair represents the department in interactions with external stakeholders, including alumni, industry, government agencies, and other academic institutions. They are responsible for building and maintaining relationships that can provide opportunities for collaboration, funding, and employment for students.
 - o. Communication, Advocacy and Leadership: The Chair conveys University and College policies, procedures and actions to the department. As the primary advocate for the department, the Chair must communicate the department's needs, achievements, and aspirations to the College and University leadership. They play a critical role in securing the support and resources necessary for the department's success.
 - p. Professional Performance: The Chair must provide an example of professional leadership in the department, by maintaining and demonstrating competence in teaching, research, and professional activities, including participation in professional associations and community service.
 - q. Other duties: The chair will carry out other duties as assigned by the Dean, responding flexibly to the changing needs of the department, College, and University.
2. Evaluation of Department Chairs in the College of Science: The criteria for evaluation are based on the outlined responsibilities of the Department Chair above, including academic leadership, faculty and staff management, budget and resource allocation, student academic affairs, research and scholarship, strategic planning, compliance, and community relations.
- a. The evaluation process consists of several components to ensure a comprehensive assessment:
 - i. Self-Evaluation: Each Chair will submit a self-evaluation report detailing achievements, challenges, and a reflection on their performance against the outlined responsibilities. This report should also include goals for the coming year.
 - ii. Review of Achievements and Performance Metrics: Each chair will submit an analysis of the department's performance in areas such as enrollment, graduation rates, research funding, publications, and other relevant departmental metrics and how the chair facilitated departmental success.
 - iii. Faculty Evaluation: Faculty members within the department will provide anonymous feedback on the Chair's leadership, management, and overall performance with the results available to the Dean and the Chair.
 - iv. Staff Feedback: Staff members will also be invited to provide anonymous feedback on their experience working under the Chair's leadership, focusing on aspects such as communication, support, and the work environment with the results available to the Dean and the Chair, the latter being contingent upon maintaining anonymity in departments with very few staff members.
 - v. Dean's Assessment: The Dean will review the Chair's performance, considering the self-evaluation, feedback from faculty, staff, and, where relevant, students, and the Chair's achievements in relation to the department's, college's, and university's strategic goals.
 - b. Evaluation Process
 - i. Collection of Evaluations: The Dean's office will collect all components of the evaluation, ensuring confidentiality and integrity of the process. This may include direct questionnaires, online survey tools, or other methods that seem appropriate. Typically, evaluations will be collected in March, to allow completion of other steps before the end of the semester.
 - ii. Compilation of Reports: A comprehensive report for each Chair will be compiled, summarizing the findings from the self-evaluation, peer and staff feedback, and performance metrics.

- iii. **Evaluation Meeting:** The Dean will meet individually with each Chair to discuss the evaluation report, highlighting strengths, areas for improvement, and setting goals for the next year.
 - iv. **Faculty Meeting:** Following the individual meetings, the Dean will convene a meeting with the department's faculty to discuss the Chair's overall evaluation and gather additional insights and suggestions. The Chair will not attend this meeting nor will faculty, such as spouses, with a direct conflict of interest. The Dean will meet with the Chair as needed after this meeting to provide additional feedback to the Chair.
- c. **Additional Actions**
 - i. **Monitoring and Support:** The Dean, in collaboration with the Chair, will monitor progress on goals and provide support as needed, including professional development opportunities and mentoring.
 - ii. **Feedback on the Evaluation Process:** Chairs, faculty, and staff will be invited to provide feedback on the evaluation process itself, to identify areas for improvement and ensure the process remains effective and fair.

3. Internal Selection Process

- a. **Nomination and Interim Appointment:** In the spring of the final year of the current Chair's term or upon the Chair's position becoming vacant, the Dean or their designated representative will request nominations for the Chair position from the department's full-time faculty members. In cases of a vacancy, the Dean, with approval from the Provost, may appoint an interim Chair to serve until a new Chair is selected.
- b. **Eligibility and Nomination Process:** Tenured faculty members are eligible for the Chair position. Nominations can be made by peers or by self-nomination. Once nominated, the Dean will verify the nominee's willingness to serve. The nomination phase should conclude no later than March 15th of the outgoing Chair's fourth year, with earlier deadlines or extensions if necessary.
- c. **Selection and Voting Process:** The Dean may organize sessions for candidates to present their vision for the department to the faculty. Following these presentations, a secret ballot election will be held among all full-time faculty members. One option on the ballot shall be 'None of the above'. A committee, appointed by the Dean and free from conflicts of interest, will count the votes, requiring a simple majority of those voting to win. If no candidate achieves a majority, a runoff vote between the top two candidates and 'none of the above' will be conducted. The committee, after tabulating the votes, will report the count to the Dean.
- d. **Finalization:** If both the Dean and Provost are in agreement with the selection, the Dean will negotiate the appointment terms with the chosen candidate and forward these terms to Academic Affairs for approval. The term of a chair usually begins and ends with the fiscal year, but variation is possible.
- e. **Authority and Alternatives:** The Dean, as the primary hiring authority, may seek alternative solutions if the chosen candidate is not approved, including appointing or extending the term of an interim Chair, re-opening the internal search, selecting another candidate from within or outside the department, or initiating an external search. Faculty members can also propose conducting an external search for candidates. The Dean will ensure faculty are informed and understand the decision. In all cases, a Chair serves at the pleasure of the Dean and may be dismissed at any time.

4. External Selection Process

- a. **Initiation and Criteria:** The Dean, with the Provost's approval, can initiate an external search for a Chair at any stage. This search will generally adhere to the university's standard procedures for tenure-track faculty recruitment, requiring candidates to qualify for a tenured professorship relevant to the department's disciplines.