

Department Chair Guide

By

Marie McMahon

Edited by

Mary Kjartanson,

Chair of Chairs 2015-2017

Duties and Responsibilities of the Department Chair

The position of Department Chair is an important and exciting role in any college environment. Department chairs are elected by their full-time faculty peers to serve in a leadership position within the department and to represent their department, but are not a substitute for the appropriate manager with respect to the reporting requirements of faculty in the department (AFT, 9.1.1,2).

The Chairs advocate for their departments from a perspective of the best overall interests of the College. They lead and represent faculty in important processes that shape the curriculum and impact the learning of students. Chairs also serve as mentors to colleagues and collaborators with other college administrative officers. All of this is accomplished through effective communication.

In the performance of these duties the Department Chair is expected to seek advice from departmental faculty colleagues systematically, and to keep department members informed of the Chair's actions in a timely fashion. As listed in the AFT Guild Agreement, the duties and responsibilities of the Department Chair are listed below:

1. Facilitate curriculum revisions, deactivations, and development of new curriculum and programs.
2. Recruit under-represented adjunct and/or contract faculty.
3. Convene regular department meetings and attend department, school, college, and district meetings.
4. Attend training meetings and leadership development seminars for department chairs.
5. Assist the dean/manager in developing and implementing plans to improve student retention.
6. Assist the dean/manager in meeting departmental, college, and district productivity and enrollment management goals while meeting student and program needs.
7. Participate in student job placement and/or transfer activities.
8. Assist the dean/manager in developing the schedule of classes and in making faculty assignments.
9. Encourage open communication and/or facilitate conflict resolution among department faculty members.
10. Assist administration in resolving student complaints and grievances.
11. Facilitate cooperative ventures with other departments, schools, and/or colleges.
12. Support grant applications and/or supervision of grant programs.
13. Collaborate with community agencies and/or corporate partners related to department programs.
14. Attend local, state, and/or national events related to department disciplines.
15. Meet all critical deadlines (curriculum, catalog review, book orders, class schedule development, contract and adjunct faculty evaluations, master planning, program review, etc.).
16. Remain within department budget allocations (supplies, materials, equipment, certificated hourly and non-academic temporary staff, etc.).
17. Work collaboratively with the dean/manager and evaluation coordinator to ensure smooth implementation of contract and adjunct faculty evaluation procedures.

User's Guide for Department Chairs at San Diego Miramar College

Introduce yourself and the Dean's Office

The Department Chair should be the "go-to" person for all faculty in a department – so make sure everyone is aware of that and knows you. Introduce yourself and the Dean's Office to everyone at the start of each semester.

Introduce your Department

At your first department meeting each semester during flex week it's a great idea to officially introduce the faculty and staff of your department to all returning adjunct faculty and anyone who may be joining your department for the first time. A key element for successful mentoring of junior faculty is making everyone feel valued and welcome. It is also very effective to make everyone aware of who they can go to for assistance, and providing contact information is an excellent start. It may also be useful to provide information regarding the subject area of faculty expertise and their additional committee and leadership roles on campus.

Miramar adjunct faculty are highly valued and well-respected discipline experts. In our department, our adjunct faculty are regarded as a very important part of our academic team. Many adjuncts currently teaching at Miramar College have been doing so for at least 5 to 10 years. Therefore, it is great to let everyone know who they are, and to incorporate this into the start of every semester.

Automatic Committee Membership as a Department Chair

As a department chair, you will automatically become a member of the following college governance committees and meetings: Academic Affairs; Faculty (Contract) Hiring; and Chairs Council.

A department may have two faculty members serving as department chair, but one must be identified as the *Chair* and the other as an *Assistant Chair*. There is only a single voting privilege for any one department on these committees, so even if the chair and assistant chair attend these meetings together, only one "chair" per department may vote.

Academic Affairs Committee

This committee discusses instructional operational issues, class scheduling, enrollment management and educational policy matters. The constituents are: the vice presidents and deans, i.e., "administrators" (6); all instructional dept chairs and the articulations officer, i.e., "faculty" (minimum 16); classified staff (3), and students (3).

This committee meets on the 3rd Thursday of every month from 2:30pm to 4:00pm. The current co-chairs are Paulette Hopkins, (619) 388-7350, and Mary Kjartanson, (619) 388-7968.

Faculty (Contract) Hiring Committee

This committee develops and prioritizes a contract faculty hiring list annually. The primary task is to create and maintain an accurate system in which to rank the entire college's faculty hiring needs. Voting members consist of the voting members from Academic Affairs and the Academic Senate Executive Committee.

This committee meets the 1st Thursday of every month from 2:00pm to 4:00pm. The current co-chairs are Paulette Hopkins, (619) 388-7350, and Mary Kjartanson (619) 388-7968.

Chairs Council

This committee is for the candid discussion of issues that may need to be explored prior to inclusion of the Administrative constituency. It is also a place to discuss items that may need to be brought to other

venues. All chairpersons for every department are members. This group meets the **3rd Thursday of every month from 1:00pm to 2:30pm**. The current Chair of Chairs is Mary Kjartanson (619) 388-7968.

School Meetings

The schools on our campus are:

- Business, Technical Careers & Workforce Initiatives
- Liberal Arts
- Mathematics, Biological, Exercise & Physical Sciences
- Planning, Research & Institutional Effectiveness, Library & Technology Services
- Public Safety
- .All department chairs and program directors within these schools typically attend bi-weekly meetings for their school. These meeting times and agenda items are set by the school dean.

The 11-Month Contract

If the reassigned time for the department chair in your department is 0.30 FTEF or greater, then your department chair will qualify for an 11-month contract. Most classroom faculty members are on a 10-month teaching contract, i.e., they are not paid for two months over the summer (unless they teach summer school). As an 11-month department chair, you will have additional duties; most notably you will work an additional month (19 days) within the academic year. This often involves workings on departmental issues over the summer, scheduling or staffing, and providing assistance as department chair wherever necessary. Another duty involves providing coverage as the Evening Administrator on campus during the Fall and Spring semesters.

It is possible to split the FTEF of the reassigned time for department chair between two faculty members and share the duties of being department chair. As the current AFT contract dictates, no one faculty member may have more than 0.50 FTEF for department chair. Please note, there are no “co-chairs” for department chairs -- one faculty member must be designated “chair”, and the other “assistant chair”. Again, only one faculty member with 0.30 FTEF or more will have the 11-month contract.

Departmental Adjunct Faculty Staffing

As the department chair, one of your duties is to recruit faculty and make recommendations to the dean of your school regarding suitably qualified adjunct instructors. Wherever possible, the department chair should seek input from other contract faculty within the department who are discipline experts. Often informal interviews with an adjunct candidate can involve the department chair and other relevant department faculty members. It is a good practice to begin recruitment of adjunct faculty from the District People Admin adjunct applicant pool. This will assure fairness in the process.

Student Petitions

As the chairperson, you will be signing many documents on behalf of your department. Student petitions to either clear prerequisites taken at another institution or to waive prerequisites should have the relevant documentation attached to the petition so you can review all of the pertinent information. The department chair should seek input from other contract faculty who are discipline experts in order to make the best decision that are consistently practiced within the department.

Incomplete Grade Forms

It is advisable to encourage all faculty in your department to consult with you as the department chair regarding the exact nature of awarding an Incomplete grade. The requirements for finalizing an “I” grade are much more prescriptive now and consulting with other faculty may clear up uncertainty as to the suitability of issuing an Incomplete. It is also useful to clearly set out the details for completion of all outstanding assignments involved at the time of issuing an Incomplete grade. Experienced faculty can provide valuable insight.

Evening Administrator

All department chairs on an 11-month contract are required to serve as an evening administrator. The purpose is to act as the administrator on duty when all other deans and vice presidents are off campus. This person can help instructors and students after hours in a variety of situations, like unlocking doors, disarming and arming classrooms, resolving minor issues, etc. This “duty” involves staying on campus until 10:00 p.m.

After 5:00 p.m. on the day of duty, the evening administrator is expected to report to the circulation desk at the library, behind which is an office with a computer and desk phone for you to use. As the evening administrator, you will always carry with you the evening administrator cell phone, **(619) 301-1348**, and the master keys for the entire campus – this will allow you to respond to any inquiries or requests for assistance. For example, if instructors forget their keys and they call campus to tell someone, the calls will be directed to you and you can arrange to meet them at the classroom and let them in; you will also need to make sure the classroom gets locked and coded at the end of class.

The number of nights on duty will depend on how many deans and 11-month department chairs there are. The AFT contract cites that chairs are required to do 50% of the number of nights that administrators do. Currently many administrators have 5 or 6 nights and therefore chairs may be required to do up to 2 or 3 nights per semester. The Evening Duty calendar is circulated to all prior to each semester and dates are selected in this way.

As department chair, you are a friendly reminder to all faculty members about almost everything!

Campus/Employment Information

Faculty Web Services: <http://faculty.sdccd.edu>

The college offers you many services online. All faculty members can obtain their CSID numbers; access their class rosters and waitlists; drop students from your classes; select flex activities and check your total hours of flex; and turn in your grades online.

Miramar College Website: <http://www.sdmiramar.edu>.

This portal allows remote access to your district e-mail. The wireless internet password this semester is: *miramarfall2015*. This is for all faculty, staff and students to use.

Contacting You as Chair

The Chair of Chairs should have an updated district email list of all Miramar College department chairs. If you would like to provide additional contact information, such as a cell phone number, please do.

The Evaluation Process

Chair Evaluation by Dean

In relation to the 17 duties and responsibilities of the chair presented on the first page, all chairs should be evaluated by their deans using the one-page evaluation sheet.

Department Faculty Evaluations

Contract: When a full time faculty member in your department is up for evaluation, an evaluation committee is formed consisting of the **dean** of your school, the **department** chair and a tenured **peer faculty**. The faculty to be evaluated submits a list of 3 peer faculty to the dean who will then select the peer in consultation with the department chair. For tenured faculty, every other triennial evaluation provides an opportunity for a “peer-only evaluation” in which the dean and department chair are not directly involved in the evaluation process. However, a full evaluation committee must be convened if requested by either the dean or the evaluatee.

Adjunct: Part-time faculty have two evaluations: student and peer. An adjunct instructor can be evaluated any semester as requested by the chair or by themselves. Student evaluations are conducted during an adjunct’s first semester of employment and then *at least every three semesters thereafter*. Adjuncts will receive envelopes with student evaluation forms in their mailboxes. Peer evaluations are conducted in their first semester of employment and then *at least every six semesters thereafter*. Adjuncts need to provide to their dean a list of three (3) full-time faculty members as their peer evaluators by the set deadline. The dean will select the peer in consultation with the chair.

Per the AFT contract, full-time faculty are obliged to participate in up to 3 faculty evaluations (full-time or part-time faculty) per academic year without additional financial compensation. If a faculty member exceeds the limit of 3, he/she has the right to be compensated for this (full-time and part time faculty evaluation pay rates differ). The department chair and the dean should be aware of which faculty are at the limit, and ultimately the decision of whether to exceed this limit should be the dean's decision. It would be great to avoid having a faculty member do 6 evaluations and present a bill to the dean who has no idea that this has already occurred. Therefore, the best practice as department chair is to try to evenly distribute the workload of evaluations across the spectrum of the full-time faculty in your department when in consultation with the dean on peer assignments. It is less effective to have someone do zero evaluations and another faculty do 4, when if they each did 2, your school would save resources. Perhaps more importantly, it would more comprehensively involve everyone in the department in this important process. Please note: Pro Rata faculty in a department can act as peer evaluators for contract and adjunct faculty evaluations!

Campus/Department Involvement

Department Meetings – Schedule created by chair in consultation with the department

There should be regular department meetings each semester, and a tentative schedule should be sent out to all faculty and staff in your dept as soon as possible prior to the semester commencing. Contact the Flex Coordinator and make sure to get a Flex number assigned to each of the meetings so that adjunct faculty can go to the Faculty Web Services prior to the meeting, add the meeting to their "cart", and receive Flex credit for attending it afterwards. Below is an example of a department meeting schedule.

Fall 2014 Biological Science Dept Meeting Schedule Thursdays, 12:45 to 1:45 p.m., Room S5-103

Day/Date	Dept.	Topics	Room
Th: 9/11/14 Flex#	Biology	Welcome to Fall 2014 2:00 to 4:00pm	S5-103
Th: 9/25/14 Flex#	Biology	Discussions and Updates	S5-103
Th: 10/23/14 Flex#	Biology	Committee Reports, Updates	S5-103
Th: 11/13/14 Flex#	Biology	Updates and Reports	S5-103
Th: 12/11/14 Flex#	Biology	Committee Reports, Updates	S5-103

Course-Level Meetings

Courses that have multiple sections are encouraged to have course meetings. Often these meetings are listed on the Flex Calendar and all faculty can get Flex time for this activity.

Academic Senators

The Academic Senate is an important committee on campus and is a forum for discussion and decision-making regarding academic matters. Anyone can attend and participate at meetings, but only official faculty senators can vote. Every department elects one senator for each four (4) contract faculty members in that department for a one-year term commencing in the Fall. Adjunct faculty of Miramar College shall elect six (6) of their peers as "Senators".

The meetings are the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month from 3:30-5:00pm in room K2-106.

Student Learning Outcomes/Program Review

All faculty members should be willing to participate in the collection and assessment of SLOs for the courses they teach. The lead full-time faculty member should offer assistance to adjuncts in this matter.

Tutoring and Student Facilities

Tutors and remedial learning are available at the PLACe (Personal Learning Assistance Center), located in the Library Learning Resource Center (LLRC), Room L-101. The phone number is (619) 388-7852 852. The PLACe offers peer tutoring to students in all subjects. The Independent Learning Center (ILC) is in room L-104.

Adjunct Office Hours

Adjunct instructors can get paid for office hours. The total number they can be compensated for depends on their weekly contact hours. They will need to fill in a form and submit it to the dean's office within the first two weeks of the semester in order to be compensated for this.

Class Management

Any department should agree upon a class management policy, regarding such issues as adding students to full classes, and make it very clear to all faculty in that department. If your classes are full with many students wanting to add classes, the first 2 weeks of semester can be an intense time for students and instructors alike. Having a policy that all department faculty abide by makes for a department with integrity and consistency, and ultimately it's a much fairer system when the same rules are applied to all.

Waitlist Management

In the Biology Department, our department policy is to issue add codes to students only when there is room in a class to do so and then by way of the **official priority waitlist**. The waitlist is now only available online, but faculty may access it by the first day of semester and download it. Many students contact instructors prior to the start of semester to tell them how important it is that THEY get into your class above all others! You can sympathize and be very understanding when you explain to them the extremely thoughtful and fair enrollment policies practiced at Miramar College.

Your Syllabus

The district is very specific about what must be included in your syllabus. Often the more detailed your syllabus is, the better, as the syllabus is a written contract that protects both the instructor and the student. Basic elements include the course description, the course objectives and SLOs, your attendance policy, grading/evaluation procedures, assignments, and a schedule of activities/assignments for the class. Please contact the lead contract faculty member in your course area to see a sample of his/her syllabus. Also, you need to **send an electronic copy of your syllabus to the dean's office and your department chair.**

Student Attendance and Absences

The San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) no longer mandates attendance policies. What this means is that you must clearly state your attendance policy in your syllabus, outlining your **expectations** for both attendance and tardiness and the **consequences** of excessive absences and tardiness. If you are uncertain of anything, please contact the department chair or the lead instructor in your course area for guidance regarding this issue.

Other Items in your Syllabus?

It is requested that course Student Learning Outcomes (**SLOs**) information be in your syllabus. Please contact the lead contract faculty of your course area to get this SLO information. There are other items you may want to include in your syllabus - the possibilities are endless, such as: rules for the class, codes of behavior (including cell phone use), calculator use, other technology such as tape recording or videoing in class, talking in class, doing homework for another class in your class, timely submission of assignments, etc. You can even include a signature page with your syllabus that students must sign to verify that they have read and understood the syllabus and will abide by the rules and regulations set therein. It is really up to you what additional features you wish your syllabus to have.

Class Schedule of Events

A schedule of your class meetings is also mandatory. If final exams are given, they must be administered during the *last week of class* and *classes must meet on the last day of class*, even if the final was held earlier that week. Asking faculty to adhere to these rules is not designed to hassle them, but to ensure that we all comply with the "hours of instructions" obligations we have made with the District and other institutions.

Class Rosters

Although there are no longer paper rosters, attendance still needs to be officially recorded for the first two weeks of your class. This is done online on your *electronic roster*. The census period is the first two weeks of semester and accounting for student attendance during this period is how the college gets its funding. Approximately two weeks *after* the census period we will all need to electronically submit/validate attendance. Thereafter all class accounting will continue to be done electronically – even the positive attendance courses. All faculty receive email reminders as the dates draw closer.

Grades

Final grades are only submitted online through Faculty Web Services. It is suggested that faculty consult with their department chair if they are considering issuing an Incomplete grade to a student, as the requirements are specialized as outlined in the college catalog. There is a new form that must be completed with the submission of an "I" grade to admissions. Make sure faculty submit the final grades before the deadline, as late grade submissions negatively impact students' ability to register for the next semester and/or submit their university transfer applications.

Student Misconduct or Behavior Issues

Review the Code of Student Conduct on the District website and use that language in your syllabus. There is also an updated BP 3100 policy regarding "Student Rights, Responsibilities and Administrative Due Process". It may be that you have a student (or students) in your class whose behavior is unfortunately disruptive, disrespectful, or perhaps even dangerous – we should all know some basic procedures to safeguard everyone. If there is an emergency, use the red call phone situated at the front of the classroom to call campus police. If students are disruptive, you may remove them from that class session and the next session. Immediately after class, contact your department chair and summarize in a letter or email the reason why a student was removed and under what condition(s) the student may return. If the student continues to misbehave, contact the chair again; the chair, the school dean and the Dean of Student Affairs will proceed with the next steps in the student discipline process. For your own protection and safety, it is imperative that you thoroughly document all instances of student misconduct and report them to your department chair immediately.

With regard to the removal of a disruptive student from class, the faculty member is required to fill out the removal form and submit it to the office of the Dean of Student Affairs immediately. This will allow the dean time to respond before the student returns to class. It should be noted that the faculty member should state his/her behavioral expectations for the class with the student, and this should be consistent with all students in the class as it pertains to the code of conduct. The student shall be allowed to return to class after 2 class sessions. If there are extenuating circumstances, the student needs to work with the Dean of Student Affairs, to determine next steps, if any. This process is per Ed Code and District process.

Situational Protocols – A Systematic Approach

The Chain of Command in Procedures

It may be valuable to share some common experiences regarding the practices and procedures used and applied frequently in various situations. Whether it's within your department or if it's campus-wide, a very useful practice is to confer with others - other department chairs, your dean, the admissions office, counseling, etc.

Some issues may seem like no big deal but it could be that by simply talking about them with someone else we recognize that it's more complex than we first thought. If we act with integrity and consistency, then we can solve essentially every challenge with compassion and a positive resolution.

Exercise in Protocol: What would be the best thing to do and why?

This section is designed to get us thinking. We can use these scenarios (listed below) and others as a way to examine the important issues that we may be presented with over the course of a semester. For example, are we all familiar with FERPA? How about the official procedures for a grade challenge? What about petitions to waive prerequisites?

Here are some examples of situations that occur. What would you do? Why?

- a) A parent calls you and asks, "Why did you drop my son from your class, was he failing?"
- b) The class is going on a field trip; is there a form or something? Should I tell someone about this?
- c) A student was having headaches and asked for an Incomplete grade with only 5 more exams to go.
- d) The instructor who issued the "I" grade now no longer teaches at Miramar College.
- e) A student disputes the grade he/she received in your class, and the two of you cannot come to an agreement.
- f) The air conditioning is not working and it's uncomfortable, so the instructor cancels class.
- g) An instructor thinks the lab is poorly written and meaningless, and so decides to do a different lab exercise.
- h) The class using the room prior to you always runs over its class time and leaves the room very messy.
- i) Several students in your class come to tell you they witnessed a fellow student cheating in your class.
- j) You, the instructor, "catch" someone cheating in class.
- k) A student reports that the instructor wanted to end the 3-hour class after the 1-hour exam was over.
- l) A student uses inappropriate or obscene language in class.
- m) One student always raises his/her hand when you ask questions and continually monopolizes class discussions.
- n) Other

A useful exercise may be to ask yourself if you have experienced any of these scenarios as a department chair. What are some actions you could take to improve the outcome or prevent future re-occurrence?

- a)
- b)
- c)
- d)
- e)