

# **Department Chair Handbook**

**Whitman College**

**2011 - 2012**

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## 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 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 Provost and Dean of the Faculty is the chief academic officer of the College and is responsible for the academic program. The Provost'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.

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, some of which include maintaining the Provost's calendar; supporting the Personnel Committee; overseeing faculty contracts and payroll, activity reports, visas, academic budgets, Aid to Scholarship and Instructional Development (ASID) and Professional Development Accounts (PDAs); assisting in faculty searches; coordinating native speaker, and visiting

and endowed lecturers; and dispersing reimbursements and other funds. The College's accreditation and assessment activities are also coordinated by the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty. Excused absences for students participating in whole class field trips are issued by the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Provost and Dean of the Faculty web site](#) for more details and Appendix A for an organizational chart of the administrative structure of the Provost's Office.

The Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty staff 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 following is a brief summary of the responsibilities of the members of the Provost's staff:

Sally Hooker

Associate to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty

- Annual Faculty Activity Reports
- Appointment Calendar for Provost and Dean of the Faculty
- Contingent Faculty Requests
- Faculty Appointments and Salary Letters
- Faculty Code and Handbook
- Faculty Personnel Committee
- All Faculty Reviews
- Periodic Reviews
- Sabbaticals, SCP & Phased Retirement
- Student Course Evaluations
- Surveys

Karen Zollman

Executive Assistant in the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty

- Immigration / Visas
- Catalog
- Campus Directory
- Center for Teaching and Learning
- Commencement and Convocation
- Department Chairs
- Encounters
- Faculty and Academic Staff Recruiting
- Academic Budgets
- Native Speakers
- Faculty Committees

Susan Bennett

Senior Academic Assistant in the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty

- Telephone / Reception
- Accreditation, Assessment, External Reviews
- CASE Professor / GRAVES Award

Faculty Student Research (Perry / Dublin / Abshire)  
Professional Development (ASID / PDA, NFS, Student Research Funding,  
Innovation in Teaching and Learning grants, WOCI, etc.)  
Visiting and Endowed Lecturers (including O'Donnell Endowed Professorship)  
Accounts Payable/ Reimbursements / JP Morgan  
Social Events  
Faculty and Student Commencement Awards  
Website Maintenance

In addition to the staff in the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, the Division Administrative Assistants and Secretaries provide substantial support for Department Chairs. Although administrative support from Division Administrative Assistants and Secretaries will vary from building to building, when requested, these Assistants and Secretaries can provide assistance to Department Chairs with individual department budget information, support with faculty searches, and aid in the preparation of curricular materials to be used by the Division Chair for Division approval. Student and/or staff payroll for work paid by department budgets should be processed through the Division Administrative Assistants.

### **Division Chairs**

According to the Faculty Code, each Division Chair is the “executive office of his or her 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 both tenure-track and contingent faculty. The evaluation and retention of contingent faculty by Department Chairs must be done in consultation with the Division Chair. The Division Chair is also responsible for issues pertaining to the “physical equipment, buildings, and classrooms of his or her division.”

The Committee of Division Chairs, among many other duties, advises the Provost and the President on staffing, budget, 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; and, in those instances, it is appropriate to initiate communication directly with the Provost and Dean of the Faculty. As a rule, though, the Division Chair should be consulted, at least initially, on any matter relating to departmental or divisional concerns.

## **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 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 the Communications Office, Admission Office, the Pioneer, etc., in connection with the department website, admissions materials, or communicating basic information about the Department's faculty, curriculum or programs.

## **The Department Chair as Leader**

While the department chair is charged with many administrative responsibilities, s/he 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 as a whole. Leading a department is challenging, but can also be a highly fulfilling dimension of academic life. 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.

PROPOSED INSERTION: resources on department chair leadership

## 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 (generally once per 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, 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 contingent faculty.
- 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.).
- 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 staff and student workers as appropriate.
- Manage departmental communications with students.
- Determine course equivalences and approve transfer credit for students for courses in their major.
- Oversee department assessment activities, including annual assessment reports and periodic external reviews.
- Ensure the currency and accuracy of department web pages.

- 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.
- Represent the Department with other administrative offices such as Communication, Admission, 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.

It is important that individual departments establish policies that define their decision making procedures. This will include clear statements about the role of contingent faculty and students—e.g., who can vote in department meetings and on which issues, the role of students on search committees, etc. (Refer to Chapter II, D in the *Faculty Handbook* for College policies concerning contingent faculty and Article II, Section 1B in the *Faculty Code* the role of students in searches and other departmental matters.)

### **Calendar**

Department Chairs are encouraged to check the Whitman College calendar posted on the Whitman homepage for important dates such as visitor days, reunion weekends, visiting educators, etc. The calendar posted on the [Provost and Dean of the Faculty web site](#) lists important deadlines for the Office of the Provost and Dean of Faculty such as sabbatical applications, budget requests, ASID requests, etc. Deadlines from the Registrar's Office concerning course changes, catalog copy, etc., are also included.

The Provost and Dean of the Faculty's website also links to a current calendar of religious holidays. Chairs are encouraged to take these dates into account, as feasible, when planning department events, speakers, examinations, etc.

### **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 courses serving as electives, survey courses, and general education offerings. Department Chairs work with the faculty in their departments 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, etc. Departments are to use the Course Proposal Template, which can be found on the [Provost and Dean of Faculty's CLEo site](#) in the Course Proposal Forms folder, and 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 for approval.

### **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, and especially in light of the new five-course load, departments must plan their curricular offerings, at minimum, two years in advance, again, balancing 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 can be found on the [Registrar's Web page](#).

The Department Chair is responsible for communicating to students and others, as necessary, information about the department's curriculum, including schedules, anticipated courses, major and minor requirements, and information about the department's senior assessment in major. Such communications may be made by sending emails or letters 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 requirements (e.g., completion of a comprehensive examination or a thesis). To assist in this purpose, department chairs might find it useful to develop, in consultation with departmental colleagues, a checklist of requirements for use in advising.

### **Departmental Assessment**

Each year, departments must submit an annual assessment report to the Assessment Committee and their Division Chair. Each department should also maintain a department assessment file where a copy of each year's report is kept, allowing for continuity from year to year, from one chair to his or her successor. Guidelines and a template for the assessment report are sent to departments each year by the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty and can also be found in the Assessment Materials folder on the [Provost and Dean of the Faculty's CLEo site](#) .

### **External Reviews**

The College began a program to conduct external reviews of all academic departments in 2006 with the goal of reviewing each department every 10 years. These reviews are meant to assist departments in setting long-term goals, assess the success of their curricula and operating structures, and to foster conversation about changes colleagues in the department might envision to strengthen what they are doing. Departments selected for review by the Committee of Division Chairs will be given ample notice and will work with the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty to make necessary arrangements. Guidelines and templates for external department reviews can be found on the Provost and Dean of the Faculty's CLEo site in the External Review Materials folder.

### **Departmental 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 contingent faculty, including sabbatical replacement, as appropriate. Departments should not assume that because they were authorized to hire a contingent faculty member during a previous year, whether full or part-time, that that person will automatically be hired for the following year as well. The hiring of all contingent faculty 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 contingent faculty member will contribute to the overall academic program of the college.

All decisions about department staffing levels, including requests for contingent faculty, will be made by the Provost and Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Committee of Division Chairs.

## Recruitment and Hiring of Faculty

Generally, the Department Chair, or his or her designee, serves as the Chair of departmental search committees for tenure-track and non-tenure track faculty. 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.
- Recommending to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty the composition of a search committee. The search committee must consist of all tenure-track faculty in the department and the Division Chair. For tenure-track searches, the Provost and Dean of the Faculty will also appoint at least one additional member, including a member from outside the division.
- Submitting to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty and the Committee of Division Chairs an explanation of how the department will involve students in the search process.
- Meeting with the Associate Dean of the Faculty to discuss the department's strategy to attract a diverse pool of candidates for tenure-track positions.
- Managing, as required, the electronic submissions on SimpleHire.
- 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 of the Faculty.)
- Coordinating with the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty travel and interview logistics for the candidates' on-campus visits.
- Notifying unsuccessful candidates of the outcome of the search.

A complete set of guidelines for the conduct of tenure-track and non-tenure-track positions, *Search Guidelines for Tenure-Track Searches* and *Search Guidelines for Visiting Faculty Searches*, can be found on the Provost and Dean of the Faculty CLEo site, in the *Searches* [folder under the Resources tab](#). See also Chapter II of the *Faculty Handbook*.

## 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 contingent appointments, and where appropriate, the evaluation of non-instructional department staff and students.

## **Mentoring**

The Center for Teaching and Learning runs an orientation program each fall for all newly hired faculty as well as additional programs on specific topics 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 CTL will send to department chairs a schedule of the orientation programs so that you will be informed about the opportunities available to your new colleagues.

The College also has a formal faculty Mentoring Program for tenure-track faculty coordinated through the Center for Teaching and Learning. Chairs should encourage new faculty in their department to participate in the program as well as encourage tenured members of the department to serve as mentors in the program. For more information on the mentoring program, see the Center for Teaching and Learning website.

The chair has an equally important role in helping all junior 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 requirement 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. You can help your 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 set up email and voicemail and showing how to use CLEo. While the needs of junior colleagues are especially high in their first few weeks on campus, you should look for ways to continue supporting junior faculty throughout their first few years.

PROPOSED INSERT: a "checklist" of things that depts. can do to assist new faculty (Lisa has seen a book elsewhere that has such a checklist.)

## **Contingent Faculty**

Department Chairs, in conjunction with the Associate Dean of the Faculty, review annually the teaching evaluations and Activity Reports of all Lecturers, Visiting Instructors, Visiting Assistant Professors, Adjunct Instructors, and Adjunct Assistant Professors in their departments.

Towards the end of each academic year, the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty collects Activity Reports and teaching evaluations from all contingent 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 Dean of the Faculty for their review and comment.

If a contingent faculty position has been approved to be carried over for an additional year, the Department Chair and Associate Dean make recommendations to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, based on those reviews, as to whether or not to retain that individual or to conduct a new search.

### **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 CLEo site). 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 Handbook.

### **Evaluation of Non-Instructional Staff**

Department Chairs, where appropriate, are responsible for completing annual performance appraisals for any non-instructional staff they supervise. Forms and guidelines for staff performance appraisals will be provided by the Office of Human Resources and collected by the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty at the beginning of the calendar year. 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 and may not receive payment in cash. It is important that the students be officially registered in the payroll system before they perform any work for the department. Consult your division administrative assistants about the proper 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.

Department Chairs should ensure that faculty members in the department are upholding these standards and may, on occasion, need to intervene in disputes among department members. Depending on the circumstances, it is often possible for the Chair to successfully mediate between the parties involved in such instances. It may sometimes be helpful to involve the Division Chair and, if necessary, the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, in such disputes.

The College has established policies prohibiting harassment, and the Faculty Code has a grievance procedure for faculty to follow should they believe the circumstances of their complaint warrants such action. It is hoped that this is a course of last resort and that department faculty can work to resolve any disputes internally. In addition, staff may file complaints against faculty members following a procedure outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of the Staff Handbook (located on the Human Resources website).

PROPOSED INSERT: web or other resources on conflict resolution specific to department chairs.

## **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 funding and other resources within the department and intra-departmentally, where appropriate, 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 Division Administrative Assistants when appropriate, and with the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty. In general, budget matters dealing with department budgets are handled by Karen Zollman; budget matters relating to lectures, visiting educators, and PDA/ASID requests are handled by Susan Bennett. Although administrative 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 budget year and discuss any discrepancies or resource issues with the administrative 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.

The dispensation of balances remaining in department budgets at the end of any given fiscal year is at the discretion of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, who is charged with reconciling the annual operating budgets of the academic program. Depending on fiscal constraints, ending balances may be transferred to the Provost and Dean of the Faculty Surplus Account (up to a maximum accumulated balance of \$4,000). If desired, it is the responsibility of the Department Chair to request that a year-end balance be rolled over into the surplus account.

### **Spending Guidelines**

Department Chairs should work to ensure that departmental spending conforms to approved College guidelines.

The following are common examples of allowable expenses:

- transportation, lodging, and meals for professional travel
- professional conference fees
- dues to professional organizations
- subscriptions to journals or other publications relevant to teaching or research
- desk supplies for a faculty member's office at the College
- compensation of student research assistants (hourly and/or stipend) processed through the Division Administrative Assistants
- compensation of professional editors or research assistants
- copyright fees and publication subvention
- books, reprints, scores, photographs, films, software, recordings and other items related to your teaching or research
- continuing education such as coursework, seminars, and workshops relevant to teaching or research
- minor equipment such as cameras
- entertainment for students, alumni, and other college-related events
- meals with candidates (restrictions apply)

There is a limit of \$50 per person per meal (excluding gratuity) for all meals paid with operating funds provided by the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty. This would include, for example, department funds and funds for searches. For specifics, including guidelines for the use of endowed funds, contact the Office of the Provost and Dean of the Faculty.

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 Administrative Assistants for the Divisions or 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, digital cameras, MP3 players, 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.

## **PROPOSED INSERT: sample budget statement and how to read it**

### **Student Concerns**

#### **Advising**

Academic advising, both major and pre-major, is a crucial component of student learning and success. It is the responsibility of all tenure-track faculty to fully participate in the advising of students (with the exception of new colleagues, who should not be advising students until their second year or later). 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 coordinated by the Director of Academic Resources who assigns pre-major advisees to faculty advisors and who also 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.

#### **Book Orders**

Department Chairs should urge the faculty in their departments to adhere to the Bookstore's textbook adoption schedule as they allow Whitman Bookstore staff to offer students the best possible value on books by locating used texts and obtaining the lowest market price for textbooks and instructional materials. It also allows the Bookstore to obtain "print on demand" books for faculty and to make adjustments for out of print materials.

#### **Textbook Adoption Schedule:**

April 15: Adoptions of previously used textbooks for Fall Semester

June 1: Adoptions of new textbooks for Fall Semester

## November 1: Adoptions of all textbooks for Spring Semester

### **Complaints**

There will be occasions when students come to the Department Chair to register a complaint about some aspect of the department. Complaints may range from a grade on an assignment to dissatisfaction with a particular instructor. Depending on the particulars or severity of a complaint, it may be appropriate to encourage the student to talk with the instructor directly, providing the student with strategies to raise his or her concern in a positive and constructive manner. Other courses of action include sending the student to the Board of Review in cases dealing with alleged violations of College policy, or to either the Dean of Students or the Provost and Dean of the Faculty, depending on the particular circumstances. The Student Handbook details student rights and responsibilities. It is particularly important to review College procedures for handling complaints of sexual harassment. See chapter 2 of the Faculty Code and the section of the Student Handbook dealing with sexual misconduct.

### **Excused Absences**

The Associate Dean of the Faculty grants excused absences only for students participating in entire class field trips. Please note that excused absences cannot be granted for students attending conferences or participating in non-varsity athletics. Individual excused absences can be granted by the Dean of Students under certain circumstances such as illness or injury.

See Chapter 5 in the *Faculty Code* for specifics, including regulations for absences for musical and theatre groups as well as 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, his or her records cannot be released to anyone other than those with a legitimate educational interest. This includes requests from individuals such as parent 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: (<http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>).

### **Student Travel**

There are some funds available to support student travel to conferences to present a paper or for thesis related travel. Specific information on eligibility, amounts, and application is available on the [Provost and Dean of the Faculty web site](#) in the Faculty Development and Support section.

**Transfer of Course Credits**

Departments 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.

**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.

PROPOSED INSERT: Provide a timeline, along the lines of the document Provost's staff use to guide their work. For example, put in deadline for requests for contingent faculty, submission of info to Registrar, etc.

# Provost and Dean of the Faculty

