SOUTHWESTERN COLLEGE

DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Section 1

**Department Chair Job Description**

**Basic Function.** Under the administrative leadership of a School Dean, the Department Chair provides leadership to foster the professional growth of the faculty, works to ensure the academic integrity of the programs, facilitates student success through innovation in the curriculum, and represents the interests of the Department. The Department Chair acts as the principal representative of the Department within the School. The Department Chair works with the School Dean, works collegially with other departments, and collaborates in shared planning and decision-making.

Representative duties are found in the SCEA Contract.

**Desired Qualifications for Department Chairs:**

Knowledge of:

Operations, services and activities of the assigned academic department.

Applicable policies, procedures, goals and objectives of the department to which assigned.

Methods and techniques of leadership and management.

Methods and techniques of hiring and performance evaluation.

Principles and practices of curriculum, course development, and evaluating courses and educational programs.

Applicable computer software applications.

Principles and practices of budget preparation and administration.

Effective and appropriate communication skills.

Professional growth opportunities related to disciplines within department programs.

Ability to:

Direct the activities and provide effective leadership for the assigned academic department.

Analyze curriculum and offered courses and recommend modifications.

Create new curriculum and courses to meet the learning needs of students.

Exercise critical and independent judgment.

Serve on committees.

Participate in the development and implementation of goals and objectives.

Ensure the academic integrity of department programs and courses.

Effectively utilize applicable computer software applications.

Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with individuals from diverse cultural, educational and socio-economic backgrounds.

Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those with whom they come in contact during the course of work.

Section 2

This section may be amended by the Academic Senate.

## Eligibility, Election, and Term of Office

**Eligibility**: Tenured full-time SWC professors shall be eligible for nomination for election as the Chair of his or her department.

**Elections:** A Department Chair shall be nominated and elected by tenured and tenure-track members of the Department in a regularly scheduled department meeting no later than the last department meeting of the semester in which the current Department Chair’s term ends. The Chair shall be elected by a simple majority of full-time faculty in the department present at the meeting. In the event of a tied election, the winner will be decided by coin toss. The Presiding Chair, in collaboration with the School Dean, shall gather and report the results of the elections to the Vice-President of Academic Affairs, ~~and~~ the President of the Academic Senate, and Academic Senate administrative staff.~~, and the Presiding Chair of the Council of Chairs~~.

Chairs shall be selected without regard to race, gender, color, age, religion, ancestry, creed, national origin, political belief, marital status, sexual orientation, medical condition, or physical ability.

Ideally, no more than one-third of Department Chairs should end their terms of office in any year.

**Term of Office.** The term to which the Chair is elected shall be three years, beginning two weeks before the start of the fall semester and ending at the completion of the spring semester. For 11-month contract faculty, the term of office includes summer, starting 01 July and ending 30 June. Library Chairs serve two-year terms. There is no limit to the number of consecutive terms to which one may be elected as Chair. School Deans and Department Chairs shall collegially determine the extent of consultation and/or participation by the Chair between semesters.

If leave is necessary, a replacement shall be named to carry on the responsibilities during the Chair’s absence. The Chair, in consultation with the School Dean, the President of the Academic Senate, and the affected department shall select the interim Chair for the duration of the leave. Upon returning from leave, the Chair will continue to serve as Department Chair until the completion of the 3-year term.

A Chair must give no less than two weeks’ notice of resignation. In the event of a vacancy, the Presiding Chair will initiate a replacement election in cooperation with the School Dean and the affected department.

**Department Chair Support**

**Clerical Support**. Whenever feasible, the Department Chair shall have adequate clerical support in the School office to perform the duties of Chair.

**Office Space**. In the faithful execution of the duties of Department Chair, the Chair will need some level of privacy when dealing with confidential or sensitive documents, conducting interviews, *et cetera*. Therefore, whenever feasible, the Department Chair will have a private office.

Section 3

**Votes of Confidence, Conflicts, and Resolution of Concerns**

**Vote of Confidence.** Each April, a vote of confidence of the Chair will be completed by the department’s tenured and tenure-track full-time faculty and, when possible, an adjunct faculty representative. The result of the confidence vote shall be submitted to the School Dean, the Vice-President for Academic Affairs, the President of the Academic Senate, and the Presiding Chair. In the event of a tied confidence vote, a second confidence vote must be held within five working days with all full-time faculty participation and one part-time faculty representative. In the event of a second tie, the Presiding Chair will cast the tie-breaking vote.

**Peer Conflict and Resolution of Concerns**

A Department Chair is and remains a tenured member of the college faculty. If conflict arises between the Chair and a member of the department, existing mechanisms of conflict resolution shall be employed. These can include a petition to the Professional Relations Committee of the Academic Senate. If it is the opinion of the majority of the voting members of the department that the Department Chair is performing unsatisfactorily, a signed petition to recall the Chair may be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate at any time after the Chair’s first semester of service.  The Presiding Chair will initiate a recall vote of the members of the department. A two-thirds majority of tenured and tenure-track full-time faculty will be required to recall a Department Chair.

Section 4

**Council of Chairs**

**Council of Chairs**. A Council of Chairs will be formed as a standing committee under the Academic Senate, in accordance with the Rules and By-Laws of the Academic Senate. The purpose of the Council shall be advisory to the Academic Senate and shall provide a forum for issues pertinent to the Department Chairs. The Academic Senate shall retain primary responsibility in academic and professional matters as mandated by Education Code § 70902(b)(7), and Title 5 § 53200(b) and § 53202. The Council of Chairs shall meet at least once per month during the regular academic year. Parliamentary procedure may be enacted by a motion by any member of the Council with a second and a majority vote of the Council at any time to facilitate an effective meeting.

**Presiding Chair**. The Council of Chairs shall elect one of its members to serve as Presiding Chair for a term of two years. The election of the Presiding Chair shall be in April. The Presiding Chair, or designee when necessary, will chair all meetings of the Council of Chairs, will represent the Council to the Academic Senate, shall serve on the Academic Senate Executive Committee and other designated committees, and shall perform other duties as outlined herein and in the Rules and By-Laws of the Academic Senate. The Presiding Chair should have knowledge of Robert’s Rules of Order.

**Presiding Chair Designated Committee Membership:**

Shared Consultation Council (voting member)

Curriculum Committee Resource Member (non-voting resource member)

Enrollment Planning and Enrollment Management Committee Co-Chair (~~sub~~ a standing committee of the SCC)

Academic Senate Executive Committee

Catalog Committee

Calendar Committee

**Vote of Confidence for Presiding Chair**

Every other year in April, a vote of confidence of the Presiding Chair will be completed by the Council’s members. The results will be submitted to the Academic Senate President. In the event of a vote of no confidence, the Academic Senate President will assume the role of Presiding Chair until a new election can be held. In the event of a tied confidence vote, a second confidence vote must be held within five working days with total Council participation. In the event of a second tie, the Academic Senate President will cast the tie-breaking vote.