03-11.00 – ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSONS’ ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Policy Statement: This document outlines the roles and responsibilities, evaluation, compensation, appointment and reappointment of Chairpersons.

II. Definitions:

A. AR means Annual Report.

B. Chairperson means the chairperson of an academic department. The position is a four-year appointment, renewable upon recommendation by the dean of the college with approval by the Provost.

C. CAR means the Chairperson’s Annual Report.

D. PTRM means Promotion, Tenure, Reappointment, and Merit.

III. Responsible Executive and Office:

Responsible Executive: Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost

IV. Entities Affected by this Policy: Deans, Chairpersons, Departments.

V. Procedures:

A. Leadership Role of the Chairperson

The chairperson serves as both a faculty member and an administrator, occupying a blended position in the administrative hierarchy. The primary role of the chairperson is to lead faculty and staff colleagues in the department to create an effective and efficient learning organization by:

i. ensuring that the needs of the students in the programs supported by the department and the general education courses delivered by the department are fully met;

ii. ensuring support for continual professional and personal growth of departmental colleagues;

iii. fostering appropriate change and planning;
iv promoting scholarship for advancement of the discipline(s);
v being an advocate for the academic mission, values, and needs of the department, college, and University;
(vi) maintaining and overseeing the standards for completion of program requirements toward graduation.

The chairperson is expected to integrate faculty and administrative functions, engaging in leadership, management, teaching, scholarship and service activities, toward the creation of an effective and efficient academic unit.

While core roles of the chairperson are common across different academic disciplines and departments, specific roles may vary, due to the distinctive missions, objectives, and challenges associated with the department. Therefore, the specific responsibilities for each chairperson shall be negotiated with the dean of the respective college at the time of appointment and reviewed at the time of reappointment or at such time as the dean considers appropriate.

All chairpersons should assume some responsibility for four critical leadership functions in addition to their teaching, scholarship and service activities. Sample activities that might be considered under each area are provided. This listing serves as an example that is not exhaustive and is not meant to suggest that each chairperson engage in all of these activities. Activities of the chairperson shall be determined by specific objectives of the academic unit and the college, in consultation with the dean of the respective college.

1. Leadership in Management

a. Plan and maintain department budget(s) and allocate resources appropriately.

b. Monitor department progress and accomplishment of goals.

c. Ensure effective day-to-day operations of the academic department.

d. Supervise department administrative support staff.

e. Supervise the hiring process for faculty and staff.

f. Advise, direct, and evaluate faculty in accordance with promotion and tenure policies.
g. Prepare department schedule, balancing teaching assignments, course offerings, and the academic needs of the students. Meet department workload expectations in cooperation with the dean of the college.

2. Leadership in Advocacy and Communication

a. Communicate department mission and strategic objective(s).

b. Represent department and programs on and off campus.

c. Develop and maintain relationships with other academic and administrative departments.

d. Mentor, motivate, and promote development of faculty.

e. Serve as advocate for faculty, staff and students.

3. Leadership in Governance and Operations

a. Coordinate and oversee department student advising, retention and development.

b. Plan and manage programs, course delivery, and curriculum initiatives.

c. Provide for the supervision of student teaching, internships, clinical experiences, student theses and dissertations.

d. Develop and oversee department policy on all aspects of screened majors.

e. Mediate and seek resolution of conflicts involving faculty, staff and/or students.

f. Ensure department representation on college, University, USM, and state/national committees as appropriate.

g. Maintain an atmosphere conducive to transparency and departmental shared governance.

4. Leadership in Outreach

a. Ensure department representation in professional associations and at professional meetings.
b. Encourage community related activities among department personnel.

c. Stimulate strong departmental relationships with and among alumni.

d. Enhance department image and engage in outreach to external constituencies.

B. Role of the Chairperson in Faculty Development and Evaluation

The chairperson plays a significant role in the evaluation of department faculty members. The chairperson fulfills that role by:

1. ensuring that promotion, tenure, and merit policies of the department, college, and University are followed;
2. meeting with faculty annually regarding the workload agreement documents (AR Part II) and approving department faculty members’ workload agreements;
3. consulting with the dean regarding the evaluation of faculty members made by department committees and the chairperson.

C. Chairpersons’ Teaching Load

The teaching load for chairpersons will be one to four course units per year as determined by the dean after consultation with the chairperson. The load will be determined based on, but not limited to, the following variables:

1. the number of full-time equivalent faculty and staff in the department;
2. the number of majors/students enrolled in programs in the department;
3. the graduate/undergraduate program mix in the department;
4. the complexity of the department (e.g., number and type of on-campus programs, number and type of off-campus programs, clinical experience requirements, accreditation requirements, certification needs, etc.);
5. the chairperson’s level of scholarship;
6. the level of departmental administrative support (e.g. Asst. Chair)

D. Term of Appointment and Selection of the Chairperson

The initial term of appointment is four years and the appointment may be renewed for a second four-year term following an evaluation and review
process. In unusual circumstances, a chairperson's reappointment may be for a term less than four years. In exceptional circumstances, a chairperson may be reappointed beyond a second four-year term. The length and term of appointment for interim chairpersons shall be negotiated between the chairperson, the dean, and the Provost. The chairperson shall receive a chairperson contract, signed by the dean and the Provost. This contract is separate from the chairperson’s faculty contract.

The Provost may appoint the chairperson, upon the recommendation of the dean. The chairperson serves at the pleasure of the dean. The chairperson will be selected from candidates recruited through a national search or by an internal appointment, after appropriate consultation between the dean and the department with the approval of the Provost. Under usual circumstances, a chairperson will be recruited from within the University.

E. Chairperson’s Compensation

The Provost’s Office will provide guidelines for chair’s compensation and will update them annually.

F. Evaluation of the Chairperson for Promotion, Tenure, Reappointment (as a faculty member), and Merit

Evaluation of the chairperson for promotion, tenure, reappointment (as a faculty member) and merit will reflect the blended roles and responsibilities of the chairperson as defined in this document and shall be performed as outlined in department, college, and University promotion and tenure documents.

The promotion, tenure, reappointment and merit process is conducted in large part by faculty peers and addresses the chairperson’s activities as a faculty member in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service. Chairpersons are also evaluated in a fourth category, leadership, as indicated on the CAR. Consistent with the Policy on Appointment, Rank, and Tenure of Faculty, the relative weight of categories in evaluation is determined by the entries on the CAR Part II.

The appropriate departmental committee will evaluate the chairperson for the previous year(s). Evaluation will be in reference to the activities outlined in the CAR Part II, the Workload Agreement for the previous year(s), and information supplied to the committee by the chairperson on the CAR Part I and accompanying materials. Chairpersons will receive a copy of the recommendation and shall have the normal right of appeal to the appropriate college committee. The appropriate college committee and the dean will perform their regular functions in evaluations involving
promotion, tenure, or five year comprehensive review as defined in PTRM documents.

The dean, using the criteria discussed in the previous paragraph, may perform a separate evaluation for the chairperson’s merit recommendation, taking into consideration the departmental recommendation. The chairperson will receive a copy of the dean’s recommendation and shall have the right to appeal the dean’s decision to the Provost.

G. Evaluation and Reappointment of the Chairperson

Each year during the chairperson’s initial four-year term following the completion of the CAR, the dean will discuss with the chairperson the evidence and impressions of the chairperson’s performance in the leadership role. The substance of this conversation will be recorded in writing by the dean if either party so wishes. In addition, a similar assessment may be conducted at the end of each academic year whenever the dean or the chairperson wishes to do so, with special attention to developing an action plan for the following year.

A formal evaluation will be required no later than the Spring semester of the third year of the chairperson’s first term that considers the question of reappointment. This evaluation will include a self-evaluation by the chairperson, feedback from department faculty and staff, and, when agreed upon by the chairperson and dean, feedback from key contact persons in the University and external community. The evaluation will be structured to obtain information on the chairperson’s performance of the leadership role, consistent with the chairperson’s roles and responsibilities. The evaluation will be carried out in full even if the chairperson declines to be considered for another term as chair. Under those circumstances, the feedback from faculty and staff may include their comments on who might serve effectively as chairperson.

The dean will consider the feedback provided by all constituents and his/her own evaluation in developing a written recommendation. The dean shall discuss the results of the evaluation with the Provost before making a reappointment offer for another term as chairperson. The Provost retains the final authority to approve or disapprove chairperson appointments and reappointments, and that decision is final. Once a reappointment offer has been made and accepted by the chairperson, the dean will convey the decision to the department faculty and staff. A chairperson contract for the new term will be prepared and signed by the Provost, the dean, and the chairperson.
As provided in Section V.D., the chairperson serves at the dean’s pleasure; accordingly nothing in this section shall be read to require that the dean have cause to terminate a chairperson’s contract.

All elements of this policy are subject to compliance with any relevant University System of Maryland policies that take precedence over Towson University policies.

Related Policies: TU Policy 02-01.00

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