



THE UNIVERSITY of  
NEW ORLEANS

**ADMINISTERED BY: Office of Vice  
President for Academic Affairs**

**Policy No: AP-AA-2.2**  
**TITLE: Departmental Governance –  
Academic Departments**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE: April 4, 2014**  
**CANCELLATION:**  
**REVIEW DATE: Fall 2017**

#### **PURPOSE**

To set forth the authority and responsibility of department chairmen.

#### **AUTHORITY**

*Part Two, Chapter III, Section I and Section IV of the Bylaws and Rules of the University of Louisiana System.*

#### **DEFINITIONS**

Department means a formally established academic unit within a college. As used here, the term includes those schools that are housed within colleges.

Chairman means the person who heads the department.

#### **GENERAL POLICY**

The chairman is the chief executive officer of the department and reports to the dean of the college.

#### **PROCEDURE**

1. Department chairmen are appointed or reappointed upon the recommendation of the dean of the college and the approval of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, the President, and the Board of Supervisors. They hold their administrative positions at the pleasure of the Board.
2. The maximum term of appointment is three years, with the possibility of renewal.
3. The chairman is responsible for initiating recommendations for the appointment, reappointment, promotion, and other personnel actions for all persons within the department; initiating recommendations for modifications in the academic program and in academic policies within the department, following appropriate action by the faculty; the proper administration of all budgets within the department; the allocation of financial and personnel resources within the department; the initiation of all recommendations for salary adjustments within the department; and such other duties as are appropriate to the chief executive officer.

4. The chairman is responsible for the effective application of University regulations and policies within the department.

#### **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS: THE ROLE OF THE CHAIRMAN AND THE ROLE OF THE FACULTY**

The faculty's responsibilities lie in the broad area of educational policy. This includes establishing or modifying curricula, fixing standards of instruction, determining requirements for degrees, adding or dropping courses, and so forth. Departmental faculties have jurisdiction over these matters, with the reservation that the policies of a given department may not conflict with those of its own college or school, the campus, or the UL System.

Those operations which are primarily administrative, including personnel actions and budget making, fall to the chairman, and he or she must make the final decisions and the pertinent recommendations to the dean of the college. Those operations are primarily the formulation of educational policy, including curriculum requirements, are the responsibility of the faculty, and they must act to affect changes.

The division of responsibilities, however, should be regarded simply as primarily and secondary. The chairman is not only the chief administrator of the department but should also be the leader of that faculty in the development of its program. Conversely, the faculty must have a deep interest in administrative decisions which condition the department's capacity for implementing its policies. There should be therefore be continuing interaction between the chairman and the faculty in a mood of mutual respect and recognition of respective roles.

Since the chairman is in a stronger position than individual faculty members to initiate actions and establish procedures, he or she should regard it as a specific responsibility to see that the faculty has adequate opportunity to discuss matters, even those primarily administrative, which bear upon the department's development and direction. The faculty makes up the best concentration of expertise on matters of departmental concern, and the chairman should therefore take full advantage of consultation before making decisions. Faculty members should be kept informed of matters affecting the department, and a chairman must not underestimate the effort necessary to maintain appropriate communications.

Therefore, the chairman's method of administering the department should include appropriate devices for securing the advice of the faculty and for keeping them informed not just of formal administrative decisions, but of broad directions and developments in the formative stage. It is essential that faculty members participate meaningfully in the affairs of the department, and the chairman must encourage the faculty to become an integral part of departmental planning.

#### **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Since departments vary greatly in size and complexity, machinery appropriate for one may be inappropriate for another. Each chairman will be expected, however, to submit to the dean of the college an acceptable arrangement to assure appropriate consultation with the faculty.

1. In matters for which the faculty has primary responsibility (curricula, standards of instruction, requirements for degrees, admission requirements), action will be required by the faculty as a

whole or by a representative committee of the faculty, the majority of whose members are elected. In transmitting recommendations on such matters the chairman must certify that the action has been approved by the faculty or by such a committee.

2. In matters for which the chairman has primary responsibility (recommendations for appointments, reappointments, promotions, leaves, salary increases, budgetary allocations, and the general administration of the department), he or she is expected to consult the faculty in an appropriate way before reaching decisions. Advisory committees of one sort or another may be helpful, particularly in the larger departments. The formality of advisory machinery is left to the discretion of the chairman, as is the makeup or method of selection of such committees. Even advisory committees, however, should include some elected members, and the chairman should take pains to involve most, if not all, of the faculty in departmental decision-making activities. Two points should be remembered: (1) The chairman is expected to seek advice; (2) Final decisions at the departmental level on these matters are the chairman's.
3. Departmental faculties should have ample opportunity to meet as a body to discuss departmental business. Departmental meetings should be scheduled regularly, at least once every two months, unless the faculty (not the chairman) feels the informal contacts of daily operations make such formal sessions superfluous. This would presumably apply only to the smallest departments.

In addition to the regularly scheduled meetings, a department meeting should be called at any time one-third of the faculty requests such a meeting. Opportunity should be given at any meeting for the discussion of new and old business without limitation except as the faculty in an ad hoc situation may establish.

4. Students are deeply concerned in the functioning of departmental programs, and the perspective they bring can add a valuable component to departmental planning. Chairmen should devise standard procedures for allowing students to express their opinions, preferably by appointing some to standing committees or special advisory groups. Whatever the means, the student voice should be heard.



Peter J. Fos, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
President  
University of New Orleans