

Roles and Responsibilities

At Missouri Western State University, the department chairperson is a leadership role strategically connected to both faculty and administration. Drawn from among the faculty, preferably a tenured faculty member, the chairperson represents the perspectives of the department to administrators and vice versa. It is a multi-faceted and demanding job that necessitates skills in communication, negotiation, problem-solving and time management. A department chairperson sets the tone for the department and helps determine the future vision of the unit in light of institutional priorities. At the same time, the department chairperson is expected to effectively manage the routine operations of the department and ensure that issues are appropriately addressed. Doing all of this well is not easy and requires wisdom, flexibility, patience, and the courage to engage with the challenges that arise. Finally, as a “leader in place” (Wergin, 2004), an effective chairperson has a firm grasp of the principles of shared governance and how their role serves colleagues and students alike.

The following list summarizes the essential functions performed by department chairpersons. Though it is not exhaustive, the list does provide guidance as to what is expected of the individuals filling the role.

Leadership

- Serve as an administrative liaison, representing institutional matters to the department and departmental matters to the Dean, other departments within the school/college, other units and departments within the University, as well as external agencies, organizations, and institutions.
- Coordinate the strategic direction of the department and its programs
- Create an effective working environment within the department

Management of Departmental Operations

- Prepare and manage budget and approve department purchases
- Develop schedules for course offerings
- Ensure compliance with academic policies
- Supervise the maintenance of departmental records
- Review and act upon all travel requests
- Guide departmental operations for faculty and staff
- Conduct meetings (departmental, advisory board, etc.)
- Prepare annual reports

Facilities and Equipment

- Ensure the effective utilization of facilities and equipment
- Make recommendations regarding the acquisition, replacement and maintenance of equipment

Personnel Matters

- In consultation with department personnel, determine staffing needs
- Ensure the proper utilization of faculty and staff positions
- Determine teaching assignments, reassigned time, and other duties for both faculty and graduate assistants in consultation with the dean
- Oversee the recruitment and hiring of faculty and staff
- Mentor and/or facilitate the professional development of faculty and staff
- Conduct annual performance evaluations of faculty and staff
- Oversee departmental promotion and tenure process

Curricular Matters

- Ensure that curriculum is reviewed on a regular basis
- Present curriculum and catalogue changes to appropriate College and University committees

Student Matters

- Coordinate assignment of academic advising responsibilities
- Address student concerns and grievances
- Coordinate marketing, recruitment and retention efforts in consultation with the Office of Admissions and the Office of Public Relations and Marketing
- Oversee sponsorship of student organizations

Assessment

- Oversee departmental assessment activities
- Lead program review efforts

Accreditation and Regulatory Compliance (if applicable)

- Facilitate program accreditation processes
- Ensure compliance with all governmental and institutional regulations

External Contracts and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)

- Manage the process of obtaining and executing contracts and MOU's with external entities

Summer Responsibilities

The work of chairpersons continues during the summer and they are expected to effectively manage those responsibilities. Central to this is the need to be available to meet with students, attend meetings, and coordinate departmental activities. Thus, a chairperson should be on campus for a minimum of ten (10) posted office hours per week occurring across the days when summer classes are in session. During the summer, a chairperson may work remotely one day per week but it will not count toward the posted office hours requirement. A chairperson will teach no more than one course in the summer. Exceptions to these guidelines may be made in consultation with and approval of the dean.

The summer activities vary from department to department, but chairpersons should expect their work to include many of the following responsibilities:

- Prepare annual reports
- Manage accreditation/licensure processes

- Submit curriculum changes to appropriate college and university committees
- Manage departmental participation in registration orientation sessions
- Oversee recruitment and hiring of faculty and staff
- Make changes as necessary to the fall schedule
- Ensure equipment and facilities are maintained and ready for the upcoming academic year
- Provide academic advising for students as necessary
- Facilitate meetings with prospective students and recruitment efforts
- Address student concerns and grievances

Selection and Appointment

Department chairpersons are appointed by the University President, based upon the recommendation of the Provost and dean of the respective college or school. A chairperson is appointed to a three year term. A chairperson may serve two consecutive three year terms, though under extraordinary circumstances the chairperson may be asked to serve a third term of three years. The chairperson's performance will be annually appraised by departmental faculty and staff, the dean and Provost. During the fall semester of the final year of a term, the dean will consult with the faculty and staff members of the department to determine if the chairperson should be asked to serve an additional term or if a new chairperson should be recommended to the Provost. This consultative process should include an opportunity for individual faculty and staff members of the department to provide input to the Dean in a confidential manner.

To assist in ensuring successful transitions at the end of terms, a new chairperson should be selected not later than the fall semester of the final year. In a change of chairperson, the current chairperson will be responsible for orienting the person selected to the roles and responsibilities of the position during the spring semester. While the functions of the position are to continue to be performed by the current chair, this “job shadowing” will provide the incoming chairperson with a better understanding of the position.

Compensation

Normally, a department chairperson will receive a reduced teaching load of 6-12 hours for the academic year in order to carry out administrative responsibilities. The teaching load reduction will be determined by the Provost in consultation with the appropriate dean of the college or school on an annual basis. A chairperson should avoid overload in order to ensure adequate time to perform their duties. In addition to teaching load reduction, a chairperson receives \$2,500 additional salary during the academic year.

For summer, a chairperson will receive a base salary of \$4,800. Additional compensation, up to 25% of the base salary, may be provided for the following factors:

- *Facilities/Equipment* – Departments with significant facilities, laboratories, or studios may require chairs to spend substantial time in the summer doing maintenance, facilitating repairs, or replacing equipment/instruments.
- *Hiring* – Departments requiring multiple hiring processes during the summer.
- *Accreditation/Program Review* – Departments preparing self-study documents for accreditation or program review.
- *Summer Classes* – Departments offering a large number of courses during the summer session.

- *Special Projects/Additional Duties* – Departments involved in ad hoc projects or assignments on behalf of the University.

Summer Appointment Letter

Chairpersons will receive an appointment letter for the summer that specifies the expected responsibilities, time commitments, and the compensation to be received. This letter will identify any modifications in these three areas that have been recommended by the dean and approved by the Provost. With regard to additional summer compensation, the letter will specify the applicable factors, a description of the duties warranting it, and the amount provided beyond the base salary.

Performance Appraisal

Chairpersons will be evaluated annually and anonymously by all tenured, tenure-track and full time faculty and staff by the last day of classes each Fall semester. In departments that have chairpersons, the evaluations will be distributed and collected by the appropriate deans. In departments in which a dean/associate dean also serves in the capacity of the chairperson, the evaluation of that dean/associate dean will be distributed and collected by the Provost. The compiled results will be included in the respective supervisors' annual evaluations of chairpersons or deans/associate deans who serve in chairperson capacities. The dean/associate dean or provost who supervises persons functioning in chairperson capacities will consider the evaluations when deciding whether to reappoint or replace those individuals to their leadership positions. However, the evaluations of persons functioning in the chairperson capacity will not be considered in matters of promotion and tenure.

Performance as a chairperson is evaluated by the dean in conjunction with the annual faculty evaluation process. That evaluation should address the effectiveness of the chairperson in fulfilling the roles and responsibilities enumerated previously in these guidelines and reflect upon the feedback of faculty and staff provided in the anonymous evaluation described in the preceding paragraph. While the expectation is that a chairperson will serve for the full three year term, evidence from the annual evaluation may warrant a recommendation on the part of the dean that a new chair be appointed prior to the completion of the current three year term.

Professional Development

Missouri Western is committed to providing appropriate professional development for individuals serving in the role of chairperson. To that end, professional development funds in the amount of \$500 annually will be made available to each department chair. Regular professional development opportunities will also be facilitated by the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed on a three-year cycle, including an assessment of processes, responsibilities, and compensation.