

## Santa Ana College Department Chair Resource Guide

Department Chairs are a key part of the shared governance processes at Santa Ana College and are charged to be representatives of department faculty. Department Chairs are not managers but they are leaders who help shape, guide and gather consensus from their department. The Chair is a facilitator/liaison/ problem solving person who notices the needs within the department and helps all to work together in a cooperative way. The following is a list of guidelines/best practices to help a Department Chair be more effective.

### Election of a Department Chair:

- The Department Chair election process should be determined by each department and might range from formal nominating and voting to an informal open discussion leading to a consensus choice. The process should be open, transparent and, preferably, agreed to by a majority of the faculty members.
- The election of Department Chair should include all full-time faculty members of a department including both tenured and non-tenured faculty.
- The position of Department Chair should be open to all full-time faculty members interested in serving. If possible, the chair should be tenured.
- If there are no full-time faculty in a department, then that department should align itself with a department, in the same division, that does have full-time faculty.
- In the event elections are not done annually, to ensure clarity, the process that has been chosen should be in writing and shared with all members of the department and forwarded to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Academic Senate.
- While it is up to each department to determine how long any individual may serve as Department Chair, it is recommended that the position periodically (2-4 years) be rotated.

### Duties with Students:

- Handle student concerns by talking with student, faculty, or dean as needed. Serious concerns and complaints involving faculty should be brought to the dean's attention.
- Urge your faculty to cc you on any pertinent communication regarding student/classroom/grade issues.
- Complete petitions submitted by students i.e. Program Waivers, Program Equivalencies, Petition to Repeat a Course (not the petition to repeat with substandard grades), etc.
- Advise students or find someone to advise them when they have concerns.
- Assist students with requests for Credit by Exam (if applicable).
- Advise students regarding your program.
- Track, store and monitor student data for purposes of accreditation, program re-accreditation (CTE), grants and improving student success.

### Duties with Faculty:

The Department Chair has the responsibility to gather information from department faculty and carry the department's positions forward to the Division Dean and/or Division Senators as appropriate and to keep department faculty informed regarding issues brought forward from the Division Dean and Division Senators.

## **Department Meetings**

Organize monthly department meetings. Department meetings are key to maintaining good communication within your department and being in touch with the will of the department. Allowing open communication is a good thing, but teachers like to talk. You'll need to be able to balance the use of meeting time between productive discussions on a topic and moving the meeting along. Sometimes that can be very challenging. The focus should not be about keeping the meetings short but about keeping the meeting time productive. Productive communication is healthy for a department and helps you stay in touch with the needs of your department.

It's a good idea to have the agenda available a few days prior to the meeting. Items on the agenda should include a department chair's report in which you report on all of the meetings you have attended and information you have gathered. Other items should include a senate report, curriculum report and other committee reports. After the meeting, be sure to follow up.

## **Peer Evaluations**

Establish Peer Review Committees (PRC)

See FARSCCD contract

Organize classroom observations for part-time faculty. Your Dean will provide you with a list.

## **Curriculum**

The curriculum process is completely faculty-driven. Curriculum is proposed by faculty, written by faculty and approved by faculty. As the Department Chair, it is your responsibility to oversee curriculum as it moves through your department, curriculum committee and on to the Curriculum and Instruction Council.

## **Other Duties with Faculty**

- Remind faculty of deadlines.
- Delegate departmental duties. You don't have to do everything yourself.
- Fulfill or find a faculty member to fulfill requests made of the department.
- Facilitate setting departmental practice and see that it is written down in the minutes or as a separate document.
- Request new hires and help organize screening committee serving as co-chair.
- Write letters of recommendation for part-time faculty.
- Maintain lab environments.
- Oversee textbook requisitions.
- Facilitate planning of departmental flex workshops.
- Encourage all faculty to be proactive members of the college community inside **AND** outside the department by participating on committees.
- Welcome new faculty and help them become proactive members of the department.
- Meet with part-time faculty during flex week. Arrange an alternative activity for faculty missing the meeting to fulfill their flex requirement.
- Ensure that all faculty are aware that they have access to all course outlines on Curricunet.
- Review copies of instructors' syllabi.
  - A syllabus is a contract between the instructor and the student. See the Syllabus Checklist for a list of information that the syllabus should contain. You may wish to keep a current collection of course syllabi so that you can review one if a student approaches you with a concern.
- Coordinate interviewing and hiring of part-time instructors in collaboration with your dean.
  - Train and assimilate part-time instructors into the department.

- Complete requests for equivalency. If you consider equivalencies, you need to have a Form I already on file with HR.
- Assist in scheduling classes, full-time and part-time faculty teaching schedules.
- Read student evaluations for part-time faculty. Your Dean should send them to you.
- Assist transitions within the department from year to year so that important ideas or plans are not lost.
- Facilitate writing of Department goals and maintain PA/PR.
- Facilitate the prioritization of budgetary needs and possible grant opportunities.
- Monitor budget and ordering of supplies.
- Facilitate the writing of SLO's, revisions of course outlines and quadrennial reviews.
- Facilitate changes in curriculum through Curricunet, your division curriculum committee and to CIC.
- Keep track of issues that concern faculty so that everyone feels heard and has a voice in departmental decisions.
- Communicate regularly with your division senator.

### **Duties with Dean and Outside the Department:**

- Be the conduit of communication between the Division Dean and the Department.
- Attend your Dean's Department Chair meetings and report back to the department.
- Communicate with your Dean on a regular basis.
- Attend Academic Senate and CIC meetings as needed.
- Be the advocate for your faculty to Administration.
- Be the liaison, contact person and represent the will of the department to the rest of the college.
- Be the contact person for other institutions.
- Facilitate coordination and communication with SCC.
- Participate in and represent your department in the accreditation process.
- Remember that a Department Chair is **NOT** a manager of faculty. Faculty do not manage faculty.
- Maintain department web site.
- Participate in statewide subject/policy evaluation meetings.
- Monitor articulation with high schools/ROP, CSU and UC.
- Facilitate community advisory meetings (Career Technical Education).
- Develop community partnerships (CTE).
- Oversee program (re)accreditation, certification and licensing (CTE).
- Monitor compliance with local state and federal operating regulations (CTE).

### **Things you should know or be familiar with:**

- The FARSCCD contract
  - <https://intranet.rscsd.edu/apps/pubs.asp?Q=1&T=FARSCCD+Bargaining+Agreement&P=>
  - Some department chairs receive LHE. LHE for chairs is negotiated through FARSCCD and listed in the contract. If you believe that the negotiated LHE is not adequate compensation for the work that you do, contact the FARSCCD president.
- Equivalency process
  - Information located on the SAC Academic Senate web site
- Administrative Regulation on program Discontinuance (AR #6134)
  - <http://www.rscsd.org/apps/rpub.asp?Q=1923>
- Board Policy on Minimum Class Size (BP #6129)

- <http://www.rscsd.org/apps/rpub.asp?Q=1761>
- Administrative Regulation on Full Time Faculty Recruitment and Employment (AR #4102.1)
  - <http://www.rscsd.org/apps/rpub.asp?Q=1871>
- Academic Senate processes and the role of the senate - Ideally, a department chair should have some experience serving on the Academic Senate.
  - “10 + 1” with respect to Academic and Professional Matters as defined by Ed Code and Title 5 (BP #9001)
    - <http://www.rscsd.org/apps/rpub.asp?Q=1773>
- Curriculum Process – Ideally, a department chair should have some experience serving on the Curriculum & Instruction Council.
  - Curricunet  
[www.curricunet.com/sac](http://www.curricunet.com/sac)
- Academic Freedom – Academic Freedom is not about doing anything you want any time
- How to deal with disruptive students
- Syllabus Checklist and information
- Processes for PA/PR
- Department Planning Portfolio (DPP)

### **Resources:**

- The SAC Academic Senate
  - Senate President for guidance on academic and professional issues
  - Senate web site for resources  
[http://sac.edu/academic\\_senate/index.htm](http://sac.edu/academic_senate/index.htm)
- FARSCCD President for guidance on workplace and contractual issues

### **Best Practices:**

- Have a course coordinator for each course (Math, Chemistry)
- Maintain a department web site
- Maintain a department directory on the “H” network drive to keep departmental files such as election procedures, department practices, etc...
- Schedule social events i.e. holiday party, BBQ, sports game, hike, happy hour, etc

Approved: SAC Academic Senate 5/8/12