

### **Guidelines for Evaluation of Department Chairs Instructions to the Deans**

Currently, detailed information on the performance of chairs is sparsely and unevenly represented in their advancement dossier. Evaluation of a chair's service is sometimes included in the department letter, but most of the available information on this subject is contained in the letter the dean writes for the chair.

In order to ensure that a chair's achievements are properly acknowledged during the review process, CAP has tried to identify the types of accomplishments that might be highlighted in a dean's letter are listed below. Of course, the duties and responsibilities of chairs vary widely across the campus, so the following suggestions are meant to stimulate thought and discussion, rather than to serve as an exhaustive list.

Exceptional service and innovations as chair might be indicated by:

1. Chairs who have made substantial improvements in administrative procedures, courses and curriculum, support for teaching and research, or other aspects of departmental life, rather than simply "minding the store."
2. Chairs who have identified ways that their department can improve its teaching, research, and/or service mission, and who have led their faculty in implementing the changes required to improve the quality of their department.
3. Chairs who have gained the respect and the admiration of their faculty, e.g., by taking the time and effort required to make fair and even-handed decisions, rather than handling problems using the most expedient method.
4. Chairs who anticipate and solve administrative problems before they affect the staff, faculty, or students in their unit.
5. Chairs who view their role as an integral part of a larger administrative group, and who work toward the health of that larger group, rather than always operating in a competitive, zero-sum mode.
6. Chairs who have guided their departments through a difficult transition (reorganization, fission, downsizing), and who have been able to minimize the damage and maximize the opportunities that occur during such periods.
7. Chairs who have successfully attracted and recruited high caliber faculty to their units and to the campus.
8. Chairs who make substantial contributions to the governance of their college (e.g., as valued and productive members of advisory committees to the dean).
9. Chairs who adroitly manage the financial, physical, and spatial resources provided to their department, and who allocate resources fairly among the individuals in their unit.
10. Chairs who foster the development and success of their faculty, e.g., by mentoring junior and new senior faculty, by writing thoughtful, insightful, and detailed letters for merits and promotions, and by fairly and accurately representing their faculty in the event of disagreements about merits and promotions.

11. Chairs who support individual faculty members in their research and teaching, e.g., by helping them establish intellectual networks on campus or seek out funding from traditional or innovative places.
12. Chairs who are able to build on a department's strengths, by marshaling the hidden resources of the faculty. This might include reconceptualizing disciplines, so as to create new units or subspecialties comprised of faculty already on campus.
13. Chairs who skillfully negotiate among differing opinions within the department, seeking rapprochement if possible, or peaceful coexistence and tolerance if not.
14. Chairs who receive the strong support of departmental staff, e.g., because they are able to improve relationships between staff and faculty, or because they are sensitive to staff needs and concerns when instituting administrative procedures.

Academic units vary greatly in size, and the deans of large units may lack the detailed information required to document the accomplishments made by the chairs within their unit. In such cases, it might be possible for a dean to collect information about a chair's performance from various sources. However, if a dean does request information from faculty members, staff members, or students, the procedure used should ensure a response from all of the individuals in a particular category. In contrast, an open call for comments from anyone within the unit is more likely to yield a biased sample of comments from individuals who either strongly approve or strongly disapprove of the chair's performance. Another important issue is confidentiality, since the chair is in a position of power with respect to the faculty, staff, and students in his or her unit.

These suggestions reflect the types of information about a chair's administrative skills, academic vision, and collegiality that should be considered when chairs are evaluated for merits or promotions. Additional suggestions from the deans and faculty about the types of achievements of chairs that should be considered when these individuals are considered for advancement and promotion are encouraged. Finally, this list is not meant to be a "checklist" for evaluating chairs' performances, but rather a means to support and acknowledge faculty members whose service as chair should be recognized and rewarded.