

# Department Chair Handbook

Whitman College  
2024-2025



**WHITMAN**  
— **BLUES** —



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## Department Chair Handbook

### Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to outline the responsibilities of department chairs and program directors and to provide chairs and directors with information and resources to assist them in administering those responsibilities. While most of the information in this handbook will pertain to both departments and programs (and will use the term “department chair” to refer to the administrators of academic departments and programs), the handbook is written with the understanding that the administrative responsibilities of chairs and directors will vary across programs, departments, and divisions. For this reason, department chairs should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the [Faculty Code](#) and the [Faculty Handbook](#), which define the official policies and procedures under which the faculty and the academic program operate.

The [Faculty Code](#) is the official record of faculty legislation regarding the power of the faculty to “arrange the course of study,” “take proper measures for the government and discipline of students,” and “make such rules for its own organization, government, and procedures as it shall deem proper.” (Constitution of Whitman College, Article V.) Changes, additions, and deletions to the Faculty Code can only be made by a vote of the faculty.

The [Faculty Handbook](#), which is prepared and maintained by the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, contains the procedural details for the implementation of policies outlined in the Faculty Code, policies that are not subject to faculty legislation, and general information concerning support for professional development. The policies and procedures detailed in the Faculty Handbook are only guidelines; they are not contractual agreements.

Given the evolving nature of faculty governance and administration, the Department Chair Handbook will be revised as necessary. Suggestions for revisions, additions, or deletions should be directed to the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty.

## Administrative Structure of the Academic Program

### Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty

The Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty (PDOF) is responsible for administering the academic program of the College and includes the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, and the Associate Dean for Faculty Development. The Office's areas of responsibility include the faculty; the curriculum; academic support services; the academic budget; grants and faculty development; institutional governance; accreditation and assessment; and relations with alumni, students, and external audiences. For a list of the specific areas of responsibility for the Dean and Associate Deans, see the website for the [PDOF Office](#).

The staff in the Provost and Dean of the Faculty Office handle duties in support of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty's areas of responsibility and can provide details and further clarification of the guidelines contained in this handbook, as well as assistance to department chairs as they carry out their responsibilities. The PDOF website has [a list of the specific areas of responsibility](#) for Provost office staff.

### Division Chairs

According to the Faculty Code (Chapter I, Article VIII, Section 9), each division chair is the executive officer of their division and is expected to call regular meetings of the division. The division chair is the chief budget officer of each division as well as its representative on the Committee of Division Chairs. Division chairs are to be fully included in all deliberations pertaining to searches for tenure-track faculty. The division chair is also responsible for matters pertaining to the physical equipment, buildings, and classrooms of their division (office assignments, however, are handled by Helen Kim).

The Committee of Division Chairs, among many other duties, advises the Provost and the President on staffing, budget, evaluation of faculty, and policy matters as they relate to the various divisions and academic departments as well as the College as a whole.

As a rule, department chairs should direct questions or concerns regarding the issues outlined in this document to their respective division chair. There will, of course, be instances where this may not be feasible or appropriate; in those instances, it is appropriate to initiate communication directly with the Provost and Dean of the Faculty or, as appropriate, one of the associate deans. In cases where an issue concerns the faculty as a whole, the department chair may wish to contact the Chair of the Faculty, particularly as this is the faculty member who sets agendas for meetings of the faculty.

### Department Chairs

Department chairs are the primary representative of their departments in matters to be considered at the divisional level or by the faculty as a whole. They represent their departments on occasions or events that might be organized by the President or the Provost

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and Dean of the Faculty. Department chairs also represent their departments in discussions with the division chair, the Committee of Division Chairs, and the Provost and Dean of the Faculty regarding personnel changes, proposals to fill vacated positions, and curricular matters. Finally, they represent the department in relations with a number of other offices including Admission, Communications, and the Registrar.

### **The Department Chair as Leader**

In addition to being charged with many administrative responsibilities, the department chair has a fundamental role in supporting faculty members in the department, ensuring a collegial working environment, and helping to sustain and improve the teaching and learning mission of the College. Department chairs who lead effectively not only manage budgets and curricula: they facilitate discussion of important issues, enable full and equitable participation of all colleagues, and help to develop consensus where there are divided opinions. They can also help to connect discussions within their department to matters of importance that extend to the College as a whole. For example, a department chair who attends a Center for Teaching and Learning discussion on a particular topic, or engages in a discussion about curricular issues on a standing committee, can bring ideas back to the department for further consideration. Finally, chairs play a key role in helping to foster positive working relationships among members of the department and staff who work with the department.

The Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty offers an orientation for new chairs each year, and the Associate Dean for Faculty Development is an on-campus resource for assisting in the development of strategies for addressing particular challenges chairs may encounter in their work. In addition, the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty is supportive of off-campus resources and opportunities for department chair training and development. Faculty interested in these resources should contact the Associate Dean for Faculty Development.

Some chairs have found it valuable to begin their terms by doing informal “listening tours” with individual department colleagues to better understand their concerns and to use that information to shape the agenda for department meetings for the following year.

### **Department Chair Administrative Responsibilities**

Department chair appointments are made by the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, normally for a period of three years, and begin on July 1. Typical responsibilities of a department chair include the following, which will be explained in greater detail in this document:

- Call and conduct regular department meetings.
- Attend meetings several times each semester with the Provost and Dean of the Faculty.
- Ensure the department adheres to College legislation and policies as stated in the Faculty Handbook and Faculty Code.
- Mentor new and visiting faculty, providing them with guidance on departmental,

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divisional, and College policies and serving as a resource in supporting their work in their new positions.

- Chair search committees for tenure-track and non-tenure track positions, although in some instances, another tenure-track member of the department may serve as the chair of a search committee.
- Evaluate non-tenure-track faculty who do not have senior status.
- Work with department colleagues and the division chair to monitor, assess, and modify, as appropriate, the distribution of intra-departmental faculty workload (e.g., number of major advisees, course enrollments, etc.).
- Work with department colleagues and the division chair to coordinate, monitor, and assess the department's curricular offerings (e.g., range, level, and diversity of classes, including the distribution of classes across times of the day and semesters, contributions to Encounters and general studies, etc.). This includes maintaining a two-year course plan and working with colleagues to time sabbatical and other leaves to reduce impact on the department and students.
- Manage and supervise department budgets.
- Maintain clear and transparent guidelines for the use and distribution of departmental budgets and intra-departmental funds such as gifts and grants.
- Supervise and evaluate staff and student workers as appropriate.
- Manage departmental communications with students such as tracking requirements for the major, completing senior assessments, applying for honors.
- Oversee awards that recognize student achievements.
- Determine course equivalences and approve transfer credit for students for courses in their major.
- Oversee department assessment activities, including periodic assessment reports and external reviews.
- Ensure the currency and accuracy of department web pages. Communications can assist in website redesign projects.
- Represent the department in discussions with the division, the Committee of Division Chairs and/or the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty concerning issues such as personnel changes and budget requests.
- Represent the department in relations with the Registrar's Office concerning such matters as course offerings, course scheduling, enrollment limits, evaluation of transfer credits, catalog copy, etc.



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- Represent the department with other administrative offices such as Admission (e.g. on Visitor's Day), Communications, WCTS, etc. as necessary.

### Department Meetings

It is expected that every academic department will hold regular meetings. The frequency and formality of these meetings may vary by department, but it is the chair's responsibility to ensure that all members of the department are afforded the opportunity to participate fully in departmental decision making and understand departmental policies and procedures.

The Faculty Code (Chapter I, Article I) grants voting rights to all tenure-track faculty as well as Senior Lecturers and Senior Adjunct Assistant Professors (additional clarification is provided in the Faculty Handbook, Chapter II.C). Departments may wish to include other members of the department either at regular meetings or at specific meetings where the topic of discussion is particularly germane to those faculty.

Department chairs can have an enormously positive influence on the department by running effective meetings. Sending out an agenda ahead of time, soliciting agenda items from colleagues, and ensuring equal participation during the meeting are valuable. Taking and circulating minutes (or delegating this to colleagues) can help to ensure that all members have a record of decisions that were made and responsibility for any items that may have been given to individual colleagues. Chairs can also anticipate discussions on certain issues that are likely to be contentious, such as potential changes to the major or to a course that is a foundation for the major. In such cases, it may be useful to consider particular ways for structuring the conversation that will most likely ensure that the various points of view are well articulated and considered in the decision-making process.

For some meetings, the department chair might consider inviting a senior colleague or administrator from outside the department to facilitate. This can help the chair, for example, to be able to speak freely about their concerns or interests regarding a curricular change without worrying about this interfering with their obligation as chair to ensure that all voices and perspectives are heard and adequately considered. Division chairs, the Associate Dean for Faculty Development, and the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion have assisted in this purpose.

### Calendar

Department chairs are encouraged to check the Whitman College [Events Calendar](#) for important dates such as visitor days and reunion weekends. The Registrar's [Academic Calendar](#) has deadlines concerning course changes, catalog copy, etc. The Intercultural Center posts a current [calendar of religious holidays](#). Chairs are encouraged to take these dates into account, as feasible, when planning department events, speakers, examinations, etc. There is also a [Provost and Dean of the Faculty Calendar of Deadlines](#).

Some departments have developed their own internal departmental calendar, which can be very helpful to a new chair in knowing about the many tasks that need to be completed by a certain deadline.

### Curriculum

Department chairs have the responsibility for managing their department's curriculum. This includes oversight of the department's course offerings, managing the curricular revision process, course scheduling and planning, and disseminating curricular information.

Academic departments and programs are expected to offer a comprehensive curriculum in their discipline or field of study appropriate for study in the context of the liberal arts. This includes a range of courses at different levels offered at different times throughout the day and balanced across semesters, serving the interests of students majoring and minoring, as well as courses serving as electives, survey courses, and general education offerings.

Department chairs work with the faculty in their departments, as well as colleagues in other programs and offices, to ensure that these various interests are met.

Department chairs are responsible for the curricular revision process for their departments. This includes the organization of departmental proposals to the Curriculum Committee for curricular changes, alterations in major and minor requirements, introduction of special topics courses, consultation with the Off-Campus Studies Office regarding study abroad, etc. In proposing new courses or modifications to courses, departments are to use the [appropriate form](#) found on the Registrar's Office webpage. Chairs must carefully complete all sections of the template before proposals can be considered. All curricular proposals must be reviewed and approved by the entire department before they are brought to the divisional level and the Curriculum Committee for consideration.

#### Department Planning

In consultation with their department members, department chairs also determine course scheduling for the academic year as well as prerequisites and enrollment limits. To the greatest extent possible, departments must plan their curricular offerings at least two years in advance and balance their offerings across times of day and across semesters. For example, in order to avoid an imbalance in curricular offerings, not all faculty members in any given department may teach three courses in the fall and two in the spring. Such planning allows for students to better plan their long-term schedules, and for the administration to more accurately anticipate future resource and budgetary needs. Guidelines for standard class times, the Curriculum Planning and Scheduling Tool, and other resources can be found on the Registrar's [Services for Faculty and Staff](#) web page.

The department chair is responsible for communicating to students and others information about the department's curriculum, including schedules, anticipated courses, major and minor requirements, and information about the department's senior assessment in the major. Such communications may be made by sending emails to department majors, distributing information to students in classes, or by other methods deemed appropriate by the department. In addition, the chair must communicate all necessary course adoptions, course revisions, and catalog information to the Registrar's Office by specified deadlines.

Department chairs should ensure that advisors are giving consistent and timely information to departmental advisees. This is especially important in the case of juniors, who should be reminded of the expectations for the senior year and the steps that they need to take to fulfill

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requirements (e.g., completion of a comprehensive examination or a thesis). To assist in this purpose, departments might find it useful to develop a checklist of requirements for use in advising. They may also communicate important advising information for non-majors to the Associate Dean for Faculty Development to post on the Canvas advising site.

### Department Conversations about Curriculum and Pedagogy

Part of a department's planning efforts involve reflecting on the current program of study and its effectiveness. Your department has developed a [set of goals](#) for students in the major, including mastery of disciplinary knowledge, aptitude in discipline-specific skills (writing research proposals or papers, for example), and there may also be some cross-disciplinary skills that you especially emphasize (quantitative reasoning, writing, oral presentation skills, etc.). In addition, departments should periodically review the compositional diversity of students in the program, whether there is equal access to the program's offerings, and success rates for various groups of students in the program.

Every year, department chairs are asked to submit an assessment report on one or more department student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes should be assessed in a rotation that allows all of them to be evaluated at least once in a three-year cycle. Student learning outcomes to be assessed in any given year are determined the prior year and can be found on the previous year's report. The chair is responsible for coordinating assessment efforts and data collection within the department and for submitting the final report, which can be accessed via the faculty my.Whitman login page. Any questions should be directed to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. Departments and programs should periodically discuss what might be the most effective ways to examine student learning. As chair, you can help the department continue its momentum by reviewing prior assessments and asking colleagues for input on other potential areas to examine.

[Pedagogical Inquiry Grants](#) may be appropriate sources for supporting departmental curriculum and pedagogy revision efforts. Contact the Associate Dean for Faculty Development to discuss this possibility.

### External Reviews

The College expects each department to conduct an external review every 7-10 years. These reviews are meant to assist departments in setting long-term goals; constructively critiquing the success of their curricula and operating structures; and fostering conversation about changes the department might envision in order to strengthen its programs and better meet the educational needs of all the students participating in it. Departments selected for review by the Provost and Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will be given ample notice and will work with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs to make necessary arrangements. Guidelines and templates for external department reviews can be found at [External Review Guidelines and Procedures](#) on the Provost and Dean of the Faculty web page.

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### Department Staffing

In addition to the planning necessary for the efficient management of the curriculum, department chairs must plan for departmental staffing requirements. This includes working with department colleagues to schedule sabbaticals in such a way as to minimize disruptions to the department's curricular offerings and major and minor programs. Such considerations must also take into account, to the greatest extent possible, the needs of non-tenured, tenure-track faculty.

Chairs will need to assess and monitor departmental staffing needs and make requests to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty for the hiring of non-tenure-track faculty, including sabbatical replacements. Departments should not assume that because they were authorized to hire a non-tenure-track faculty member during a previous year, whether full or part-time, that that person will automatically be hired for the following year as well. Currently, the hiring of all non-tenure-track faculty who do not have senior status requires an annual request, a rationale that includes reference to enrollment needs as well as other relevant factors, and an indication of how any given faculty position will contribute to the overall academic program of the college. These requests will also include requests to have tenure-track faculty teach courses that are in addition to their normal teaching load.

All decisions about department staffing levels will be made by the Provost and Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Committee of Division Chairs. It is the chair's responsibility, however, to communicate regularly with the non-tenure-track faculty already teaching in the department about anticipated staffing needs. Early in the fall semester, as additional staffing needs for the following year begin to be discussed, the department chair should discuss with all non-tenure-track colleagues without senior status whether the department will include them on the request for non-tenure-track faculty that is submitted to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in early fall. Opportunities for honest conversation about the department's most pressing needs, as well as courses the colleague would most like to teach, are very much valued by faculty in non-tenure-track appointments. Likewise, the department chair should communicate with their colleagues any updates on the status of that request. Keep in mind that some faculty teach in multiple programs; in these cases, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs facilitates staffing requests by consulting with the non-tenure-track faculty member as well as the relevant program or department chairs.

## Recruitment and Hiring of Faculty

Generally, the department chair serves as the chair of departmental search committees for tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty although a department colleague may take on this responsibility if doing so would serve the interests of the department or program. In this role, the chair is generally responsible for:

- Presenting to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty proposals to replace existing tenure-track faculty positions when vacated; advocating for new tenure-track lines, or proposing the hiring of adjunct or visiting faculty for the purpose of replacing sabbatical leaves, alleviating enrollment pressures, etc.
- Meeting with the Associate Dean for Faculty Development and the Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion to discuss the department's strategy for attracting a diverse pool of candidates for tenure-track positions.
- Submitting an explanation of how the department will involve students in the search process as well as a timeline for the search process.
- For tenure-track searches, submitting to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty and the Committee of Division Chairs the department's five or six finalists, ranked in order of preference, recommended for on-campus interviews, including rationales for the selection and ranking. (For non-tenure-track searches, three finalists in rank order are submitted to the Associate Dean for Faculty Development.)
- Developing itineraries for candidates' on-campus visits, in coordination with the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty who arranges travel and sets the times for public presentations
- Notifying unsuccessful candidates of the outcome of the search.

More information on chairs responsibilities related to searches can be found in the [Guidelines for the Conduct of Tenure-Track Searches](#) and the [Guidelines for Visiting Faculty Searches](#). Chairs should also familiarize themselves with the [Opportunity Hire Policy](#) and the [Faculty Fellows Program](#).

## Personnel Matters

A major component of a chair's duties deals with personnel matters both within the department and inter-departmentally. A chair's responsibilities include the mentoring of faculty, the annual evaluation of faculty in non-tenure-track appointments, and where appropriate, the evaluation of non-instructional department staff and students.

### Mentoring

The Associate Dean for Faculty Development plans and oversees an orientation program each fall for all newly hired faculty as well as additional programs on specific topics

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throughout the year. These programs are an important resource in enabling new faculty to become active participants in the College's educational mission and helping them in their own professional transition. Each summer, the Associate Dean will send to department chairs a schedule of the orientation programs so that they will be informed about the opportunities available to their new colleagues and can avoid scheduling meetings that conflict with the orientation program. In 2024-25, new faculty orientation series events will happen monthly on Fridays at noon.

The College also has formal [faculty mentoring programs](#) for tenure-track faculty and for Faculty Fellows. Chairs should encourage new faculty in their department to participate in the programs as well as encourage tenured members of the department to serve as mentors. The Associate Dean for Faculty Development will inquire with visiting faculty about their mentoring needs beyond the department and try to make relevant connections.

The chair has an equally important role in helping all new faculty in their department to understand departmental and college norms with regard to teaching and other professional matters. Even new faculty members with significant teaching experience elsewhere need to understand how the courses they are teaching fit into the major or college requirements as well as particular expectations that students might have. They will also need to know about specific resources on campus to support teaching and scholarship. Chairs can help new colleagues to feel welcomed and supported by offering to share syllabi, taking time to explain sources of funding for research, and (in the first weeks before class) offering to help familiarize colleagues with Canvas or other resources used by faculty.

**Observations:** For visiting faculty, it is imperative for the chair or a designated colleague to observe the new colleague's teaching in the fall semester, so that they can make recommendations about rehiring the visitor, when relevant, and write helpful letters of recommendation for their future job searches. Observations should be formative and collegial in nature. Colleagues should always have advance notice of any observation. Prior to the observation, the observer and new colleague should communicate about the goals of the course and teaching techniques employed so that the faculty member can provide context for the class period and specify the kind of feedback they would find most valuable. After one or a series of observations, the observer and new colleague should debrief in a supportive, growth-oriented conversation.

For tenure-track faculty, observations are not required until the formative review process in the fall of the second year, but many new colleagues will find it helpful to be observed in the initial year as well. Chairs should talk with these colleagues early in their time at Whitman to discuss the approach to observation that will be most constructive.

While the needs of junior colleagues are especially high in their first few weeks on campus, chairs should look for ways to continue supporting junior faculty throughout their first few years. See Appendix B for a checklist of things a department chair can do to facilitate the transition of a new faculty member.

Please note that the formative review for faculty in tenure-track appointments is a mentoring opportunity. This review process (voted into Code by the faculty in 2011) stipulates that a



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tenured colleague in the department (not necessarily the chair) be invited by the tenure-track faculty member to participate. Although a formally mandated process, the formative review is strictly for the purpose of aiding tenure-track faculty in making progress toward their contract renewal and tenure reviews by the Faculty Personnel Committee and helps faculty in this goal by providing multiple sources of feedback.

### **Evaluation and Support of Non-tenure-track Faculty**

Department chairs, in conjunction with the Associate Dean for Faculty Development and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, review annually the teaching evaluations and activity reports of all non-tenure-track faculty in their department without senior status, including visiting faculty members. Each January, the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty collects activity reports and teaching evaluations from all relevant non-tenure-track faculty. The relevant department chairs are notified when these materials are received and the materials are then made available to department chairs and to the associate deans for their review and comment.

Non-tenure-track faculty members, particularly those who are not full-time, are generally hired for their teaching of specific courses, and should not be expected to perform significant departmental or college service. Non-tenure-track faculty who have been promoted to Senior status are expected to perform some service, and this may or may not include departmental service. As the report of the Non-Tenure-Track Faculty working group of January, 2017 made clear, many faculty in non-tenurable appointments value engaging in meaningful service, so it is also helpful to be aware that non-tenure-track colleagues may be interested in participating in departmental activities.

The report of the working group on non-tenure-track positions also emphasized that many faculty engage in scholarly activity and consider it an important part of their professional identities. Chairs should try their best to support the research agendas of their non-tenure-track faculty by making sure that they know about these resources and acknowledging that non-tenure-track faculty have professional development goals.

### **Evaluation and Support of Tenure-Track Faculty**

Department chairs should have an in-depth understanding of the procedures for contract renewal and tenure so as to communicate consistent information to tenure-track faculty members and to encourage departmental colleagues to understand their role in the evaluation process. See Chapter IV of the [Faculty Handbook](#) for a detailed explanation of the process.

It is also important that department chairs be familiar with the guidelines for discipline-specific scholarship (available on the Provost and Dean of Faculty website under the "[Faculty Development and Support](#)" tab). These guidelines are meant to be of assistance to candidates for contract renewal, tenure, and promotion; to aid those writing letters on behalf of candidates, especially with respect to assessments of professional activity; and to offer guidance to the Personnel Committee as it reviews materials submitted by candidates for contract renewal, tenure, and promotion. The guidelines neither replace nor modify in any way the criteria of evaluation indicated in the [Faculty Code](#).

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### Evaluation and Support of Non-Instructional Staff

Department chairs are responsible for completing biannual performance appraisals for any non-instructional staff they supervise. Procedures for staff performance appraisals will be provided by the [Office of Human Resources](#). Timely submission of performance appraisals is necessary for consideration of salary and wage increases for staff.

### Hiring of Students

All student employees of the college must be paid through the hourly student payroll system. It is important that the students be officially registered in the payroll system AND **hired by the department (two different steps) before they perform any work for the department.** Academic building assistants can help explain procedures for payment of student employees.

### Employee Relations

Both the [Faculty Handbook](#) and the [Faculty Code](#) address the importance of non-discrimination; the right of all Whitman College faculty, staff, and students to work and learn in a harassment-free environment; and the need for tolerance and civility within the context of free speech and academic freedom. The College has established policies prohibiting harassment and has developed a grievance procedure to follow should any member of the College community believe the circumstances of their complaint (whether related to harassment or any other grievance) warrant such action. Please note that it is particularly important to review College procedures relating to allegations of sexual misconduct, gender-based discrimination or harassment because College employees have the obligation to report such allegations that come to their attention. The [grievance policy](#) details these obligations.

Minor conflicts in the department that do not fit the definition of harassment or discrimination outlined in the grievance procedure may be able to be successfully resolved between the parties through informal mediation, and department chairs are encouraged to pursue this avenue when appropriate. It may sometimes be helpful to involve the division chair and, if necessary, the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, in such disputes. As suggested in the section above on “The Department Chair as Leader,” a chair’s efforts to foster regular and effective communication within a department can often help to prevent the normal tensions and disagreements within an academic community from becoming serious conflicts that interfere with its functioning. If you are uncertain as to whether a conflict in your department falls under the definition of harassment or discrimination, please contact the Human Resources director.



## Budgets and Spending

### Budgets

Department chairs are responsible for submitting and managing department budgets and ensuring that the department remains within the annual operating budget in any given year. This includes expenditures by the department, individual faculty members, and the management of student workers. Department chairs must ensure that the distribution of resources is equitable and transparent. This includes funds from gifts and grants as well as department and divisional funds. Departments must have clear guidelines outlining their policies and procedures for allocating resources.

Budget management includes working with academic building assistants and with the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, especially Qi Jia. Although building assistants can help the department chair to keep track of receipts, record spending, and ensure accuracy, they should not bear the responsibility of overseeing the budget. For this reason, it is important that department chairs periodically review the budget throughout the year and discuss any discrepancies or resource issues with the division assistant.

Each year in September, department chairs will receive notice from the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty of the procedures and deadlines for submitting annual department operating budget requests for the next fiscal year (July 1 – June 30). The budget approval process, which includes evaluation and approval by the Committee of Division Chairs, the college Budget Advisory Committee and the Board of Trustees, is completed in February.

Requests for one-time purchases of equipment and capital items are submitted to and approved by the appropriate division chair, who manages the division's capital funds.

### Spending Guidelines

Department chairs should work to ensure that departmental spending conforms to official [College guidelines](#). Guidelines specific to the Provost's Office may be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#) (Chapter IX).

Departmental business expenses may include:

- supplies or activities directly related to courses taught in the department (these could include independent studies or regularly offered courses)
- desk supplies for faculty offices in the department
- minor equipment for shared use of a department's faculty or students
- student departmental assistants
- meals and entertainment necessary for departmental business
  - Colleague meetings, departmental and interdepartmental, should be scheduled for times other than meals whenever possible. See separate section below for more details.

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Discretion should be used when spending departmental funds for faculty/student entertainment. Only rarely should a department meeting entail food expenses. At the beginning of the academic year or semester, departments should discuss any anticipated events for students that might involve expenses such as food and come to an agreement on department resources that should be spent on student entertainment.

The Conferences, Events & Scheduling [Alcohol Policy](#) states that faculty and staff may host private functions at their homes to which students are invited. **The College strongly encourages such events to be alcohol free.** [Washington State law](#) related to possession and use of liquor by any person under 21 must be followed. Faculty and staff present should be role models for responsible drinking.

Payment to any individual for services rendered to the College **must** be made either through the college payroll system or with a Personal Services or Performance contract, accompanied by the proper tax withholding forms. A completed and signed IRS Form W-9 must accompany reimbursement requests for lodging payments made to an individual, landlord, or any unincorporated entity. Questions about payment for services to individuals may be referred to the academic building assistants or to Qi Jia in the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty.

Department chairs also must ensure compliance with the college policy that states that any equipment, software, or other durable resources (including computers, furniture, books, digital cameras, lab/studio tools, etc.) purchased with college and/or grant research funds are the property of Whitman College and remain so when the faculty member leaves the college.

Note that PDA/ASID funding is an appropriate source of support for instructional development. For example, a faculty member seeking to develop a new course might purchase a few books for researching course content or pedagogy. Department budgets typically cover teaching costs directly related to a scheduled course (desk copies, equipment or materials necessary to class activities, etc.).

Department chairs are reminded that all receipts must be itemized and include detailed description and justification of the business purpose. This practice is important for college-wide accounting and auditing purposes.

### Department Endowment Use

Endowment agreements range from very specific to general and unrestricted; some are quite large and generate significant yearly income.

Who owns the endowments? In all cases, endowments and income generated by them, regardless of the department, program, or individual involved, belong to the College. The “owner” of an endowment is the college officer who is responsible for the area supported by the endowment.

The individual program or department has significant autonomy in determining the disposition of funds. However, the budget officer has final authority over such disposition.

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### Policy for Administering Departmental Endowments:

- Departments chairs will be made aware on a regular basis of endowments designated specifically for their use; what the specified use of income is (if specified in the agreement); available income; and any other details needed to effectively use the endowment.
- Qi Jia in the office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty should be kept informed by the Department Chair of how the endowment is being used.
- Departments are encouraged to make regular use of endowment income to fund department expenses, faculty research, small equipment, enhanced computer capacity/software or other specific purposes.
- Departments that have their own endowments for guest lecturers or unrestricted endowments are expected to use those sources of funding to support visiting educators (see the section below on departmental endowment use). Departments without endowments may request funding from the Associate Dean for Faculty Development.

The Provost and Dean of the Faculty will reserve the right to redirect funding requests made by departments to college-wide funding sources, to departmental endowments, where necessary or appropriate.

This policy is intended to encourage wise use of endowment income, which will in turn allow existing college-wide funding opportunities to be made available to more faculty.

## Student Concerns

### Advising

Academic advising, both major and pre-major, is a crucial component of student learning and success and is considered a dimension of teaching at Whitman. It is the responsibility of all tenure-track faculty and Lecturers and Senior Lecturers to fully participate in the advising of students (with the exception of new colleagues, who should not be advising students until their second year). Senior Adjunct faculty, who are compensated for college service in addition to the courses they teach, may advise majors or pre-major advisees.

Department chairs should work with their departments to try to develop mechanisms to distribute the advising of department majors as equitably as possible across all faculty in the department, keeping in mind the pressures already existing for untenured faculty.

Pre-major advising is overseen by the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who assigns pre-major advisees to faculty advisors, and the Associate Dean for Faculty Development, who conducts advising information sessions and workshops. In addition to being a vital way of supporting Whitman students early in their career, advising pre-major students is a valuable way for faculty members to learn about the College curriculum, and department chairs should encourage, and ensure opportunities for, their colleagues to participate. All long-term full-time faculty are expected to take pre-major advisees as regularly as possible.

### Book Orders

Department chairs should urge the faculty in their department to adhere to the Bookstore's textbook adoption schedule as it allows Whitman Bookstore staff to offer students the best value on rentals, new, used and ebooks. It also allows the Bookstore to obtain "print on demand" books when available for faculty and to make edition changes/adjustments for "out of print" or "old edition" materials and enables us to be in compliance with the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2008 which, among other goals, seek to provide students more transparent and timely information about education costs.

Textbook Adoption Schedule - through our [AIP \(Barnes & Noble ordering\) program](#):

October 31, 2024 for Spring 2025

March 30, 2025 for Fall 2025

### Student Complaints

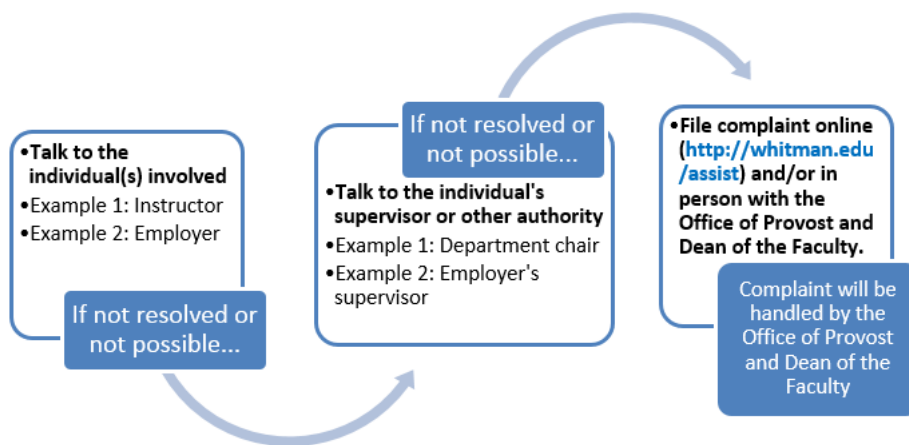
There will be occasions when students come to the department chair to register a complaint. Complaints may range from a grade on an assignment to dissatisfaction with the instructor's teaching methods to a matter that pertains to an issue unrelated to the department. Department chairs listen as sympathetic advisors to students who want to blow off steam or who want advice on whether or not they want to approach somebody who can look into a complaint. This situation often occurs when students see the department chair as an advisor

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or a mentor, rather than as a person in charge who has the ability to do something about the complaint. Depending on the particulars or severity of a complaint, it may be appropriate to encourage the student to talk with the instructor or other involved party directly and to provide the student with strategies to raise their concern in a positive and constructive manner.

Department chairs may also look into the matter in an unofficial manner. If it is the case that a student wants something done about the complaint, the department chair looks into the issue and asks the student to fill out the [Record of Informal Student Complaint](#). At the end of the process of looking into the issue, the department chair sends an informational email to the Provost's office. The information in the email will also allow the Provost's office to add the resolution of the complaint to the form, which would not be the case if the student-completed form was the only record of the complaint. The email will be discarded once the form is filled out (i.e., the email will not be filed in any of the faculty personnel files). This process serves to ensure both that there is a resolution for the student and that the Provost office is aware of any patterns of concern on campus.

If it is not possible or appropriate for the chair to look into an issue or the student feels the situation remains unresolved, they can file complaints with the Office of Provost and Dean of the Faculty by filling out and submitting a [complaint about a classroom issue or faculty member](#).



The [Student Handbook](#) details student rights and responsibilities. It is particularly important to review College procedures relating to allegations of [sexual misconduct or gender-based discrimination](#) because College employees have the obligation to report such allegations that come to their attention.

### Authorized Absences

The Associate Dean for Academic Affairs grants authorized absences only for groups of students participating in class field trips or other events with a significant academic component. Please note that authorized absences cannot be granted for individual students

## Department Chair Handbook

attending conferences or students participating in non-varsity athletics.

### **FERPA**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Policy (FERPA) grants students the right to examine their records (grades, enrollment records, personal information), challenge the veracity of those records, and to consent to the disclosure of those records to other individuals. Without express permission of the student, their records cannot be released to anyone other than those with a legitimate educational interest. This includes requests from individuals such as parents and employers.

The College takes the privacy of student information seriously and all faculty and staff are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students' Office with any FERPA-related questions. Additional information about FERPA can be found on the [U. S. Department of Education website](#).

### **Student Travel**

There are funds available to support student travel to conferences to present a paper or for thesis-research related travel. See the [Thesis Research and Presentation Travel Funding](#) page for specific information on eligibility, amounts, and the application.

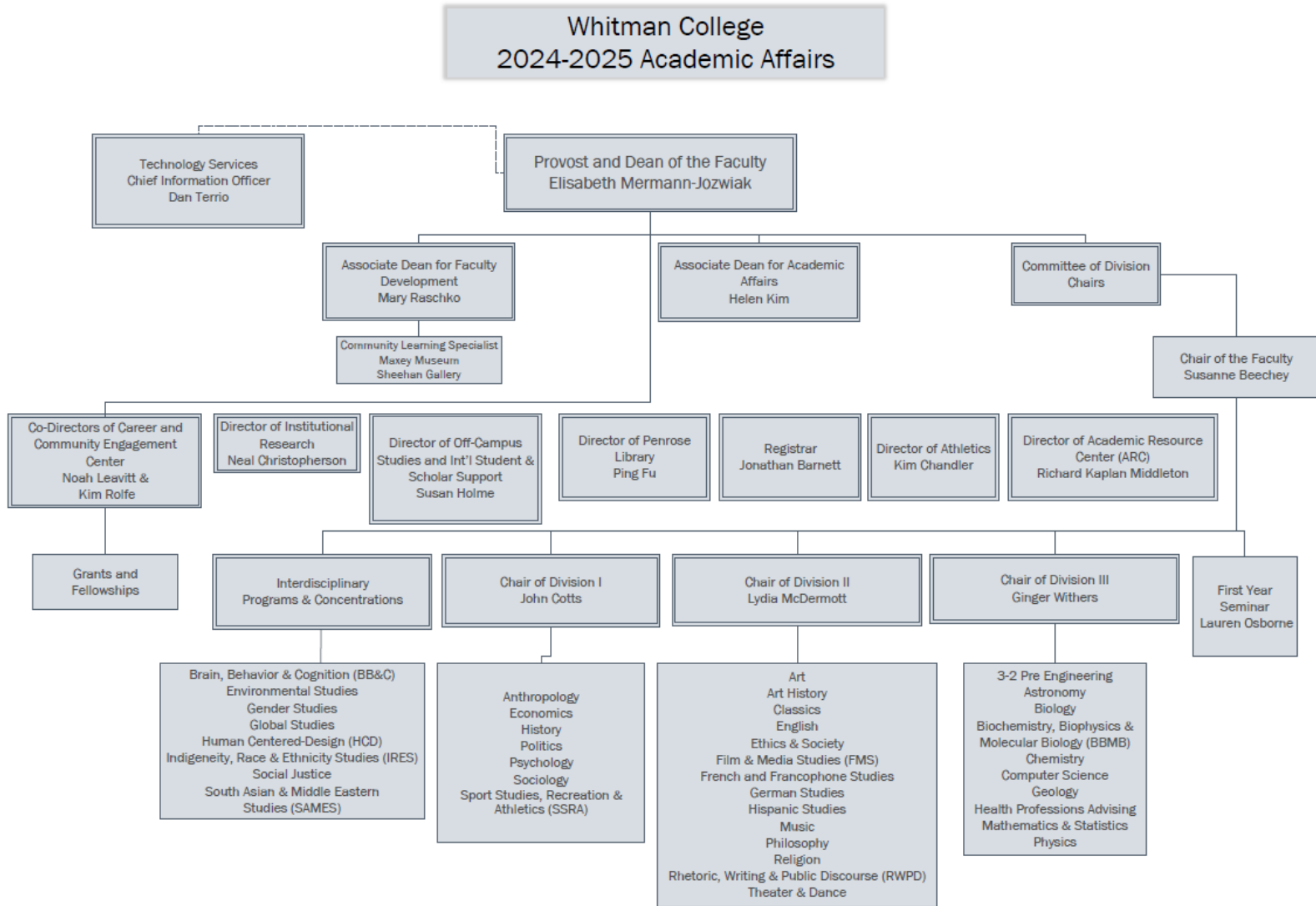
### **Transfer of Course Credits**

Department chairs will often be called upon to determine whether courses from other schools are equivalent to Whitman courses for the purpose of transferring academic credit. It is important that department chairs remind the faculty in their departments that students must obtain pre-approval of any transfer work planned during the summer, or on leaves of absence. The College is crafting new policy regarding transfer course credits. Chairs will be notified of these changes as soon as possible.

### **Fellowships and Grants**

The [Office of Fellowships and Grants](#) assists students and alumni in securing national fellowships, scholarships, and grants. Department chairs and the faculty in their departments are encouraged to recommend students to the Fellowships and Grants Office, support those students by writing letters of recommendation, and serve on the Office's Fellowship and Scholarships Committees. This is one of the most important ways faculty can help students to see how their liberal arts education will prepare them for meaningful experiences beyond their four years at Whitman.

Appendix A – Academic Affairs Organizational Chart



Updated 0807/2024

Link to organizational charts found [here](#).

## Appendix B - Department Chair Checklist for Assisting New Faculty

Below are some suggestions for helping new faculty transition in their first year.

- Shortly after hire, send sample syllabi or other resources to help colleague understand Whitman and department norms.
- Work with division chair to secure office space and ensure computer set-up or other resources.
- Before classes, meet with the colleague to discuss teaching needs, departmental norms, and major departmental business anticipated in the coming year
- When scheduling department meetings, avoid conflicts with lunches for new faculty and CTL programs. Encourage participation at these events.
- Week 1 or 2, meet with colleague to check in. For visiting faculty, schedule class visits. For tenure-track faculty, go over [discipline-specific guidelines](#).
- Before observations, communicate about course goals and the new colleague's priorities for feedback. After observations, engage in a supportive, growth-oriented conversation.
- Week 6 or so, ask whether there are any questions about courses and if they need support pursuing their scholarship.
- End of semester, ask colleague if they have questions about Activity Report or student evaluations.
- January, discuss teaching evaluations to help make sense of trends and offer practical advice for improvement. In the case of visiting faculty being considered for reappointment, contact the Associate Dean for Faculty Development with concerns or recommendations for rehire.
- May, meet to debrief how the year went. Remind tenure-track faculty of sabbatical application date (summer) and ask all colleagues about professional development agenda. What were they able to accomplish in this first busy stressful year? What do they hope to accomplish before contract renewal? By tenure? For promotion to Senior status (for non-tenure-track faculty)?



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### Appendix C - Department Chair Planning Guide

The following table includes only items relevant to nearly all chairs. External reviews, tenure-track searches, or other departmental activities can be added as relevant.

Month	Items to be considering	Contact Person
Late August/ September	<p>Confirm departmental representation at New Student Orientation</p> <p>Discuss staffing needs for the following year; speak with non-tenure-track faculty about likely courses available; update 3-year plan for FYS contributions; submit non-tenure-track staffing requests</p> <p>Begin developing budget request due in October</p>	<p>Juli Dunn</p> <p>Helen Kim</p> <p>Division Chair, Qi Jia</p>
October	<p>Communicate with majors about requirements for graduation, including Honors (see honors application due dates in the <a href="#">Registrar's senior handbook</a>)</p> <p>Observe new colleagues and discuss observations</p>	
November	<p>Discuss new courses or other changes to the catalog (due January)</p> <p>Notify all colleagues of status of non—tenure-track faculty staffing request</p> <p>Begin process of putting together department two-year curricular plan for the CPST (due January)</p>	<p>Division Chair</p> <p>Logan Higgins</p>
December	<p>Submit position description for new visiting positions and plan timing for search</p> <p>Plan spring department meetings</p>	Mary Raschko
January	<p>Review course evaluations and activity reports for non- tenure-track faculty. Communicate with Mary Raschko to confirm renewing faculty for visiting positions approved for following year.</p>	Mary Raschko
February/March	<p>Observe courses of colleagues undergoing Personnel Review following year (due August for contract renewal and September for tenure/promotion)</p>	Atarah Pinder

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<p>April</p>	<p>Discuss plans for visiting educators for department for next year</p> <p>Deadline for submitting names of students to receive honors of the major</p> <p>Major Study Certificate forms for all seniors in your department due to the Registrar</p>	<p>Laurie Doohan</p> <p>Jennifer McNeil</p>
<p>May/June</p>	<p>If in last year, meet with new chair to pass on materials, offer advice</p> <p>Help transition of newly hired faculty (see checklist in Appendix B)</p> <p>Set department meetings for the fall semester and solicit items to be considered over the course of the year</p> <p>Review department budget. Purchases for this budget should be made by early June (must receive shipment by end of June)</p> <p>Confirm departmental representatives at new student registration and departmental information sessions</p> <p>Review department website to ensure accuracy (new faculty, course changes, etc.).</p>	<p>Mary Raschko</p> <p>Academic Building Assistant/Qi Jia</p>