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PROVOST'S MEMORANDUM 2004-08

TO: Deans, Chairs and Directors
FROM: Diane E. Alperin, Interim University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 
DATE: March 28, 2011
SUBJECT: JOB DESCRIPTION: DEPARTMENT CHAIR/SCHOOL DIRECTOR* (Revised)

Purpose:

As of January 7, 2003, the Florida Atlantic University Board of Trustees became the public employer for FAU employees. This memorandum articulates the roles and responsibilities of Department Chairs/School Directors.

Appointment:

Department Chairs/School Directors are appointed by the Dean, in consultation with the faculty and with the concurrence of the Provost. The appointment of a Chair/Director is not for a fixed term. The length of the appointment will be determined by the Dean, utilizing, at a minimum, one or both of the following:

- An annual evaluation of the performance as Chair/Director to be conducted by the Dean, in consultation with the faculty. As a guiding principle, the evaluation should be developed by the respective Deans so as to reflect the assignment and Job Description.
- An in-depth review of the Chair/Director to be conducted by the Dean no less frequently than every three years. The comprehensive Department Chair/School Director Performance Appraisal procedure was developed by the Office of the Provost in consultation with the University Faculty Senate Assessment Committee. The Appraisal is conducted by the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis in consultation with the Dean and the Office of the Provost.

Compensation:

Department Chairs/School Directors serve on a twelve-month basis and the appointment will therefore generally entail converting the individual's appointment from nine to twelve months. In addition, Chairs/Directors will accrue and use annual leave according to existing university policies. In recognition of the added responsibilities of the Chair/Director, an additional salary stipend may be approved for the period of service in this role. The amount of this stipend may vary depending on the size and complexity of the Department/School and any special circumstances that may exist.

Assignment:

Chairs of Departments and Directors of Schools are Supervisors appointed by the Dean and responsible to the Dean for the normal operations of their respective units on all campuses. While the academic assignment given to the Chair/Director by the Dean must include distinctly administrative responsibilities for supervision, management, development and leadership of the academic unit, it may also include teaching and research/creative activity. The details of these responsibilities will be determined by the Dean and may include, but are not limited to, any of the following, depending on the needs of the individual unit.

Department/School Management and Development:

- Managing the department/school office and its operations, ensuring that it is run in a professional, responsible and effective way
- Overseeing the maintenance, safety, and security of facilities and equipment
- Governing the use of department/school resources within the framework set by the college and university policy
- Developing and administering resources and facilities necessary to support the research and creative work of the faculty
- Developing and implementing strategic plans for the acquisition and maintenance of resources necessary to the curricular and scholarly development of the unit, within the limits of available resources for the acquisition and maintenance of resources
- Developing and implementing external funding efforts within the context of the college's and the university's efforts
- Representing the department/school, college and university credibly to external

constituencies

- Leading the unit's planning efforts, developing unit goals within the framework set by the college and university goals
- Proposing and managing the unit's budget
- Drafting and submitting the unit's annual report as well as other reports requested by the college or university
- Planning, organizing and leading effective department/school meetings

Faculty Development and Staff Supervision and Development:

- Supervising and evaluating faculty and staff in regard to all aspects of their assignments, including evaluation of performance as required for assignments, annual evaluations, third year reviews, promotion and tenure decisions, merit/salary increases, leave requests, special bonuses and awards, sabbaticals, non-renewal, non-reappointment, discipline and termination
- Working with faculty to develop plans for their professional development in instructional as well as scholarly and creative work
- Working with faculty and staff to develop professional improvement plans for areas of the assignment where there is unsatisfactory performance
- Leading faculty in the development and implementation of appropriate criteria for annual evaluation, promotion, and tenure
- Overseeing, mentoring, and actively working to enhance the development, work environment, and opportunities for faculty and staff
- Leading the faculty in curricular development, including ongoing review of curricular effectiveness
- Leading the faculty in assessment efforts and being responsible for the department's assessment process
- Maintaining appropriate records of faculty assignments, evaluations, credentials, and other personnel matters, understanding the confidential nature of some of these records

- Preventing and resolving conflict among faculty and staff that damages the effective functioning of the department
- Responsibility for oversight of all activities within the department and may impose discipline, as appropriate, when faculty or staff behaviors interferes with the effective functioning of the department/school or violates a policy
- Displaying and encouraging the highest standard of professional and responsible behavior
- Appointing or, as appropriate, ensuring the election of unit representatives to college and university committees
- Supervising faculty assigned to department activities such as direction of graduate or undergraduate programs
- Leading the development of assessment of the scholarly/creative work of the department/school
- Providing leadership for the responsible, systematic and effective recruitment of tenure-track, non-tenure track, and adjunct faculty
- Ensuring that faculty are aware of and responsive to college and university policies relevant to their instructional, service, and scholarly/creative work

Curricular and Major Management and Development:

- Building an effective schedule that serves the curriculum as well as the goals set by the college and university
- Assigning faculty to teach scheduled offerings
- Monitoring enrollments closely and adjusting course schedules and instructional assignments as necessary
- Leading the faculty in curricular development, within the confines of college and university policies and resources
- Facilitating and supporting the recruitment of students into the major
- Leading the faculty in the assessment of the effectiveness of the curriculum

Student Affairs:

- Providing for the effective and responsible advisement of students
- Maintaining appropriate and thorough records of instructional work as required for accreditation as well as college and university policy
- Developing and providing opportunities for students to resolve difficulties/grievances with faculty and staff
- Providing for appropriate and thorough student and peer review of instruction
- Maintaining appropriate student records

Additional Administrative Responsibilities:

- Serving as a member of the Dean's Executive Committee
- Serving as a liaison between the faculty and the Dean and the Associate Deans
- May be designated by the Unit Head as the Step One Representative for a grievance
- Serving on the Advisory Council of the University's Collective Bargaining Team
- Participating in the Chairs Leadership Series and other professional development opportunities for Chairs/Directors
- Representing the unit at special academic events, such as Commencement and Honors Convocation

*Includes Directors of academic units other than Schools who report directly to the Dean and whose units are degree-producing

Contact: Office of the Associate Provost, Academic Personnel & Programs - (561) 297-3068

Evaluation of Department Chairs

Process and Semester Timetable

Week 1 of the term

The Dean meets with the Chair/Director to review the process, the on-line surveys to be used, and to discuss the College and University officers who will be consulted as part of the evaluation.

Weeks 2-4 of the term

The Dean meets with the tenured and tenure-earning faculty with a majority assignment inside the Department, full-time instructors, and those appointed at any rank with the Department as Scholar/Scientist/Engineer/Research Professor. The Dean reviews the evaluation process and clarifies the Chair's/Director's duties and responsibilities. The Dean seeks advice about any Department-specific issues that are relevant to the evaluation of the Chair/Director.

For interdisciplinary programs, the Dean will determine the faculty to be included in this initial meeting and the subsequent evaluation process, after consulting with the collegial body (e.g., Executive Committee) regularly involved in the program.

Weeks 3-4 of the term

The Chair will present a self-evaluation to the faculty, in which he or she discusses achievements, challenges, and proposals for future unit development. The Dean may suggest a standard template to be used for the self-evaluation.

Weeks 4-5 of the term

The Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Analysis (IEA) will make a secure on-line survey available to faculty eligible to participate in the process. The anonymity of the respondent will be assured by IEA unless the respondent explicitly chooses to be identified. The survey will have a set of standard questions and will include substantial opportunity for additional written comments. When the survey is completed, a summary of the quantitative data and the entirety of the written comments will be made available to the Dean.

If there are Department-specific issues that are not within the scope of the survey, the Dean should arrange for departmental input on these matters.

A similar process will be used to solicit responses from the Associate Deans, the College Business Manager(s), the peer Chairs, and other relevant College and University officers as identified by the Dean and/or the faculty.

The Dean will meet confidentially with faculty who request such meetings after they have completed the survey. If warranted, the Dean may ask for additional information from or meetings with individual faculty or groups of faculty.

Weeks 6-12 of the term

The Dean meets with the faculty to discuss the input provided through the surveys and meetings. As appropriate and possible, the Dean meets for discussion with others who have provided input. The Dean meets with the Chair/Director to discuss the results of the review and then delivers an overall written report on the review to the Provost. The overall report to the Provost will include the chair's self-evaluation, the aggregate data from the faculty survey, the aggregate data from the peer survey, and the Dean's evaluation of the chair and will be due the 12th week of the semester.

Subsequent semesters

In subsequent semesters, the Dean may schedule a meeting with the Department to review progress in regard to the goals and recommendations made at the conclusion of this evaluation process.