

TO: DR. TRACY HALL
FROM: FACULTY SENATE
SUBJECT: RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF DEPARTMENT CHAIR TRAINING
DATE: DECEMBER 24, 2015

The faculty senate believes it is imperative that our direct leadership such as our Department Chairs be given support in the form of planned and methodical training on a routine and ongoing basis. This request is even more imperative given the significant number of changes in curriculum as we address initiatives related to accreditation including Common Core standards, the update/modernization of degree programs to meet local needs, and the centralization of processes recommended by the Huron Consulting Group and TBR. Areas for training that we feel are essential include:

- **Accreditation Reporting:** This category would include training on Internal Audits, area of discipline audits (SACS, ABET, ACBSP, etc...), as well as basic functions such as the location of previous reports, the data collected by departments to support this reporting, etc...
- **Curriculum procedures:** Change procedures, Add procedures, termination procedures for degrees, certificates, and courses.
- **Human Resource procedures:** procedures including job posting, credentialing applicants, Support & Administrative Staff evaluation processes, salary recommendations.
- **Faculty Evaluations procedures:** This category is distinctly separate from Support & Administrative Staff because of the importance of the chair in developing new faculty in a way that encourages promotion & tenure. It should also include a common acceptance of faculty roles across the many departments where there have been major differences in the past.
- **Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) / Program Outcomes / Institutional Effectiveness (IE) requirements:** This category would include training on course-level SLOs, using the IE system for Program Outcomes, and using the IE system for the ancillary information that is needed to complete the reporting process and satisfy accreditation requirements.
- **Student Appeal procedures:** While the student handbook is a starting point, the chairs are often the first point of contact when a situation escalates. This training should include the type of documentation needed, the methods to advocate, etc...
- **Student Classroom Discipline:** Again, the student handbook is the starting point; however, efficient and knowledgeable use of the Southwest adjudication process can safeguard the student body, protect the faculty work environment, and equip the chair with conflict resolution tools that may help de-escalate a precarious situation. Formal training in this area may enable the chair to support the faculty while also addressing and resolving the issue in the shortest amount of time possible.
- **Faculty Overload Scheduling:** This task directly impacts faculty pay, work/life balance, and the department budget. Moreover, it impacts students via course scheduling and degree completion planning. Since it is an integral component of the department chair's responsibilities and since it can be a very complex issue, training on best practices for planning, assignment, and budgeting may be helpful.

- **Work Unit Conflict/Issue Resolution:** This category refers to the necessity of leaders to possess the ability to recognize and resolve issues that arise between departmental stakeholders, in a fair and unbiased manner and one that preserves the dignity of those involved. The absence of this critical skill risks discord in the work unit and thus compromises the mission of the unit. The chair should have the skills to resolve issues that arise between members in the department as well as between departmental members and the chair.

In our recent meeting, the faculty senate was delighted to learn of your support for the development of the people who have worked for our college and served our community for so long. We ask for consideration to be given to the Department Chairs who work so closely to the front-line of our mission and can have such a profound impact in daily operations.

We welcome your response on this issue. Thank you in advance for your consideration.