OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE

GUIDE FOR
DEPARTMENT AND PROGRAM CHAIRS
General Job Description for Department Chair

For many departmental matters, Department Chairs work directly with the Dean of the College. The December 2006 Faculty Handbook (p.23) has a thorough outline of responsibilities for Department Chairs. The curriculum, faculty course assignments, budget management and oversight, faculty evaluation and review, search requests, student and staff supervision, and preparation of a departmental annual report are all listed as chairs’ responsibilities.

In addition, the following comments may be used as guidelines for your term as chair:

Accessibility: The Department Chair presents the views and requests of the department to the administration. In doing so, it is essential that the Department Chair be available in the department, and the Chair should hold regular, announced office hours if scheduling makes him or her often hard to find, in order to be accessible to his/her colleagues; it is also essential that department meetings be held to discuss important decisions that the department makes. Minutes should be taken and preserved.

Curriculum Integrity: The curriculum of the department must be kept up to date and must fit the concepts and suit the needs of both students and faculty. It is the responsibility of the Chair to see that required courses are staffed for each academic year, and that a sufficient supply of attractive electives is available. The Dean of the College would like to see all department members taking on a fair share of the responsibility for Cultural Studies Program courses, introductory courses and a fair share of the enrollments in the department. The Chair needs to work with his or her colleagues to insure that the curriculum's needs are met via regular faculty members wherever possible. At the same time, a balance must be struck among the needs of the Core program and other programs in which the departmental faculty participate.
Occasionally it is necessary to cancel a course, usually because of low enrollment. Faculty members, department chairs, and program coordinators must obtain the approval of the Dean’s office before cancelling or adding a class.

**Standard Class Times:** Unless otherwise indicated, classes meet at the times listed below. These times are also listed in the College Catalog at [http://www.oxy.edu/registrars-office/class-periods](http://www.oxy.edu/registrars-office/class-periods). Any deviations will require the approval of the Dean.

### CLASS PERIODS

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**Personnel Decisions:** The personnel decisions of the department, both with regard to faculty and to staff, are initiated and guided by the Department Chair. In hiring, evaluation, contract renewal, tenure, and promotion, the Department Chair is in charge of designing the process, in consultation with the department and the administration, and insuring its proper operation and conclusion. Faculty reviews are conducted as described in the [Faculty Handbook](#), with particular attention to the development of skills by new faculty members, and staff reviews are conducted annually in a process described in an annual communication from the Director of Human Resources. The sabbatical leave schedule is planned by the Chair in consultation with the Dean’s office in such a way that the department can continue to conduct its curriculum. Other faculty personnel issues should be brought to the attention of the Dean of the College.

**Budget Decisions:** The Chair oversees budget decisions and allocations of the department. The management of the current budget is part of the Chair's responsibility, as well as the preparation of the proposed budgets for the following year. The budgets for ongoing departmental expenses, for student wages, for equipment and alterations, and for departmental computing needs are all proposed to the Dean’s office by the Chair. In addition, the Chair prepares requests each year for Academic Capital Equipment and for Major Repair and Renewal (MR&R).

**Adjunct Faculty Orientation:** New adjunct faculty will need help navigating Oxy. Chairs and their administrative assistants will be instrumental in ensuring a smooth adjustment to the College if they provide new adjunct colleagues with training on the use of myOxy, OxyConnect (Oxy gMail), online grading and the SEAN system, preparation of a syllabus, and a guide to important offices (HR, ITS, the Registrar, Campus Safety, the Dean of the College).

**Other Issues:** In some departments, other important issues arise. For example, there may be safety issues in the operation of departments, in which case the Chair must make sure the department is fully trained and operating in a safe manner. The Chair needs to know where to refer faculty who are seeking support resources or looking for outside funding. In addition, the Chair is the first person who is usually approached when someone in the department is having difficulty, or when someone in the department is causing difficulty for students, faculty, or staff members. Finally, the Chair prepares for the Dean’s office an annual report on the department, in which achievements of students and faculty, predictable needs for the future, and plans currently in progress are described.

**Curriculum of the Department**

**Curriculum overview and catalog planning:** The College Catalog contains a description of the requirements for students to graduate under various options in each department or program. The first responsibility that the Chair exercises in connection with the curriculum is to insure that required courses such as introductory courses and courses that are taught annually to keep up with demand are in fact scheduled and staffed. In general, tenure-track faculty should be teaching the required courses. If the courses that must be taught cannot be taught with the faculty members who will be present, then the Chair should ask the Dean’s office to provide the additional staff needed to replace some or all of the courses from persons on leave. Such requests must be made before all the funds for such courses are allocated, so please observe the deadlines on the calendar at the front of this handbook. The Dean’s office is always available to consult with Chairs in planning for future temporary or permanent staffing needs.

Substantive changes to majors or minors must be vetted through APC. Guidelines for revising a major or minor, or for proposing a new major, minor, program, or department, can be downloaded from the [Faculty Meeting and APC Materials Moodle site](#) to which all Oxy faculty are subscribed.

**Departmental self-study and outside review team visits (Program Review):** Approximately every 7 years, departments and programs undergo a self-study and review team visit. It will begin with an analysis of the current curriculum and other issues by the faculty of the department and a report on the findings, which will provide the basis for a visit from a team of outside reviewers selected by the Dean’s office in consultation with the department. The report of the outside reviewers will be held confidential between the department and the
administration, but will be the basis for discussions between the Dean of the College and the department about revising the courses, staffing, facilities, and support of the department. A Memorandum of Understanding will be the end product of departmental Program Review. The report will be made available to the members of the Academic Planning Committee (APC).

**Informal Departmental Reviews:** Between these major reviews, the department may study its curriculum and make such revisions as it deems appropriate, after dialogue with the APC that approves major requirements for all departments. In addition, the APC may request that the department revise its contributions to the Core Program. In making any decision that might cause the department to need more funds, it is essential to keep the Dean’s office apprised of the plans so that it can let the department know the extent to which increased funding expectations are realistic.

**Support for Course Improvements:** Individual faculty members may apply for funds for pedagogical innovation or attendance at meetings on teaching through the Dean of the College and the Director of the Center for Teaching Excellence.

**Planning Sabbatical and Other Leaves:** Long-term sabbatical planning should be included as part of the department’s annual report. In addition, the impact of leaves on other programs in which the faculty member is teaching needs to be considered in choosing any replacements.

**Recruiting New Tenure-Track or Multi-Year Faculty Members**

**Planning:** If a department finds that it has a vacant position due to resignation or retirement, or wishes to add a new position, the department must submit a proposal to the Academic Planning Committee (guidelines and deadlines for proposals to the APC are announced early in the Fall semester). The APC advises the College on faculty position planning, and advises the President and the Dean on how to fill vacant faculty positions on a case-by-case basis. Vacant or new faculty positions are filled only after they are funded by the College. When a department has been notified that a vacant or new position has been funded, a formal search process can begin.

One of the most important tasks of faculty members at Occidental College is the selection of new faculty members. The Department Chair will either chair the search or will appoint the chair of the search, and will appoint the members of the Search Committee in consultation with the Dean’s office. Chairs and their administrative assistants will meet with the chair of the Affirmative Action Committee and the Dean to review the methods used in searches. In general, the responsibilities of the search are shared between the department and the Dean’s office in well-defined ways that are described in guidelines provided by the Dean’s office.

During this meeting, the chair of the Affirmative Action Committee and the department will also discuss methods to increase the incidence of highly qualified applicants providing diversity in the applicant pool and to get the department's input into how it wishes to consider diversity (e.g., would diversity make a contribution to the curricular aspects of the position, and if so, how important is that contribution?).

**Role of Search Committee:** It is important for the Department Chair to discuss with the Search Committee at an early date the role it will take in the process. The Dean, the President, and the Affirmative Action Committee will expect all tenured and tenure-track members of the department, as well as majors and minors, to have a role in making the final recommendations. If anyone has a relative or a domestic partner who is in the pool, however, he or she may not contribute to the discussion of that candidate. Search committees will make a formal recommendation to the department and the administration, providing an annotated preferential list of the candidates who visited the campus as part of the finalist pool.

**Choosing the Candidates:** In general, the applicants will be screened by the Search Committee and a smaller "long list" pool obtained. According to law, it is necessary that quality alone be used to make this cut. It is essential in all fields that references be obtained before continuing to define a short list. It is often very important to have telephone interviews to clarify issues that remain, including, if possible, a speaker phone group interview,
and to take other approaches that would insure that the final “short list” include the very best and most suitable candidates to be brought to campus for interviews.

Normally, in searches for three-year or shorter visiting appointments, departments will invite only their top-ranked candidate to campus, and invite a second candidate only if they do not feel they can offer the position to the first candidate.

The chair of the Search Committee should send letters of rejection to those candidates no longer under serious consideration.

**Interviewing:** In planning campus visits for tenure-track appointments, it is essential to make sure that the candidate is scheduled on the Dean's calendar. When the candidate is on campus, it is important to line up people for that person to see and to interact with during most of the visit. It is especially important that candidates meet with students, in addition to any formal presentation to students the candidate might make.

**Recommendation and Offer:** Once the candidates have been interviewed, the recommendation for hiring should be made to the Dean. If the Dean and the President are in accord, then the Dean will discuss the terms of the offer with the Chair and make an offer. It is important that when an offer is being made, candidates be told that they must satisfy the legal requirements (including immigration requirements, if any) to be hired at Occidental College or the offer will not stand. It is the responsibility of the hired person to obtain proper visas, if necessary; the College, as the employer, will assist with the payment of filing fees and the anti-fraud police fee. Spouses’ or partners’ and children’s visas will not be supported financially by the College. Note that if the person selected and hired is not able to complete immigration formalities before classes start, he/she may not be placed on payroll. Please be aware that we have experienced delays that have taken up to an entire semester longer than expected. It is helpful to assess the immigration status of the selected candidate in order to determine whether he or she can be on payroll when classes begin. However, if a candidate has a “J” visa, our immigration counsel must first confirm whether or not they are eligible for the appropriate work visa or permanent resident status. When the candidate has orally accepted the terms of a position, the College will send out a contract. The search is closed when the Dean’s office receives the signed contract.

Please note that the signed contract must be returned and all hiring procedures must be completed before the new faculty member begins teaching.

**Housing:** The College owns a small number of rental units that may be made available to incoming faculty for a term specified in the contract.

**Arrangements for Arrival:** When a new faculty member has been hired, the Chair should obtain summer addresses, find out when the new faculty member will arrive and arrange for someone to facilitate the new faculty member's transitional arrangements: office, stationery, payroll, housing, etc. This need will usually occur during the summer so it may require some ingenuity and effort, but it is well worth it to facilitate the adaptation and comfort of your new colleague.

**Recruiting Part-Time and One- or Two-Year Faculty Members**

**Overview:** Depending upon the number of tenure-track candidates being recruited, the process for short-term faculty recruiting may be changed from year to year. In general, such appointments are recruited over a smaller area (not a national search). The amount of funding available for short-term appointment searches will not be equivalent to that for permanent appointments, but the exact limitations for the year will be indicated in the recruiting guidelines. In all cases, the Dean must agree to the appointment, and a job description must be approved by the Dean before the search begins. It is understood that the teaching load for all full-time visiting appointments is six courses.
Interviews Required: For persons to be appointed full-time for one or two years, the Department Chair will interview the candidate, but the Dean and President need not. For persons to be appointed for less than a year, or for fewer than six courses, ordinarily the Chair may recommend a selection to the Dean. However, it is important that the candidate him/herself be interviewed by at least one department member, who should delve into questions of teaching in some detail. If the candidate is a person who is a relative or domestic partner of the immediate supervisor (Department Chair), another person or group of people should evaluate and recommend the hiring in order to abide by the College’s policy on the employment of relatives.

Hiring Process: For one-year or two-year full-time appointments, the Department Chair recommends the appointment to the Dean and submits an Adjunct Request Form and a CV of the candidate, if one has already been identified. If the appointment is approved, a salary is decided upon and the Dean of the College makes the offer to the candidate. It is important that when an offer is made, candidates must be told that they must satisfy the legal requirements to be hired at Occidental College or the offer will not stand.

For appointments to teach less than full time (i.e., fewer than 6 courses), the Department Chair recommends the appointment to the Dean by submitting an Adjunct Request Form and a CV of the candidate, if one has already been identified. If the appointment is approved, a salary is decided upon and the Dean of the College makes the offer to the candidate. It is important that when an offer is made, candidates must be told that they must satisfy the legal requirements to be hired at Occidental College or the offer will not stand. Contracts for all adjunct faculty are prepared by the Dean’s office.

For temporary positions described in this section, it is the responsibility of the hired person to obtain proper visas, if necessary. The College, as the employer, will assist with the payment of filing fees and the anti-fraud police fee. Note that if the person selected and hired is not able to complete immigration formalities before classes start, he/she may not be placed on payroll. Please be aware that we have experienced delays that have taken up to an entire semester longer than expected. It is helpful to assess the immigration status of the selected candidate in order to determine if he or she can be on payroll when classes begin. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to arrange for coverage of any course that is required.

Please note that the signed contract must be returned and all hiring procedures must be completed before the new faculty member begins teaching.

Mentoring Junior Faculty Members

Junior faculty members look to the Chair for advice about time allocation, office hours and accessibility, teaching strategies, how to make time for research, how to fund research, etc. This mentoring is very important for the new faculty member's development, and is one of the Chair’s most important responsibilities. One way to approach this mentoring is to have regular meetings between the Chair and the new faculty member.

The Faculty Council has also instituted a mentoring program for new faculty members, matching them with tenured faculty members outside their departments who can acquaint them with the culture of the College, act as a resource for any questions and queries they might have during their first year, and help make the transition to life at Occidental as smooth as possible.

Reviews of Department Faculty Members

Please refer to the Faculty Handbook for all guidelines relating to reviews of tenured and tenure-track faculty members.

Staff Relationships and Evaluations

The Assistant to the Dean, in consultation with Department Chairs, conducts annual reviews of Administrative Assistants and Department Service Coordinators, using the form provided by Human Resources which lists
the specific job responsibilities for each staff member. Chairs should consult with their department colleagues regarding their experience with staff members over the course of the year, and staff in Human Resources will assist as needed.

Chairs may have responsibility for staff members in their departments (staff accompanists, lab or equipment managers, and so on). It is the responsibility of the Human Resources department to orient Department Chairs to their supervisory responsibilities. These may include oversight and signing of time cards, approving vacation days, serving as a liaison between Department staff members and HR, and the like. For the purpose of overseeing time cards, it is important for Department Chairs to know the College’s rules about overtime for hourly workers: anything over 8 hours of work a day, 40 hours of work a week, or 7 days in a row of consecutive work, constitutes overtime, which is compensated at 1.5 times the employee’s hourly rate of pay.

**Budget Management**

Budget Monitoring: The Chair should review the department’s accounts regularly to ensure that funds are spent appropriately and that the bottom line of the budget is not overspent. Although the Chair works in close consultation with the Departmental Services Coordinator/Administrative Assistant, this responsibility cannot be delegated. Each department is allocated a Services and Supplies budget (A001-xxxx), and many departments also control restricted and/or unrestricted “income” or reserve accounts. Your administrative assistant will have a list of those account numbers, and you may request access to all those accounts by contacting the Controller, Barbara Gillett Valiente (bgillett@oxy.edu, or ext. 1417).

To monitor your services and supplies budget (A001-xxxx), use the finance tab under myOxy.edu. You can also receive answers to many of your budget-related questions by reviewing the SSB Finance User Guide, available at http://www.oxy.edu/sites/default/files/assets/SSBFinanceUserGuide.pdf.

For fund balances in all your other departmental accounts – income, restricted, endowed – you will need to contact the Business Office directly. For now, it is not possible to get an automated response to these requests.

Reallocation: The Business Office may allow you to reallocate funds from one category to another during the year to meet needs, but they will not allow you to spend funds in excess of your total departmental bottom line operating budget. There is no contingency fund, so be careful not to reallocate too much early in the year that will be needed later. Make sure you are not spending the Student Wages Budget at an inappropriate rate, since there is little leeway in that fund. Therefore, it is particularly important to check on the rate at which this budget is spent.

**Health and Safety Management (to be completed)**

**Grants Management**

Institutional Signature Requirements: Phoebe Dea, Director of Sponsored and Undergraduate Research at Occidental College. General information on the Sponsored Research Office may be found at http://www.oxy.edu/sro/. Contact the SRO for guidelines and policy for submitting proposals.

Additional Reviews: For proposals that involve human subjects, animals or recombinant DNA and select organisms research, approvals must be secured from Human Subjects Research Review Committee (Phoebe Dea, Acting Chair), Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (Nancy Dess and Roberta Pollock, co-Chairs), or Institutional Biosafety Committee (Aram Nersissian, Chair), respectively, prior to submission. Information on these committees may be found at http://www.oxy.edu/institutional-review-boards. Please contact Scott Bogue, College Compliance Officer and Associate Dean, or Susan Molik, IRB Coordinator, if you have questions on these federally mandated review processes.

Grants Account Setup: When faculty members or departments receive grants from funding agencies, these grants are assigned special account numbers and are monitored by Jaletta White-Griego (ext. 2528), Business Office.
Resources for Faculty

Please refer to the Faculty Resource Guidebook, online in the Faculty area of myOxy.

Annual Report of Department Chair

In the spring, the Chair is responsible for preparing a departmental report which will be sent to the Dean’s office. The Dean’s office will issue a call for the report, detailing what it should contain. In general, information about assessment and graduates (including prizes awarded), enrollment trends, achievements of the department, needs of the department, perspectives on directions in curriculum and/or faculty development, and leave or sabbatical plans for the academic year after the upcoming year (with any resulting staff requests for replacements) should be included.

These reports should be submitted by mid-June. The Dean and the President use these reports over the summer, so every effort should be made to get them turned in on time.

By June 30 each year, faculty members turn in their Annual Report to the Dean. Faculty members are expected to give their Department Chair a copy, as well.
Appendices

DEPARTMENT and PROGRAM CHAIRS, 2012-2013

American Studies: Xiao-Huang Yin, (323) 259-2578

Art History and Visual Arts: Eric Frank, (323) 259-2740

Biology: Dan Pondella, (323) 259-2955

Biochemistry: Roberta Pollock and Chris Craney, (323) 259-2964 (Pollock) and (323) 259-2767 (Craney)

Chemistry: Aram Nersissian, (323) 259-1411

Cognitive Science: Carolyn Brighouse, (323) 259-2588

Core: John Swift, (323) 259-2804

Critical Theory and Social Justice: Donna Maeda, (323) 259-2856

Diplomacy and World Affairs: Anthony Chase, chase@oxy.edu

East Asian Languages and Cultures: Sarah Chen, (323) 259-2978 (fall) and Motoko Ezaki (spring)

Economics: Woody Studenmund, (323) 259-2776

Education: Ron Solorzano, (323) 259-2517

English and Comparative Literary Studies: Michael Near, (323) 259-2864

English Writing: Deborah Martinson, (323) 259-2801

Geology: Jim Sadd, (323) 259-2518

German, Russian and Classical Studies: Jürgen Pelzer, (323) 259-2837

History: Sharla Fett, (323) 259-2868

Kinesiology: Stuart Rugg, (323) 259-2705

Latino/a Latin American Studies: Lisa Sousa, (323) 259-2753

Mathematics: Ramin Naimi, (323) 259-2550

Music: Irene Girton, (323) 259-2590

Philosophy: Saul Traiger, (323) 259-2901
Physics: George Schmiedeshoff, (323) 259-2800
Politics: Caroline Heldman, (323) 259-1309
Psychology: Anne Schell, (323) 259-2798
Religious Studies: Keith Naylor, (323) 259-2963
Sociology: Lisa Wade, (323) 259-2900
Spanish and French Studies: Felisa Guillen, (323) 259-2839
Theater: Susan Gratch, (323) 259-2576
Urban and Environmental Policy: Peter Dreier, (323) 259-2913
SABBATICALS and LEAVES, 2012-13 (information to come)

Fall
1.

Spring:

Phased Retirement, year 2:

1. Arthe Anthony
2. Larry Caldwell
3. Lynn Dumenil
4. Alan Freeman
5. Allen Gross
6. Martha Ronk
7. Louise Yuhas