

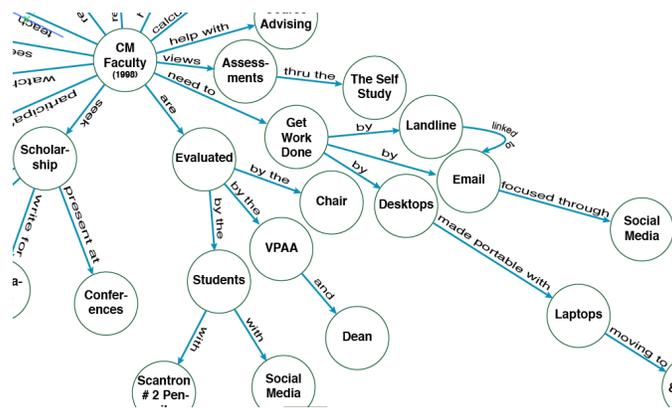
Objective(s) of the Presentation: Participants will:

Participants to this brown bag lunch will:

- a) provide feedback to a concept model of chair and faculty duties
- b) share experiences with other chairs and administrators as to where the chair's time is being spent today
- c) offer opinions on how to prioritize a department chair's time
- d) speculate on the future of the chair position

Description of the Presentation

The “ivory tower” stereotype often associated with higher education appears all but irrelevant today with department chair practices emerging as more open, assessed, and accountable to its publics than ever before, a shift that appears to be driven in-part by the demand for need it now information made possible by mobile technologies and improved data gathering systems. In this brown bag lunch presentation, a concept model built under the guidelines of Brown¹ will be presented (a segment is shown below) to reflect on an effort that seeks answers to the question of whether or not advanced procedures, data collection, reporting techniques, structures, and technologies have lived up to the hype of reducing department chair workloads; making respective administrative tasks easier while enriching scholarly lives. Because of perceived negative responses of department chairs to the additional work created by these advances, a null hypothesis is explored. This is to say that the advent of such tools such as course management systems, instituting a Dean reporting structure, enhancing advising systems, creating seat management and classroom allocation systems and so on has done little to make the chair role simpler, but in fact has raised the complexity of their work, hypothetically limiting the time that they have for tasks more closely related to the department's subject matter.



¹ Brown, D. M. (2011). *Communicating design: Developing web site documentation for design and planning*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.

For the record, the model for review works outward from a faculty role circle, a role of which the chair is a part, to the roles and technologies of the past, rippling outward to the present with speculation on the future. It is created with the aid of other chairs and their recollections of the work environment in addition to data gleaned from the literature. The impetus comes from a personal initiative of the presenter to make procedures more efficient for future department chairs, thereby making the position more attractive for those who could fulfill the role. In this the current chair has assembled a full list of yearly activities with links to procedural information as job aids in the course management system *Blackboard* (see below).

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY Randy Howe

My Fitchburg State Courses OneCard

Users and Groups
Customization →
Packages and Utilities →
Help

B. Expectations for the Chair Every Five Years

The Department Chair is responsible for assembling a self-study every five years. The last department self-study was completed in AY14. The next self-study should be compiled for completion in AY19. The Department Chair takes charge of the process, leading the department through the following steps:

- conduct/compile/write a self study per the contract and guidelines available from Academic Affairs
- set-up department committees or utilize existing committees to assist in the writing of the study
- work with the department and/or Academic Affairs to identify and hire an external reviewer
- provide the external reviewer with a copy of the completed study
- set-up a day for the external reviewer to come to campus to meet with students, faculty, and administrators
- work with the faculty, Dean, and Academic Affairs to respond to the reviewer's review when available

C. Expectations for the Chair at Anytime of the Year

- attend scheduled Chair's meetings with the VP of Academic Affairs
- attend scheduled Chair's meetings with the Dean of Arts and Sciences
- ensure that the department web pages are accurate
- ensure that the two-year course rotation on the department website is kept up to date
- review student petitions
- monitor and possibly accept pre-majors into the program
- review student change of major/minor requests
- review grade change requests
- review change of advisor requests
- review student requests for independent studies, directed studies, and field studies
- adhere to the tasks of the Personnel Calendar for promotion and tenure as defined per the contract
- conduct class visitations and evaluations as required per the contract
- review department expenditures, PCard purchases, and the moving of funds across accounts as needed
- schedule and conduct faculty meetings (as many as needed, currently up to three per semester)
- monitor and contribute to the department's social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- assist wherever possible or necessary in the movement of curriculum or policy proposals through governance
- attend personnel meetings as needed, such as with Human Resources, the Dean, or Grievance hearings
- work with Admissions to define enrollment targets and marketing strategies
- give tours to prospective students and their parents if available (i.e., barring scheduling conflicts)
- work with the Registrar to review student records as requested or required, such as for graduation
- approve key or card access to Communications Media classrooms and labs

D. Expectations for the Chair by Month through the Academic Year

July (Chair)

- monitor the process whereby new students are assigned to faculty advisors by the Department Secretary
- check the online catalog to ensure that it is ready to go "live" on September 1

August (Chair)

- work with the Dean and Registrar to preregister students before the August SOAR session
- send an email reminding SOAR volunteers about the upcoming meeting date

Chair and/or others affiliated about the GCE Information Session, often held this month

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This task list will be provided with the concept model as handout. Discussions will be limited to only a few strands based upon participant preference. Possibilities may include processes for student portfolio review, course advising, assessment, self-studies, day-to-day work, faculty evaluations, links to the field, and teaching. Attendees should be able to respond nostalgically while considering where we are and where we are going. The promise of new academic program models that are more diligently and expeditiously aligned to professional fields, bringing faster knowledge transfer between faculty and field, such as blogs, social networks, and professional learning communities, are possible discussion points. A key question however is whether or not expanding administrative expectations drag this down. Participants will be asked to describe how specific changes have or have not advanced their ability to manage their department's effectively without losing site of the larger picture.