

DUTIES OF THE DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON

CENTRAL MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

The role of Chairperson is recognized as a primary leadership position. In performing the duties of the position, it is assumed that Chairpersons will exercise considerable discretion while complying with University policies and procedures and operating within the limitations imposed by the availability of resources. While considerable diversity may exist in the operation of various departments, there is a common core of duties to be performed by Chairpersons. Among the expectations of the Chairperson is that they will adhere to established timelines and deadlines in performing their duties. The duties assigned by CMU are grouped under the following major categories: Administrative Functions, Faculty and Personnel Functions, Liaison Functions, Student-related Functions, and Leadership Functions.

Administrative Functions

The Chairperson is the chief administrator of the department and the primary representative of the academic discipline to which they belong. This places the Chairperson in the unique position of fulfilling administrative responsibilities assigned by the Dean and Provost, maintaining standards of the discipline, and meeting the professional expectations of the departmental faculty. Among the specific administrative duties for which the Chairperson is responsible and accountable are:

1. Communicating the departmental needs and desires to the Dean and Provost;
2. Communicating and interpreting College and University decisions to the faculty;
3. Maintaining open lines of communication among specializations within the Department, and encouraging appropriate balance;
4. Encouraging the development and improvement of the departmental curriculum, and seeing that the proper curriculum forms are submitted on schedule;
5. Insuring the preparation of catalog information and schedules of class offerings in accordance with deadlines;
6. Supervising the departmental budget, record keeping, and the requisition of supplies, equipment, materials, and other instructional needs;
7. Developing and following procedures to assign faculty to classes, laboratories, studios, and other responsibilities;
8. Reporting undesirable or potentially hazardous conditions with respect to the physical plant;
9. Coordinating and supervising departmental program reviews, accreditation and departmental evaluations, and other reviews;
10. Cooperating with departments, schools and other units in the accomplishment of their tasks.

Faculty and Personnel Functions

Among the most important duties of the Chairperson are those relating to faculty and personnel. The success of the Department is frequently dependent upon the abilities of the Chairperson in this regard. Among the specific tasks for which the Chairperson is responsible and accountable are:

1. Exercising leadership in recruiting and retaining capable faculty;
2. Evaluating faculty performance and developing procedures for assessing faculty accomplishment;
3. Exercising judgments regarding the extent to which departmental members have pursued their professional and University obligations;
4. Making recommendations relative to tenure, promotion, reappointment, salary adjustment and leaves of absence;
5. Facilitating and encouraging grants and contracts from extramural sources;
6. Encouraging improvement of faculty performance by fostering good teaching and stimulating research, scholarly writing and creative activity;
7. Implementing the University's Affirmative Action Plan as it relates to personnel decisions and to the development of collegiality among department faculty from diverse backgrounds;
8. Promoting faculty professional development and enrichment, and encouraging faculty in their service to the University and the community;
9. Maintaining faculty morale by preventing and resolving conflicts, and by arranging for the effective and equitable distribution of faculty responsibilities.
10. Supervising departmental support staff including selection, scheduling, evaluation and disciplining.
11. Communicating to the Dean, in a timely manner, personnel changes involving departmental faculty and support staff.

Liaison Functions

The Chairperson has primary responsibility for representing the Department and the discipline to the College, the University and the community-at-large. Among the specific duties for which the Chairperson is responsible and accountable are:

1. Maintaining liaison with other departments and support units;
2. Fulfilling public relations responsibilities, and enhancing the departmental image and reputation on and off campus;
3. Promoting interdepartmental and interdisciplinary cooperation in the development and maintenance of academic programs.

Student-Related Functions

The recruitment and retention of outstanding students is often dependent upon how wisely and effectively the Chairperson responds to student needs. Among the specific duties for which the Chairperson is responsible and accountable are:

1. Coordinating the academic advisement process and monitoring the process to see that it is responsive to changing student goals and aspirations;
2. Encouraging student clubs and organizations which foster achievement and professional development;
3. Developing and assuring compliance with procedures for resolving student complaints about faculty, courses and/or programs;
4. Informing students of special departmental registration procedures and enrollment criteria, etc., and administering those procedures as appropriate;
5. Assure that students pursuing programs in the department have available to them appropriate courses to allow satisfactory progress toward their degrees.

Leadership Functions

No one would presume in brief form to define the precise nature of leadership. There are obviously different styles and techniques for carrying out the duties of the Chairperson. However, there are a number of attributes that are important to the leadership of departments. Among them are:

1. Being available to faculty, staff and students;
2. Judging people fairly and thoughtfully;
3. Initiating and sustaining action towards defined goals and encouraging the initiative of others;
4. Demonstrating interpersonal relations that foster a professional working atmosphere;
5. Demonstrating a commitment to excellence in teaching and research through continuing activity as a teacher and scholar;
6. Being sensitive to the needs of faculty and students from diverse backgrounds;
7. Working with committees and promoting their effectiveness;
8. Engaging in consultation and participatory decision-making;
9. Being open to fair criticism;
10. Demonstrating objectivity.