

Central Connecticut State University

Council of Academic Chairpersons

By-laws

I. Purpose. The Council of Academic Chairpersons will promote synergy among department chairpersons and efficacy in the performance of the chairperson role, resulting in important gains for the University.

II. Functions and Responsibilities

1. Promote role definition of the department chairpersonship at CCSU
2. Provide a mutual support structure for department chairpersons
3. Enhance efficiency and effectiveness in the function of department chairpersons
4. Provide a forum for the consultation of affairs that concern department chairpersons
5. Foster advocacy by department chairpersons for appropriate administrative and academic procedures.
6. Represent the concerns and recommendations of Chairpersons to the Senate

III. Membership. The membership shall consist of the chairpersons (including Chairs, Interim Chairs and Acting Chairs) of all academic departments and of the Department of Athletics, and the library faculty spokesperson.

IV. Meetings. The Council shall meet a minimum of 3 times per academic semester/ Special meetings shall be called upon request of 10% of the membership.

V. Organization. A Council Chair and a Secretary shall be elected at the start of each academic year for one-year terms. The Chair will act as facilitator of meetings and liaison to the Faculty Senate and Provost; the Secretary will keep and distribute minutes and assume the role of Acting Chair in the absence of the Chair.

VI. Communication. The Council will be a standing committee of the Faculty Senate; however, the Council will also have direct lines of communication with the Provost to discuss matter of concern that affect departments across all academic schools at CCSU.

A Clarification Document Highlighting the Involvement of Department Chairpersons in Activities Originating Outside of Their Departments.

[Passed by the CCSU Senate 03.10.2008; signed by President J. Miller]

Department Chairpersons are elected to serve three year terms by members of their respective academic Departments. As such, they represent their Departments to their Deans, the Provost, and other Departments. Over the years, myriad duties and job functions have come onto the desks of Chairpersons from divisions, administrators, administrative assistants, and various personnel outside of the normal channel from Provost to Dean to Department. This document was created because it is specifically important that those outside of the Department and outside of the normal channels of communication should recognize that chairpersons are, first and foremost, members of the faculty. They serve primarily to facilitate the functioning of their Department and to lead in the daily academic functions of their Department.

Like the faculty in their Departments, Department Chairpersons have contractual duties which extend into teaching, research, and service in addition to the workload credits given for serving as Chairperson. They are not supervisors. They are not full-time administrators nor full-time budget managers. The following points establish that Chairpersons are still active members of the instructional faculty and are not to be treated as administrative faculty. Therefore, administrators, staff, and other colleagues outside of the Department are asked to respect the wishes and job functions of the Chair as an academic leader and recognize the following points when asking for the assistance of Chairpersons.

- 1) Department Chairpersons are faculty serving at the behest of the faculty in their Department. Department Chairpersons shall exercise their judgment on what decisions and actions are to be delegated within their Departments. Furthermore, no external group may tell chairpersons what documents to show or not show to their constituency when such documents impact the academic and fiscal functions within the Department.
- 2) Department Chairpersons shall have the right to be evaluated *only* by the members within their home Department and *only* if and when the Department members decide such an evaluation process is necessary. External evaluations of chairpersons inevitably put the functions and responsibility of chairpersons at odds with those who elected them.
- 3) Parties outside of the Department must recognize that undue hardship is placed upon Chairpersons when they are given inadequate time to perform certain administrative tasks. As a best practice, any external request upon chairpersons must reflect the time required for them to adequately consult with their faculty. An operating procedure that should be strictly adhered to is as follows: During the academic year when courses are in session, Chairpersons should have two weeks minimum to consult with their faculty on actions that originate outside of their Department.

- 4) Summer duties place special burdens upon Chairpersons without 12-month appointments. The amount of workload during the summer is culturally increasing because such duties as freshman and transfer orientation, room assignments, time processing of staff, registration, multi-party meetings, now require Chairpersons' efforts. Therefore, Chairpersons deserve due recognition for these efforts, and respect should be given by choosing appropriate timelines. It should be recognized that Department Chairs on 10-month contracts are not derelict in their duties if these additional, not contractually specified, obligations are not met. In no way should Chairpersons or their Departments be held accountable for not providing summer services pro bono. Chairpersons are in favor of exploring unique arrangements for additional compensation for summer work that is over and beyond what has been expected based on the rate of compensation for 10-month chairs when compared to 12-month Chairs. An operating procedure that should be strictly adhered to is as follows: During the winter and summer sessions when Chairpersons and their faculty may be away from campus for an extended period of time, Chairpersons should have a minimum of four weeks to consult with their faculty on actions that originate outside of their Department.
- 5) For all meeting requests, the party requesting Chairpersons' attendance shall give adequate time and notification of agendas to all appropriate Chairpersons and must go through the proper channels involving the Dean and Provost. If Chairpersons cannot make the meeting, they have the right to send a designee. Any action taken at the meeting must be communicated to all Department Chairpersons (or their designees) who were requested to be at the meeting, especially if time or work restraints prevented a Department from being represented. In the absence of representation, the Chairpersons on behalf of any Departments not represented should be afforded the opportunity to weigh in on the action by communicating their support or objections to the appropriate body.
- 6) The University recognizes that any change, any revision, or any new policy or procedure that affects a Chairperson ability to "leading the department in fulfilling its responsibilities in academic and personnel areas" and in "facilitating the need of the Department" [from Section 5.23 of the CSU-AAUP/BoT Contract] must be presented, discussed, and approved by the Provost, the Deans, the Department Chairpersons, as well as the CCSU-AAUP executive council.