
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CAL POLY DEPARTMENT HEADS & CHAIRS

(REVISED FEBRUARY 2020)

A great deal of administrative and service work is carried out by department heads and chairs throughout the campus. Some deans determine that a department head, with an indefinite appointment, best suits the needs of a particular department, while in other cases, the three-year, rotating department chair appointment best suits the needs of the department.

Department Heads are appointed indefinitely while department chairs may serve one or more three year terms. By the nature of these different appointment types, department heads often are longer serving and provide continuity of leadership within their department and college. On the other hand, having a rotation of department chairs provides new leadership, fresh ideas, shorter term action plans, and the opportunity for more faculty to rotate through this leadership role. In accordance with the Campus Administrative Manual (CAM), the appointment of heads and chairs are made by the dean after consultation with the faculty, the Provost and the President. (For more information see [Cal Poly Election Process for Internal Department Heads/Chairs \(Feb. 8, 2018\)](#).) Both department heads and chairs serve at the pleasure of the dean.

Department heads and chairs may have academic year appointments or 12-month appointments depending on the nature of their duties, and are compensated accordingly. If there is a need for a full-time year round department chair, then the 12-month appointment is preferred. Full-time 12-month department heads and chairs accrue 2 days (16 hours) of vacation per month and are required to use vacation for any workday that they are not working. Some department heads and chairs have very limited or no summer term assignments. In these cases an academic year appointment is preferable with a fractional or no summer assignment as determined by the appropriate dean. Finally, department heads and chairs may be placed on a split assignment if appropriate. For example, they may be placed on a 12-month assignment for their administrative duties at a fractional timebase, and on an academic year assignment for their teaching at the remainder of their timebase (for example 40% administrative assignment 12-months and 60% teaching academic year).

RESPONSIBILITIES AND PRIORITIES OF CAL POLY DEPARTMENT HEADS & CHAIRS

(REVISED FEBRUARY 2020)

The responsibilities and priorities of department heads and chairs will vary across colleges, departments, and individuals. This document lists various administrative and service work often expected of heads and chairs. Departments have varying models of how the responsibilities listed below will be accomplished. Although there are many items listed as the department heads' and chairs' responsibilities, some of these items may be delegated to other faculty and staff depending on the size of the department, organizational structure, support staff and the fraction of the department head's/chair's assignment that is dedicated to administrative duties. The college deans will help the department heads and chairs understand the prioritization of these duties in conjunction with the college's and department's vision and goals.

Academic programs/Curriculum

- Assure development and direction of quality academic programs
- Work with department faculty in academic program planning and review
- Work with department faculty in curriculum development, review, and revision. Initiate and/or recommend changes in departmental curriculum.
- Act as the department coordinator for all applicable accreditation activities
- Support diversity, equity and inclusion in the development of curriculum and implementation of pedagogy
- Schedule classes to meet curricular goals and department needs
- Communicate to faculty members (especially new faculty members) the curricular and programmatic goals of the department, college, and university
- Lead or support the department in carrying out reviews of curricula and assessment of learning outcomes
- Use data to plan for and support student success (e.g., retention rates, graduation goals, scheduling classes to meet student needs, etc.)
- Supervise or support the operation of instructional activities such as laboratories
- Work with the university articulation officer to review and maintain articulation agreements

Budget development and administration

- Develop and effectively manage the department operating budget and other resources (assigned time, staff, facilities, labs, equipment, etc.). Recommend expenditures, including travel and equipment
- Oversee the department's property and equipment, maintaining a property inventory for the unit
- Work to secure external grants oversee the administration of grants within the department

Advocacy and leadership

- Represent the department to the dean and the campus at large
- Address conflict and attempt to resolve problems between faculty, students, and staff
- Model respect for personnel matters and confidentiality regarding performance reviews, personnel decisions, grievances, etc.
- Keep the faculty and staff apprised of department, college, and university plans, activities, budgets and expectations

- Work with the faculty to develop and implement a strategic plan that emanates from the department's mission and goals
- Learn the capabilities, motivations and goals of individuals within the department
- Cultivate leadership within the department
- Consistently communicate, coordinate and recognize efforts in the areas of diversity, equity and inclusion; support campus and college-wide diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives
- Advocate for the department's needs, vision, and goals to the dean and other campus administrators

Tenure Line Faculty--Retention, Tenure, and Promotion

- Ensure that new faculty are oriented to the department and campus-wide goals, processes, expectations, and administrative tasks.
- Be attentive to the workload and service expectations of new and newly tenured faculty, and provide them with resources and guidance to be successful
- Support faculty research by providing access to data, grant opportunities, travel/conferences, and time through work assignments
- Promote innovative teaching by supporting faculty development
- Promote faculty involvement in department, college, and university service, and in community and professional service activities
- Counsel faculty regarding the criteria upon which their performance will be evaluated and assist probationary faculty in understanding the evaluation processes, and in presenting an effective RTP dossier
- Conduct annual evaluation of tenure line faculty in accordance with university established schedules and contract requirements
- Use teaching, research, and service assignments as an opportunity for faculty development
- Be attentive to and make efforts to improve the retention of diverse faculty

Tenure Line Faculty--Recruitment

- Use curricular and programmatic to determine departmental priorities for future probationary hiring, and submit recruitment requests to dean when prompted
- Promote diversity, equity and inclusion in recruitment and hiring
- Establish search committees according to university policy, which include appropriate committee members, committee chair, and trained Employment Equity Facilitator (EEF)
- Ensure that recruitments are conducted in accordance with university policies and that candidates are treated equitably and fairly
- Provide a hiring recommendation to the dean

Lecturer Faculty

- Develop broad and diverse faculty part time lecturer pools through outreach, advertising and other activities
- Ensure that lecturers are oriented to the goals of the department and the mission of the university
- Counsel lecturers regarding the criteria upon which their performance will be evaluated and the process for lecturer range elevation
- Follow the collective bargaining agreement for the appointment of lecturers. Obtain training on the "order of work" to facilitate this process.
- Conduct annual evaluation of temporary faculty in accordance with university-established schedules and contract requirements

Administration of department

- Be available throughout the work week to attend to daily business of the department and to meet student needs
- Schedule and chair regular faculty meetings
- Attend all meetings of college chairs, and share information from those meetings back to the department faculty and staff
- Provide reports as requested on such matters as faculty workload, release time, assigned time
- Ensure proper maintenance of departmental records, including the security of those documents deemed sensitive or confidential
- Promote open communication, and encourage faculty involvement in the advancement of the department
- Review and approve faculty and staff absences, including sick leave, vacation and other time off, through the Absence Management Self Service (AMSS) system
- Review and approve faculty and staff master payroll

Students—Advisement and student success

- Ensure an effective and ongoing student advisement program for the department
- Oversee the maintenance of advising materials
- Advise students at the undergraduate, graduate, and credential levels concerning degree requirements and career objectives
- Ensure active involvement of the department in annual advising events such as transfer student orientation
- Ensure effectiveness of faculty and staff advising by securing their training as needed (for example, PeopleSoft training)

Students—Clubs and Organization

- Ensure student clubs and organizations are appropriately sanctioned and have faculty advisors
- Ensure that student club officers understand university policies and procedures including financial, hosting, safety, risk management and appropriate use of facilities
- Ensure that the Student Fee committee is established and meets regularly, communicates with student body, and provides input to the department chair/head

Students—Issues

- Assist in the resolution of faculty/staff and student interpersonal relationship problems when possible
- Recommend action on student petitions (withdrawals, etc.)
- Be fully familiar with campus support structures for accommodations, counseling, and crisis intervention
- Understand student rights and responsibilities with respect to grade petitions, fairness board, plagiarism, and disciplinary issues
- Be attentive to and make efforts to improve class and campus climate
- Demonstrate awareness of and attention to student voice

Students—Recruitment

- Participate in and facilitate the participation of others in departmental and college recruitment, retention, and graduation efforts
- Ensure active involvement of the department in annual recruiting events such as Open House

- Communicate directly or indirectly the department's academic goals, offerings, and requirements to prospective and current students
- Initiate and implement activities in support of student recruitment such as awards, competitions, scholarships, and clubs

Staff Administration

- Exercise leadership in the selection and appointment of staff personnel, including student assistants working for the department
- Supervise assigned administrative, clerical, and technical staff
- Approve requests for vacation, sick leave, and other time off
- Schedule and chair regular staff meetings
- Conduct staff performance evaluations in a timely manner
- Support staff training and development
- Model collegial, respectful, and productive relationships with staff
- Arrange for the proper supervision of student assistants

Advancement

- Support the college and University advancement initiatives and activities
- Initiate alumni communication, events and giving initiatives (typically higher expectation in this area for heads with 12-month assignments)
- Maintain an alumni or industry advisory board
- Ensure that appropriate communications materials are developed for the department, college and University

Community engagement and development activities

- Act as department contact for civic and professional organizations and when hosting on- and off-campus functions
- Publicize the department's courses and programs to the community, especially to prospective students
- Work with dean and university advancement officers to promote the department to the community
- Promote discipline-based contact with appropriate groups, including community college faculty, high school teachers, community organizations, alumni, and others