



## ***Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Role of Department Chairs***

### **SDCCD Academic Senates And the American Federation of Teachers Guild, Local 1931**

Faculty play a central role at California Community Colleges as classroom and non-classroom educators, and as non-teaching faculty re-assigned to carry out administrative duties. Among the latter are faculty colleagues elected as department chairs or reassigned as program directors, with duties and responsibilities defined in our AFT Faculty Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). The following are FAQs about the role of faculty department Chairs with administrative responsibilities that merit clarification.

#### **Q1: Is my elected department Chair my boss?**

A1: No, department Chairs are faculty colleagues.<sup>a</sup> Your Dean remains the manager to whom you report.

#### **Q2: Are department Chairs administrators or managers?**

A2: Department Chairs are faculty member not administrators or managers.<sup>b, c, d</sup>

#### **Q3: What are the responsibilities of department Chairs?**

A3: Faculty department chairs carry out a collection of duties and organizing functions in administrative units. They also serve as the bridge between faculty members in those units and Deans and administration.<sup>e</sup>

#### **Q4: What is the role of department Chairs in the evaluation process of other faculty?**

A4: Department Chairs collaborate with their Dean and the evaluation coordinator to ensure smooth implementation of contract and adjunct faculty evaluation procedures. They serve as faculty colleagues on the evaluation committee of faculty in their departments.

#### **Q5: What is the role of department Chairs in college governance?**

A5: As faculty they are Academic Senate members, and as department chairs they “... are responsible for day-to-day implementation of several policies that are originally developed by the academic senate and/or collective bargaining agent, even though they may not have participated in the creation of these policies”.<sup>e</sup>

#### **Q6: Do department Chairs interface with the Academic Senate and the collective bargaining leaders?**

A6: Effective department chairs do not perceive their departments as islands, they communicate with local Academic Senates and collective bargaining leaders, as well as other faculty, on a regular basis to craft cooperative approaches to academic issues, most commonly through a “council of chairs” structure. The reporting “chain of command” typical of administrators communicating with administrative leadership does not apply to communication among faculty groups.<sup>e</sup>

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(a) Education Code §87003 and Title 5 §53402 define:

**Faculty/Faculty Member:** Employee of a district who is employed in an academic position that is not designated as supervisory or management.

(b) Education Code §87002 and Title 5 §53402 define:

**Administrator:** An individual employed in a supervisory or management position

- not part of faculty bargaining unit.
- may be employed in an academic position or a non-academic position

**Dean** An administrator in a middle management position—may carry out the same duties as a division/department chair or may supervise several division/department chairs.

(c) Education Code §87003 (b) specifically states that faculty members do not become administrators simply because they perform certain duties.

(d) AFT Faculty Contract: “Article IX- 9.1.1.2 “The department chair shall serve in a leadership position within the department, but will not substitute for the appropriate manager with respect to the reporting requirements of faculty in the department.”

(e) *Roles and Responsibilities of Faculty Academic Chairs: An Academic Senate Perspective. ASCCC, 2004.*