

March 16, 2006

TO: Dr. Tracey Schwarze, *President of the Faculty Senate*

FROM: Senate Subcommittee to Review Departmental Chairs' Workload
(Committee members: Cheryl Mathews, Scott Pollard, Brian Bradie, Kelly Cartwright, Leland Jordan, Steven Breese)

RE: Recommendations to Faculty Senate

PREAMBLE: During the months of February and March, 2006 the *Senate Subcommittee to Review Departmental Chairs' Workload*¹ met to discuss, "...problems common to chairing in all academic departments at CNU." In particular, the committee deliberated the charges given to the Faculty Senate resulting from a meeting of chairs from both schools (held on 1 December 2005). The Committee unanimously supports the results and recommendations contained in this report

Before beginning the discussion of each charge, it is worth noting that The Committee spent time deliberating the general validity of the charges. Do chairs' workloads need revising? How are chairs currently compensated? How is the workload of the chairs perceived by the general faculty? What are the incentives for serving as chair? What are the disincentives? What is the role of a chair at CNU? What is/are the role(s) of chairs nationwide? Is the role of a chair, in the current academic climate, fundamentally different than that of other faculty members?

The lively and passionate discussion generated from these questions coupled with the CNU chairs' charges led The Committee to agree that it is indeed necessary to take a critical look at the departmental chairs' workload, assessment measures, and compensation. Furthermore, in view of the rapidly changing face of academia in concert with unprecedented changes that have transpired at CNU over the past 10 years, the committee thought it important to review other policies that measurably affect chairs' ability to perform their duties.

An article, by Robert M. Diamond², in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* helps illuminate and focus some of the issues currently facing chairs in all academic departments:

[Excerpts from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*; January 05, 1996]

What It Takes to Lead a Department

By Robert M. Diamond

"In the '80s, I found myself making sure paperwork was in on time, handling complaints, and staying out of the way. Faculty members saw me, first, as running interference so that they could do their own work and, second, as being responsible for bringing resources into the department. Today, I find myself an "institutional change agent," focusing on the need to improve teaching, working on curriculum, and becoming much more "hands-on." (Sociology, Chair).

I thought the position would be 50-per-cent administration and 50-per-cent teaching and research. I was half right. ... It is 50-per-cent teaching and research, but I find it's an additional 100-per-cent administration. (Engineering, Chair)..."

The impact of the changes these people describe cannot be overstated. Department heads are performing a wider range of crucial duties than ever before, which means that colleges must select the best-possible people and give them new and different kinds of support... At a recent national

¹ Henceforth referred to as "**The Committee**"

² **Robert Diamond** is the President of The National Academy for Academic Leadership. He served for over twenty years as Assistant Vice Chancellor for Instructional Development at Syracuse University, where he also was Research Professor and Director of the Institute for Change in Higher Education. From 1991 to 1999 he directed the National Project on Institutional Priorities and Faculty Rewards. His major publications include *Designing and Assessing Courses and Curricula*, *Preparing for Tenure and Promotion Review*, and *Serving on Promotion and Tenure Committees*. He co-authored *National Studies on the Perceived Balance Between Research and Undergraduate Teaching at Colleges and Universities* and was co-editor of *The Disciplines Speak* and *Faculty Reward Systems for the Year 2000*.

gathering of college administrators, to discuss how to encourage faculty members to support their institutions' broad priorities, participants wound up focusing on the new roles of department heads. These include altering the faculty-reward system, to place greater weight on teaching and advising students; and making budget and program decisions that determine the direction of departments. As the conversations continued, participants became increasingly troubled...In the past, most faculty members could handle the position if they wanted to take it, but that is no longer the case. The chairmen and chairwomen of the next decade must have more skills, administrative and personal, than their counterparts required in past decades.

After working with thousands of department heads on hundreds of campuses, Ann F. Lucas, former head of the department of management and marketing at Fairleigh Dickinson University, pinpointed the key problem when she said: 'Chairs must move from performing the highly individual work of the teacher and scholar to getting work done through others...'

Heading an academic department is a particularly difficult management position. A team of deans and department heads at the University of Nebraska identified 97 specific activities that department heads perform. The late Allan Tucker, former academic vice-chancellor of the State University System of Florida, listed 54 types of duties in *Chairing the Academic Department: Leadership Among Peers* (Macmillan, 1992).

If departments are to survive and flourish over the next decade, department heads must be able to:

- * Articulate and communicate the department's mission throughout the institution and insure that it fits the overall goals of the college or university.
- * Measure the department's effectiveness in meeting its goals and report the results to the dean and other decision makers.
- * Establish criteria for the promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review of faculty members that clearly reflect the mission of the department, and explain how those criteria can and should be met.
- * Create plans for providing mentors for new faculty members.
- * Serve as an advocate for faculty members during any reviews of the department by university panels or external reviewers, such as accrediting teams.

To complicate matters, department heads also must mediate on behalf of their faculty members with the administration, other departments, and students. Department heads are the chief representatives of their discipline on the campus, so they often represent their field when major curriculum decisions are being made. And on institution-wide committees that make tenure and promotion decisions, department heads are responsible for communicating how their discipline defines the appropriate scholarly, creative, and professional contributions of faculty members.

To perform all these tasks effectively, the person heading a department should be a consensus builder, business manager, faculty recruiter, mentor, and strategic planner...

Furthermore, if we are to attract candidates with the requisite skills, an effort should be made to compensate department heads better. In addition to higher salaries, institutions can provide other compensation, such as travel money, a small discretionary fund, or a top-quality computer...³

From these brief excerpts, which, in many cases, reflect The Committee's experiences and ideas, it is clear that departmental chairs' fundamental day-to-day job differs markedly from the rest of the faculty.

³ Full article appended to this report.

CHARGES: While the discussions of chairs' teaching load, compensation and evaluation often intersect and impact one another, for the sake of this report The Committee will address each area independently.

Charge #1 :

To the CNU Faculty Senate: The chairs are concerned about the ever-increasing workload (a survey of chairs present indicated that the average time spent in chairing was 32 hour/week). The chairs recommend that departments with more than 20 faculty members also have an Associate Chair (with a three hour release) and that all chairs be granted a six-hour release each semester, regardless of department size.

This was one charge on which The Committee reached consensus (in principle) almost immediately. The University Handbook lists over 50 separate functions, tasks or responsibilities required by department chairs (Diamond's article, above, identified, "...97 specific activities that department heads perform.") By any measurement, there are multiple responsibilities that all department chairs must perform regardless of faculty constituency or number of majors/minors. Moreover, some responsibilities (i.e.: the writing of PRC Report, tracking graduate students, curriculum development, overseeing assessment, and others), that actually pose a greater burden to smaller department chairs where fewer faculty members mean fewer bodies/brains to handle the workload.

Furthermore The Committee conducted informal, but informative, research on departmental chairs workload in relation to teaching. Some of the anecdotal information is compiled below:

Institution	Chairs Teaching Loads	Typical faculty load @ Institution
Towson	1/1	Varies: 4/4, or 4/3
VCU	0/0 (in some departments)	3/3
TCU	Typically 1/1	4/4 or 3/3
ODU	2/2	Varies: 4/4 or 3/3
Elon	2/2	3/3
Illinois State	1/0 (one class per year)	3/3 or 2/2

This much seems clear: although department chairs are receiving varying percentages of reduction based on teaching expectations of the university, the result generally requires the chair to teach no more than two classes a semester. At CNU, where 4/4 is the expectation, this would result in a two class reduction in teaching (6-hours). **The Committee concurs with the department chairs recommendation that all chairs be granted six-hour load reduction each semester, regardless of department size.**

This does not infer that larger departments should be ignored when it comes to additional help. The Committee recognizes that in some areas of work, larger departments necessarily require more time and energy from the departmental chair (i.e.: scheduling, degree certifications, many daily administrative and leadership duties, etc.). Furthermore, there may be semesters that a smaller department may need additional administrative help (i.e.: during PRC evaluation, or independent accreditation of an department's program.) **Therefore The Committee recommends that any department that has 15 faculty members or more (actively teaching), should be granted an associate chair (who will receive one 3-hour release each semester). Further, The Committee recommends smaller departments be assigned associate chairs on a case-by-case basis. Department chairs needing temporary support would petition the Dean's office each semester on their department's behalf.**

* * *

Charge #2

To the Faculty Senate: Although paid on a ten-month contract like regular faculty, department chairs perform administrative duties twelve months of the year. The current means of remunerating chairs for work beyond the ten-month contract—the summer stipend—is inconsistent, unsystematic and does not reflect the administrative work that chairs do over the summer months. Therefore, the chairs recommend that a study be done of the amount of work performed by chairs during the summer and an equitable and systematic form of compensation be devised and adopted (e.g., a university-wide stipend system tied to work hours, 11 or 12 month contracts).

Summer compensation for Department Chairs is an area where institutions vary widely. Hilary M. Lips, Ph.D. (Chair of Psychology / Radford) conducted a "...not particularly systematic survey, but one that yielded interesting results." Here is her brief summary of responses from regional Psychology Chairs regarding chairs' compensation (Fall 2005),

Stipends / Payment for Chairs

- Yearly stipends with a set amount vary widely from \$0 to \$15,000. Many respondents said they did receive a stipend but did not specify the amount.
- Summer stipends also vary widely. Some chairs receive set summer stipends (e.g., \$2000, \$4000). In a number of cases, the stipend is a percentage of the regular salary (Range seems to be 5% to 25% of base salary). A number of chairs are on 12 or 11-month contracts, so the "summer stipend" is not a separate issue.
- In a very few departments, mainly at smaller colleges, there is no explicit remuneration for being chair.
- At the other end of the spectrum, there are some larger departments in which the chair has a 12-month contract and a stipend or administrative supplement.
- Most respondents said the stipends did not vary according to size/complexity of the department at their institutions. However, some said they were based on the number of faculty members in the department or on that variable plus others such as the number of staff, building maintenance responsibilities, etc.

This seems to reflect the research done by The Committee.

Institution	Compensation	Stipend or Contract
Towson	9 month academic salary is prorated to a 12 month contract	12-Month Contract
VCU	(\$...?) Faculty sometimes "hired as chair or Director of Theater (Music)"	12 Month Contract
TCU	\$6,000-25,000 Faculty sometimes "hired as chair"	12-Month Contract
ODU	\$4,000 additional to serve as chair and summer teaching stipend of \$5,000-8,100 depending on rank	10-Month Contract
GWU	Additional \$16,500 (Accounting Department)	12-Month Contract
Elon	Small (informal) summer stipend	Standard Faculty Contract
Illinois State	Science Departments salary range: \$88,140-115,644 The Social Science Departments salary range: \$90,000-\$120,492 The Humanities departments salary range: \$106,416-\$115,000	Regular 9-month salary boosted by 15% then transformed into a 12-month contract

At CNU the process of determining summer stipend is not transparent. Additionally, the summer stipend varies from department to department and school to school. The Committee finds this to be inconsistent, at best.

Additionally, there is real concern, voiced by several members of The Committee, that many good faculty members (i.e.: senior faculty members who would make excellent chairs), avoid consideration because serving as chair is viewed as 'not worth it.'

Reiterating a quote from Diamond:

"...if we are to attract candidates with the requisite skills, an effort should be made to compensate department heads better...."

If the position of department chair is truly valued by CNU, then The Committee believes that the University should do more to adequately compensate chairs for the work they do. Short of putting chairs on a 11-12 month contract, The Committee believes that offering chairs a percentage of their income as a summer stipend would help make the compensation process consistent across the university and offer an tangible incentive for qualified faculty members to take on the responsibility of chair. **Therefore, The Committee recommends that all department chairs are compensated for summer work at a rate of 1/9 of their base salary. Further, the committee recommends that summer responsibilities are clearly and contractually delineated in their summer stipend contract.**

* * *

Charge #3

The workload distribution for chairs is fundamentally different from the rest of the faculty. The responsibilities of managing a department significantly increase the service component of chairs' workload while correlatively decreasing the time that chairs can dedicate to teaching and scholarship. Therefore, the chairs recommend that the current weighting system for evaluation of faculty (50% teaching, 25% service and 25% professional development) be modified for chairs (for example, 30% teaching, 60% service and 10% professional development).

The Committee agrees with the above justification that *"The workload distribution for chairs is fundamentally different from the rest of the faculty.* Therefore, how a chair is evaluated must reflect his/her true workload in order to remain on equal footing with his/her teaching peers. Perhaps this is already being done by the administration; however, several members on The Committee indicated that while serving as chair, their scholarship was relegated to the "back burner" often times for the duration of their chair's contract(s). Even if serving as chair does not have an adverse effect on compensation (yearly raises), the fear for many is that promotion (or even tenure) may be compromised. If this is the case—of even if it is only perception—**it adds to the disincentive of serving as chair.**

Again, looking at other institutions offers some insight. ODU weights the chairs' reviews differently from that of its teaching faculty:

	Faculty	Chairs
Research	40%	30%
Teaching	40%	40%
Service	20%	30%

Towson has a flexible review for chairs, where chairs help sculpt how various areas are weighted in a given academic year. Variable faculty workloads are a mainstay of faculty evaluation systems across the country and are recommended by experts in the field. The *ad hoc* Faculty Evaluation and Assessment Committee is using Raoul Arreola's *Developing a Comprehensive Faculty Evaluation System* (Anker Books, 2000) to develop a new faculty evaluation procedure at CNU. For Arreola, a fundamental key to the successful design and implementation of an evaluation system is variable faculty workloads.

Since departmental chairs must function competently in multiple areas, determining how to weight assessment in each area becomes complex. Assessment also needs to be flexible to accommodate the requirements of individual departments and the focus of individual chairs. **Therefore, The Committee recommends the following balances of assessment:**

- **Teaching 30%:** All chairs at CNU must teach, but given the demands of the job, weighing teaching more than 30% is not reflective of time or energy invested.
- **20% Leadership:** Leadership is an important component to all of the chair's work. It would seem logical that leadership should weigh significantly into the chair's performance evaluation.⁴
- **Service vs. Scholarship 50%:** The division/breakdown between these two areas will be determined by the chair (in consultation with the Dean) for each contractual period.

For example, a chair may decide that he/she wishes to complete a piece of research in a given academic year. He/she might choose to divide this area, 20% service and 30% scholarship. This would empower the chair to turn down a committee assignment or a weekend speaking engagement for Admissions.

Conversely, a chair might choose to spend his/her energy, in a given year, focusing on the university's mission. Perhaps he/she was elected to the faculty senate, or chosen to serve on an academic task force, or asked to oversee the creation of learning communities. This chair might choose to weight service 40% and scholarship at 10%.⁵

By giving the chair flexibility in these areas, he/she will be able to focus attention without compromising their assessment.

CONCLUSION: Department chairs are charged with many important and necessary functions at Christopher Newport. The transmogrification of chairs' duties over the past several decades—national trends that are reflected and amplified at CNU—require the university to re-examine chairs' compensation and job assessment. To quote again from Diamond:

"Department chairmen and chairwomen are increasingly pivotal in the success of any academic change. We must acknowledge the complexity of their responsibilities and act to improve their chances of success."

Part of "improving their chances of success" includes offering concrete incentives for taking on this consuming responsibility. The load reduction and additional compensation recommended in this report would be a good step in this direction. Additionally, dedicated faculty members that take on this important leadership function should be applauded for the time and efforts they invest while re-directing their professional focus. This service should be reflected in the evaluation procedures. The evaluation recommendations contained in this report should be adopted as quickly as possible to ensure that chairs are not inadvertently penalized for their important service to the university.

FINALLY: This committee finds it necessary to make additional recommendations concerning the chairing of academic departments; recommendations that affect efficient operation of departments and the role that academic chairs are asked to perform. Diamond states:

"...department heads also must mediate on behalf of their faculty members with the administration, other departments, and students. Department heads are the chief representatives of their discipline on the campus, so they often represent their field when major curriculum decisions are being made. And on institution-wide committees that make tenure and promotion decisions, department heads are responsible for communicating how their discipline defines the appropriate scholarly, creative, and professional contributions of faculty members."

⁴ Leadership is inextricably interwoven into the fabric of the chairs' responsibilities. It is multi-faceted and may be assessed in many ways. The procedures to assess this vital function should be studied and quantified at the time of implementation.

⁵ At no time could scholarship be weighted less than 10% or service be weighted less than 20%.

Given these important charges and tasks—tasks that often require interfacing with the administration on important and/or delicate issues—The Committee views it important to consider who can serve as an academic chair. Currently the Handbook reads:

“To be elected chair, a person must have a full-time, tenured or probationary Instructional faculty appointment at the rank of assistant professor or higher in the department.”

An untenured faculty member serving as chair is difficult, at best, and, in extreme circumstances, may even become detrimental to the department. Moreover, the faculty senate identifies faculty leadership as its most important goal:

[Senate] Goal 1: Increase faculty participation in university governance, and strengthen faculty responsibility, involvement, and leadership in matters of import to the university.

Conflict of interest can arise between what is good for the department, or university and what is beneficial for a faculty member attempting to achieve tenure. Diamond addresses this issue:

“In situations where non-tenured people head departments—and there are a fair number of them—it is critical that the tenure clock be stopped and their teaching load reduced, so that they have the time necessary to perform this complex role. Younger department heads often say that it is impossible for them to devote significant amounts of time to teaching and research if they also must run a department. There simply isn't enough time to do each task well.”

While The Committee does not advocate “stopping the tenure clock” this problem can be avoided altogether by not asking untenured faculty members to serve as chairs. **Therefore, The Committee recommends that only tenured faculty be eligible to serve as department chairs. In the event that a department has no tenured senior faculty, the department should make it a priority to search for a qualified faculty member to serve as chair.** Diamond recognizes the importance of identifying candidates for chairs:

“...those responsible for choosing them [chairs] must do a better job of describing the position and matching the candidates to the demands of the job. The responsibilities of the department head should be carefully thought out and clearly articulated during the search process.”

Lastly, and not of minor significance, department chairs need adequate resources to perform their various duties. While The Committee recognizes that all departments have unique needs in regard to funding (one size fits all, fits no one), it cannot help but acknowledge the need for a minimum standard of administrative support. And although departmental secretaries and administrative assistants do not work directly for the chair, it is the chairperson that most often benefits and, frankly, needs this support.

As discussed earlier in this report, all departments are asked to perform certain functions regardless of size. Smaller departments may be perceived as being “less needy” of administrative support, but, in reality, they are often the departments that require the greatest assistance. Diamond recognizes:

“Department heads are performing a wider range of crucial duties than ever before, which means that colleges must select the best-possible people and give them new and different kinds of support.”

Although “new and different kinds of support” would be welcomed, The Committee wishes first to ensure that a base adequacy of support is available to all academic departments. There have been cases at CNU where an untenured assistant professor was asked to chair a department (or academic program), without the assistance of a dedicated secretary. This places the chair and department in a very difficult position; a position that is both unhealthy for the university and unfair to the department chair.

The Committee recommends that all academic departments be staffed with a full-time dedicated secretary.

This concludes The Committee’s report and recommendations.

What It Takes to Lead a Department

By Robert M. Diamond

[From Chronicle of Higher Education, January 05, 1996]

Consider the following comments from some of my recent conversations with department chairmen and chairwomen:

** In the '80s, I found myself making sure paperwork was in on time, handling complaints, and staying out of the way. Faculty members saw me, first, as running interference so that they could do their own work and, second, as being responsible for bringing resources into the department. Today, I find myself an "institutional change agent," focusing on the need to improve teaching, working on curriculum, and becoming much more "hands-on." (Sociology)*

** I thought the position would be 50-per-cent administration and 50-per-cent teaching and research. I was half right. ... It is 50-per-cent teaching and research, but I find it's an additional 100-per-cent administration. (Engineering)*

** In my early years as a chair, I focused on recruiting, adding faculty, and supporting the growth of the research capacity of my department. It was a period of growth: more staff, more faculty, more resources. Today, it's maintaining quality while downsizing faculty and staff and consolidating courses. I spend more time evaluating teaching and addressing the priorities of the institution. It is a different and far more challenging job today than it was 10 years ago. (Chemistry)*

The impact of the changes these people describe cannot be overstated. Department heads are performing a wider range of crucial duties than ever before, which means that colleges must select the best-possible people and give them new and different kinds of support. The changes also suggest that some practices now used in appointing department heads are outmoded. The time has passed when this crucial position can be a pre-retirement stopover or an assignment that faculty members take turns at filling simply because "someone has to do it."

At a recent national gathering of college administrators, to discuss how to encourage faculty members to support their institutions' broad priorities, participants wound up focusing on the new roles of department heads. These include altering the faculty-reward system, to place greater weight on teaching and advising students; and making budget and program decisions that determine the direction of departments. As the conversations continued, participants became increasingly troubled. They realized that, although the job has become more difficult, the way department heads are chosen has not changed.

The criteria used to select people for the job often have little to do with the skills required to perform it well. In the past, most faculty members could handle the position if they wanted to take it, but that is no longer the case. The chairmen and chairwomen of the next decade must have more skills, administrative and personal, than their counterparts required in past decades.

After working with thousands of department heads on hundreds of campuses, Ann F. Lucas, former head of the department of management and marketing at Fairleigh Dickinson University, pinpointed the key problem when she said: "Chairs must move from performing the highly individual work of the teacher and scholar to getting work done through others, a task for which new chairs are monumentally unprepared."

Heading an academic department is a particularly difficult management position. A team of deans and department heads at the University of Nebraska identified 97 specific activities that department heads perform. The late Allan Tucker, former academic vice-chancellor of the State University System of Florida, listed 54 types of duties in *Chairing the Academic Department: Leadership Among Peers* (Macmillan, 1992).

If departments are to survive and flourish over the next decade, department heads must be able to:

- * Articulate and communicate the department's mission throughout the institution and insure that it fits the overall goals of the college or university.
- * Measure the department's effectiveness in meeting its goals and report the results to the dean and other decision makers.

- * Establish criteria for the promotion, tenure, and post-tenure review of faculty members that clearly reflect the mission of the department, and explain how those criteria can and should be met.
- * Create plans for providing mentors for new faculty members.
- * Serve as an advocate for faculty members during any reviews of the department by university panels or external reviewers, such as accrediting teams.

To complicate matters, department heads also must mediate on behalf of their faculty members with the administration, other departments, and students. Department heads are the chief representatives of their discipline on the campus, so they often represent their field when major curriculum decisions are being made. And on institution-wide committees that make tenure and promotion decisions, department heads are responsible for communicating how their discipline defines the appropriate scholarly, creative, and professional contributions of faculty members.

To perform all these tasks effectively, the person heading a department should be a consensus builder, business manager, faculty recruiter, mentor, and strategic planner. To be successful, he or she, at the very least, must be diplomatic, fair, accessible, ethical, well-informed, objective, patient, flexible, and politically sensitive.

What do these descriptions suggest about our current methods of recruiting department heads?

First, those responsible for choosing them must do a better job of describing the position and matching the candidates to the demands of the job. The responsibilities of the department head should be carefully thought out and clearly articulated during the search process. As many of us already know, being a great researcher or a good colleague does not necessarily mean that someone will make a strong department head.

Second, since most new department heads will have little experience with many of the tasks they must perform, institutions must begin to offer formal opportunities for training. Institutions might offer workshops and seminars on specific topics, such as stress management, budgeting procedures, and evaluation of teaching. They might encourage new department heads to attend national and regional meetings on administrative topics, and pay for subscriptions to publications such as *Department Chair* (Anker Publishing Company) and for reference books by authors who have written about how to handle the practical aspects of the position.

Forming a council of department heads to establish priorities for professional development, as has been done at Arizona State University, is another effective way to develop strong department leadership.

Furthermore, if we are to attract candidates with the requisite skills, an effort should be made to compensate department heads better. In addition to higher salaries, institutions can provide other compensation, such as travel money, a small discretionary fund, or a top-quality computer.

In situations where non-tenured people head departments -- and there are a fair number of them -- it is critical that the tenure clock be stopped and their teaching load reduced, so that they have the time necessary to perform this complex role. Younger department heads often say that it is impossible for them to devote significant amounts of time to teaching and research if they also must run a department. There simply isn't enough time to do each task well.

A final, tricky issue is the length of time someone should head a department. Having one person hold the position for an extended period may foster burnout and reduce innovation, yet annual or biennial turnover can be extraordinarily damaging to the department and the institution. It often takes two or three years just to learn the politics of a department; it is hard to make major improvements in fewer than five or six years.

Ideally, a department head should hold the position long enough to develop and carry out significant plans. Budget restructuring, redefining the department's mission, and revising the tenure and promotion guidelines all require consistent leadership over a number of years.

Department chairmen and chairwomen are increasingly pivotal in the success of any academic change. We must acknowledge the complexity of their responsibilities and act to improve their chances of success.