



Department Chair Handbook

(Revised 2026)

## **Overview of Department Chairs**

Department Chairs serve as the primary academic leaders of institutionally designated departments. They are responsible for assisting and advising in the coordination of disciplines and/or programs, and they act as the official spokespersons for their department faculty. Chairs support their supervising administrators in achieving institutional goals, plans, and strategies aligned with the college mission. They are expected to provide leadership in pursuit of excellence in teaching, advising, scholarship, research, and service activities within their departments.

## **Roles and Responsibilities of Department Chairs**

The primary obligations of Department Chairs are organized into the following categories:

### **1. Faculty Governance and Leadership**

- Lead and facilitate regular department meetings.
- Serve as a member of the institution's Student Learning Committee.
- Conduct annual observations for full-time, adjunct, and dual credit faculty.
- Assist the supervising administrator in recommending institutional committee assignments.
- Review all course syllabi submitted by full-time and adjunct faculty.

### **2. Policy Implementation and Compliance**

- Ensure departmental compliance with institutional policies and Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation criteria.
- Represent and advocate for the department on institutional committees.

### **3. Curriculum and Academic Oversight**

- Collaborate with the supervising administrator to coordinate departmental course offerings and teaching assignments.
- Assist in the development, review, and assessment of academic programs, curriculum, and catalog updates.
- Mentor or assign mentors to new full-time, adjunct, and dual credit faculty.
- Maintain and organize essential departmental records and data (e.g., meeting agendas, minutes, grant documentation).
- Coordinate professional development opportunities relevant to the department.

### **4. Budget, Equipment, and Facilities**

- Prepare and present departmental requests for equipment, student support, professional development, and supplies to the supervising administrator.
- Provide input to the supervising administrator on facilities planning, including renovations, design, and organization of departmental spaces.

### **5. Assessment**

- Lead the completion of all assessment activities within the department.
- Collect, analyze, and present departmental data relevant to curriculum and program effectiveness.

- Assist in accreditation preparations and represent the department during the process.
- Coordinate strategies to promote student success and academic achievement.

### **Compensation of Department Chairs**

During the regular academic year, Department Chairs are compensated at the equivalent of a **three-credit course per semester**.

For summer duties, chairs may receive an additional summer contract of up to **15 hours**, equivalent to a **one-credit course**.

If a chair's teaching load falls below the minimum 12-credit requirement, department chair duties may be reassigned as part of the standard teaching contract, and no additional compensation will be provided.

Department Chairs serve a **three-year term**.

### **Election Process**

By **April 24, 2026** the supervising administrator will email all full-time regular faculty within each department to solicit nominations and self-nominations.

#### **Eligibility requirements:**

- Must be a full-time regular faculty member.
- Must teach the majority of their course load in the department.
- Must be in good standing.

#### **Election procedures:**

- The faculty of each department will establish procedures during a department meeting to determine which names to submit.
- All nominations or self-nominations must be submitted to the supervising administrator **by May 1, 2026** via email.
- The supervising administrator will review and confirm the nominations.

If no nominations are received, the supervising administrator will select two faculty members per vacant position. These names will then be presented to the department for a vote.

The elected Department Chair will be appointed following final approval of the vote, effective at the beginning of the fall semester each year.

In the event that an elected Chair resigns or permanently leaves the institution, the department will hold an election to appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term. If necessary, the department faculty, in consultation with the supervising administrator, may appoint a temporary replacement.