Leading as a Department Chair

Chairs are faculty administrators

- Dual role
- Technically part of the administration
- Have some supervisory roles for department faculty
- The moral leader of the department
- Overlapping leadership and administrative functions
Some key functions of the chair

• Running department meetings
• Running academic personnel review
• Scheduling classes
• Fostering a healthy and inclusive climate
• Ensuring mentoring of new faculty
• Overseeing searches and ensuring inclusive hiring
• Department budget and staff management
• Faculty supervision/management

Running department meetings

• Set the agenda
• Set the tone, maintain the tone
  • Bystander intervention
• Run inclusive meetings, hear all voices
• Family-friendly scheduling
Running academic personnel review

- In the UC system, the department letter provides the initial framing, which has a lot of influence over the rest of the process
- Consistency – within the department and across campus
- Evaluation, not advocacy
- Each of research, teaching, and service are important
  - Quality of research, not just where it is published or what the topic is
    - Value interdisciplinary research
  - Recognize innovations in teaching and assessment, contributions to equity
    - Caution of bias in student evaluations
  - Try to recognize hidden labor of underrepresented groups

Scheduling classes

- One of the few areas of clear purview
- Aim for equitable assignments
- Family-friendly scheduling
- Protect new hires from large classes, multiple preps
Fostering a healthy and inclusive climate

- Lead by example
- Culture of respect for each other
- Encourage people to talk to you about issues
- Active intervention
- Be attentive to the climate for students and staff
- Ask for help when needed

Ensuring mentoring of new faculty

- New faculty should be provided a mentor in the department and a mentor outside the department
- The chair should make sure the unwritten rules get explained
- Introduce new faculty to staff
- Be attentive to climate issues for new faculty
Overseeing searches, ensuring inclusive hiring

• Chair sets the tone for the search process and department meetings
• Whole department benefits from training on fair and inclusive hiring
• Take steps to avoid impact of implicit bias
• Value contributions to diversity
• Advancing Faculty Diversity project

Department budget and staff management

• Work with department manager to oversee department budget
• May supervise the department manager
• Staff human resources policy is completely different from academic HR policy
• Take advantage of staff supervision training opportunities
• Remember to support your staff and support their growth
Faculty supervision/management

• Chairs are the first line for performance management of faculty
• May need to help faculty address issues arising from their personnel reviews
• May need to intervene in complaints against faculty (from students, staff, or other faculty)
• If a faculty member creates a climate issue, chair should take action
  • Ask for help if it is needed