

BOWDOIN COLLEGE

DEAN FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

Appointment of Department Chairs

Chairs are appointed by the President on the recommendation of the Dean for Academic Affairs. The Dean's recommendation is informed by the advice of the outgoing chair after consulting with all members of the department. In unusual cases—for example, when there is disagreement within the department—the Dean may consult directly with members of the department before making a recommendation.

Chairs are appointed for fixed terms determined at the time of appointment. Normally, the appointment is for a three-year term with an expectation of rotation, where practicable, at the end of the term.

In unusual cases, when it would be in the interest of the department and the College, the Dean has the discretion to remove an individual from the chair before the end of the term, after consulting with members of the department.

Responsibilities of Department Chairs

The chair is responsible for the overall strength and vitality of the departmental program, the support and guidance of departmental colleagues, and the academic well-being of students enrolled in the department's courses and programs. The chair oversees the implementation of the College's procedures and practices with respect to faculty colleagues and students and acts as a representative of the department to the wider College community. Because department chairs are the college officers closest to the point where our instructional and scholarly missions are carried out, they occupy the most important administrative positions in the academic program.

Department chairs bear a variety of more specific responsibilities, as itemized below. In summary, chairs have the final responsibility for most matters pertaining to departmental governance and planning, though in several departments, depending on their size and structure, some of these responsibilities may be delegated to subcommittees or to individual faculty members. Thus, chairs are responsible for advising and assisting tenure-track faculty throughout the reappointment and tenure process; preparation and submission of the annual budget requests; scheduling of classes; hiring of new faculty; planning for leaves and coordinating the search for leave replacements appointees; supervision of departmental support staff, student workers and assistants; maintaining the records and files of the department; and convening and chairing departmental meetings. Chairs are expected to solicit the views of all members of their departments in making important decisions about curricular requirements, course offerings, and major personnel arrangements, and in making recommendations to the dean concerning the succession to the chair.

The following outline indicates the breadth of a chair's responsibilities. It was developed by a group of chairs several years ago.

Outline of Department Chair Responsibilities

I. Within the College

A. Department

1. Manage and support faculty and staff
 - a. Faculty
 - i. Conduct searches
 - ii. Chair reappointment, tenure, and promotion reviews
 - iii. Resolve conflicts among peers
 - iv. Resolve student complaints about faculty performance (including grade disputes)
 - v. Mentor new faculty members or insure that mentoring is being done
 - vi. Tutor successors
 - b. Academic support staff/departmental staff
 - i. Hire
 - ii. Coordinate and supervise work schedule
 - iii. Review performance annually
2. Coordinate department curriculum
 - a. Courses offered (new courses, courses to be withdrawn, first-year seminars, non-Eurocentric courses, cross-listed courses); liaison with CEP New Course Subcommittee
 - b. Course scheduling
 - c. Check and revise annual catalog copy
 - d. Off-campus study and transfer of credit
 - e. Outside speakers
3. Advising
 - a. Supervise advising of majors and minors
 - b. Approve requests for transfer credit and credit for off-campus study
 - c. Administer advanced placement credit
 - d. Student groups
4. Determine equipment and space needs; oversee building management, renovation, maintenance, security
5. Manage department accounts and oversee expenditures; prepare annual budget

B. College-wide

1. Serve as contact with Admissions Office
 - a. Interviews with prospective students
 - b. Represent department at Bowdoin Experience weekends
 - c. Evaluate applicants' work where appropriate
2. Serve as contact with Development Office
 - a. Help with fund-raising – speaking, grant-writing

II. Outside the College

- A. Act as point person for all outside requests for help and expertise
- B. Respond to surveys
- C. Act as liaison with State agencies