

**2.N-2005: Area Chairs**

**1. Policy**

Area Chairs, together with the Deans and Vice-President Academic & Provost, are responsible for maintaining and enhancing the highest standards of teaching and scholarly excellence and for setting intellectual and academic priorities. Area Chairs play a critical role in connecting their Areas to the University as a whole. Chairs serve as liaisons with the Deans and represent their Areas at Faculty Council and Academic Council. More generally, Chairs are advocates for their Areas within the University and they also relay the perspectives of their Deans and University administration to the members of their Areas. In the exercise of their duties and responsibilities, Chairs are to consult with their colleagues within their Area and to seek counsel and advice from their Dean and other members of administration.

**2. Procedures**

2.1 Leadership: Chairs exercise leadership, demonstrate vision, and empower others to enable their Area to achieve the highest possible standards of excellence in all its activities.

2.1.1 It is important that Chairs recognize the legal and professional obligations that their roles encompass, including obligations to keep certain kinds of information confidential and obligations to report certain kinds of allegations and problems to others within the University.

- i. When a serious issue involving personal or academic misconduct arises, Chairs must seek advice from their Dean, the Vice-President Academic & Provost and, when appropriate, Human Resources;
- ii. Uphold and implement University policy.

2.1.2 Develop and sustain collegial and collaborative relations with faculty in the Area and maintain a sense of common purpose through appropriate structures for consultation, decision-making, and communication within the Area.

- i. Model a culture of co-operation and respect;
- ii. Be accessible to faculty and students and strive to provide the support needed to enable them to contribute fully and develop their skills and potential;

Approval Authority	Responsible Office	Effective Date	Date Last Revisited
Academic Council	Vice-President Academic & Provost	November 20, 2005	February 27, 2020

- iii. The Chair should be receptive to questions, complaints, grievances, and suggestions from members of the Area and to take appropriate action as required;
  - iv. Schedule regular meetings of the area, set the agenda, maintain order, and distribute and preserve minutes on the S: drive;
  - v. Represent the interests, priorities, and concerns of the Area to administration and at FASC and Academic Council;
  - vi. Communicate decisions and priorities of administration to the Area.
- 2.1.3 Articulate and advance the academic strategy of the Area in line with the University vision, mission, and Strategic Plan.
- 2.1.4 Promote and represent the Area and University both internally and externally.
- i. Keep the administration informed of Area achievements and activities and work with Communications to make accomplishments known to the wider community;
  - ii. Co-ordinate activities with outside groups;
  - iii. Ensure the Area is represented at special events (ex. Open Houses, New Student Orientations, etc.);
  - iv. Work with Advancement to identify and pursue funding opportunities.
- 2.2 Curriculum and Program Development: Area Chairs oversee the development of new courses and programs and the revision and review of existing courses and programs.
- 2.2.1 Ensure that all submissions for new courses or course changes are complete, using the correct templates, before they are presented to the Area, forwarded to the Enrolment Management Team, and presented to Academic Council for approval.
- 2.2.2 Provide leadership and assistance with the development of new programs.
- 2.2.3 Provide leadership and assistance (when there is a program coordinator) with program reviews.
- 2.2.4 Work with the Office of the Registrar, Deans, Vice-President Academic & Provost in the collection of data regarding student progress and success including student learning outcomes assessment and graduation rates and know how to interpret data for program improvement and advocacy.
- 2.3 Timetabling: Area Chairs make a vital contribution to the academic timetable for their Areas.

- 2.3.1 The Vice-President Academic & Provost will collaborate to develop target enrolments, and anticipated demand for courses to the Deans for distribution to Area Chairs who then will bring the information to their Areas and to particular programs.
  - 2.3.2 In September, the Vice-President Academic & Provost will provide enrolment histories, target enrolments, and anticipated demand for courses to the Deans for distribution to Area Chairs who then will bring the information to their Areas and to particular programs.
  - 2.3.3 Deans, Area Chairs, Program Coordinators and Faculty will:
    - i. Review course offerings during the past academic year;
    - ii. Review program requirements and identify courses that need to be timetabled for students to fulfill these requirements;
    - iii. Identify the number of sections, labs, tutorials that are likely to be required;
    - iv. Assign faculty to courses and identify sessional needs;
    - v. Suggest course caps and indicate if it is a soft or hard cap (provide reasoning).
  - 2.3.4 Area Chairs will collect from faculty their class length and format, and pedagogical needs for each course using the Registrar's spreadsheet.
  - 2.3.5 This process is to be completed by early October and the submission for the Area submitted to the Dean for review who will then submit the proposed offerings to the VP Academic & Provost and Registrar by the end of October.
  - 2.3.6 The Registrar will have prepared a draft timetable by mid-January.
  - 2.3.7 Area Chairs will review the draft timetable with members of their areas and communicate any concerns and change requests to the Registrar by the end of the first week of February.
- 2.4 Faculty Hiring: Area Chairs play an important role in faculty hiring.
- 2.4.1 Area Chairs are ex officio members of all FT hiring committees within their Areas.
  - 2.4.2 Area Chairs take the lead in filling temporary PT positions within the Area.
    - i. Chairs communicate to the Dean the sessional needs of the Area;
    - ii. In keeping with the Collective Agreement and the right of first refusal, Chairs are to determine if there are any qualified sessional faculty available to fill open positions;

- iii. When there are no qualified sessional faculty available, a committee, presided over by the Chair, is to be struck by the Area to draft a position description, vet applications, and interview suitable candidates. The committee shall include the Program Coordinator (where one exists), at least one FT faculty member within the discipline, and another within the Area. The Deans are ex-officio members of all hiring committees but may choose not to exercise this right;
  - iv. Chairs facilitate the work of the committee by arranging for posting the position description to the St. Mary's website and elsewhere as appropriate, receiving and circulating applications, working with the committee to develop a short list, arranging interviews, and communicating the committee's recommendation to the Dean. If the Dean concurs, notification is given to the Vice-President Academic & Provost to have a contract drawn and to inform the Registrar, the Bookstore, and IT.
- 2.5 PT Faculty Review and Mentorship: Area Chairs take the lead in the on-going review and development of sessional faculty within their Areas.
- 2.5.1 Arrange opportunities for classroom observation and to provide written assessments of teaching performance which will be placed in their personnel file.
  - 2.5.2 Receive and review the course evaluations of all sessional faculty and arrange to meet with them annually to discuss their teaching.
  - 2.5.3 Mentor sessional and junior faculty.
    - i. Chairs should be available to junior and sessional faculty to discuss career paths, teaching, and research and to help find resources on campus and beyond to support their scholarly and pedagogical work;
    - ii. Chairs should work with their Area to develop a mentoring plan for the Area;
    - iii. Chairs should be familiar with all University personnel policies and able to advise sessional faculty and direct them to appropriate resources.
- 2.6 Students: Students are another important internal constituency that fall within the responsibilities of Area Chairs.
- 2.6.1 Chairs need to be available to students to provide counsel and advice and hear concerns about courses and faculty within their Areas.

- i. Direct students to university resources and supports;
  - ii. Inform students of university policies and procedures to be followed;
  - iii. Meet with faculty to address student concerns when appropriate;
  - iv. Contact the Dean or other members of Leadership when the situation warrants.
- 2.6.2 Participate in efforts to recruit and retain students.
  - i. Be available to attend Open Houses and other events off campus;
  - ii. Work with programs to maintain and update web presence and develop promotional materials.
- 2.7 Budget Preparation: Area Chairs (and Program Coordinators, where applicable) oversees the preparation of the annual Area budget submission.
  - 2.7.1 Meet with the Areas by the middle of the fall term to identify and prioritize budget needs, including staffing and capital, for the next fiscal year.
  - 2.7.2 Ensure that all budget requests are accompanied by a written rationale and cost documentation and are in keeping with the Area's and the University's long term priorities before being forwarded to the Dean.
  - 2.7.3 Communicate budget decisions and their context back to the Area and any concerns back to the Dean.
- 2.8 Communication: ensure that faculty within the Area are adequately informed of University policies and procedures, including course outline templates, grade submission dates, text book orders, printing, IT.

**Selection**

1. Chairs are elected by their Areas
2. Chairs serve a three-year term, which can be renewed for a further two years if the Area so desires
3. Chairs receive a course release in each of the fall and winter terms