

From: Catherine Epstein

Date: Fri, Sep 11, 2020 at 12:45 PM

Subject: Meeting of the Department Chairs and Programs, Friday September 18

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to invite you to the virtual chairs' meeting which will take place next Friday, September 18, via Zoom, from 3:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. Zoom information will be sent by my office next week. Please find the agenda and a department handbook outline, for your reference.

If you have any additional agenda items, please send them to me.

Looking forward to seeing you then.

All best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Winkley Professor of History

AGENDA

Meeting of the Chairs

Friday, September 18, 2020

3:00 P.M.–4:30 P.M.

Via Zoom

1. **Provost and Dean of the Faculty's Welcome** (3:00 P.M.–3:10 P.M.)
2. **Discussion of COACHE Survey Results** (3:10 P.M.–3:45 P.M.)
We will be joined by Jesse Barba
See <https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/media/COACHE%25202020%2520Results.pdf>
3. **Continuation of the Discussion about Departmental Handbooks** (3:45 P.M.–4:15 P.M.)
We will be joined by Pawan Dhingra, Allen Hart, and Norm Jones
See attached outline/examples of items
4. **Questions** (4:15 P.M.–4:30 P.M.)

Future Meeting Dates for this Academic Year (all regular meetings are from 3:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M. and will take place via Zoom.)

- October 2
- October 30
- December 4
- January 22
- February 19
- March 19
- April 16
- May 7

Department Handbooks: Possible Topics/Examples and Related Posted Practices

Administration of the Department

How are chairs selected?

How is the transition to a new chair done?

How are department meetings organized?

How are minutes of department meetings handled? With whom are they shared?

How are department records and records of department decisions and policies maintained?

Who communicates with the provost and dean of the faculty's office about departmental matters?

How are faculty leaves planned and coordinated?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/departmental-planning-for-faculty-leaves

What is the process for preparing the annual budget?

How are department accounts and expenditures overseen?

How are space needs determined and addressed?

How are departmental spaces overseen?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/budget-space-and-equipment

Science Departments

How is laboratory and student safety monitored?

How does the department oversee lab equipment?

Life of the Department/Departmental Culture

Who organizes departmental social events?

How are new colleagues welcomed and supported?

How are departmental decisions made?

How is departmental service assigned?

How are students' complaints about faculty performance (including grade disputes) addressed?

How are conflicts among faculty and other faculty, among faculty and staff, and among staff and other staff resolved?

See also links under mentoring.

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/life-of-the-department?shib_redir=1052531519

Mentoring

What is your mentoring program for new faculty members? All tenure-track faculty members? Visitors?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/welcoming-new-colleagues-a-checklist-for-department-chairs

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/faculty-mentoring [to be discussed]

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/mentoring-tenure-track-caleagues-a-checklist-for-department-chairs

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/supporting-visiting-faculty

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/newfaculty/advising

Departmental Curriculum/Teaching

How is curricular planning and assessment undertaken?

How are decisions made about offering new courses, first-year seminars, and cross-listed courses?

How are teaching times determined? Do pre-tenure colleagues receive priority?

How is the work surrounding external reviews accomplished?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/guidelines-for-external-reviews#:~:text=All%20departments*%20at%20Amherst%20College,as%20warranted%20by%20special%20circumstances.&text=They%20aid%20departments%20in%20identifying,often%20strengthened%20as%20a%20result.

Faculty Hiring

How are requests for new faculty FTE positions decided?

How are requests for visiting positions and one-course hires done?

How is faculty hiring done?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/faculty_hiring

Note log-in for access to information for departments conducting searches

Faculty Personnel Processes

How is the oversight and preparation of reappointment, tenure, and promotion reviews done?

How are annual conversations with untenured colleagues conducted?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/annual-conversation

What is the department's process for observing the teaching of tenure-track faculty?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/tenure_promtions_reapp

Instructional Staff/Departmental Staff

How is the hiring of new staff done?

How are staff members' work schedules coordinated and supervised?

How are annual performance reviews done?

How are responsibilities and tasks determined and assigned to the ADC?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/staff-supervision

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/staff-hiring

Students

How is the coordination of student advising/engagement in the major handled?

How is the advising of majors coordinated? How are advisees assigned?

How are theses evaluated?

How is student placement organized?

How does the department advise and sponsor student groups?

https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/provost_dean_faculty/information-for-department-and-program-chairs/assignments-of-majors-to-advisors

From: **Catherine Epstein**

Date: Tue, Sep 29, 2020 at 9:31 AM

Subject: Meeting of the Chairs This Friday (Oct. 2): Agenda and Zoom Info

To:

Dear Colleagues,

Please see the agenda for Friday's chairs' meeting below. Because we had a chairs' meeting so recently, I do not have a specific topic to discuss with you. However, since we will not have another chairs' meeting until October 30, I would like to give a quick update on various matters, and also address any questions that you might have. In addition, if you have a topic that you'd like chairs to discuss, please let me know, and we will add it to the agenda. I do not expect Friday's meeting to last the full ninety minutes. In response to the request made at our last meeting, below is a list of five processes that departments should include in the departmental handbooks that they will draft during this academic year. **The Zoom link for our meeting is at the very end of this note.**

All best,

Catherine

Departmental Handbooks (see also the longer list sent earlier that includes more detail about the items listed below, in particular mentoring.)

Mentoring

Decision-making within the Department

(How are decisions made, e.g., consensus or voting? [If voting, who votes on what? What can happen via email?] Who takes minutes and maintains a record?)

Supervision of staff

Budgetary Matters

(What is the process for preparing the annual budget? Who makes decisions about spending? How are department accounts and expenditures overseen?)

Evaluation of Teaching

How do you conduct the evaluation of the teaching of tenure-track faculty (annual conversations, observation of teaching...?)

AGENDA

Meeting of the Chairs

Friday, October 2, 2020

3:00 p.m.–4:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

I. Welcome and Update by the Provost (3:00 p.m.–3:15 p.m.)

II. Topics raised by chairs (3:15 p.m.–3:45 p.m.)

II. Questions to the Provost (3:45 p.m.–4:00 p.m.)

Future Meeting Dates for this Academic Year (all regular meetings are from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will take place via Zoom.)

- October 30
- December 4
- January 22
- February 19
- March 19
- April 16
- May 7

Topic: Department Chairs Meeting

Time: This is a recurring meeting

From: **Catherine Epstein**

Date: Fri, Sep 17, 2021 at 11:27 AM

Subject: Agenda and Zoom Information for Chairs Meeting, September 24

Dear All,

I look forward to our chairs' meeting on Friday, September 24, from 3:00-4:30 P.M.

Please find the attached agenda and supporting documents that were sent earlier.

You will find the Zoom information below. You will also receive calendar invites.

See you soon.

All best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Winkley Professor of History
Amherst College

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://amherstcollege.zoom.us/j/94361037349?pwd=OXdyVGErdWYrTVpnanV5RmM4cHVJUT09> Meeting ID: 943 6103 7349 Passcode: 554809

AGENDA

Meeting of the Chairs

Friday, September 24, 2021

3:00 P.M.–4:30 P.M.

Via Zoom

1. **Provost and Dean of the Faculty's Welcome** (3:00 P.M.–3:10 P.M.)
2. **Update/Discussion about the ADC Task Force** (3:10 P.M.–3:35 P.M.)
Maria Heim and Chris Grobe will provide this update.
3. **Discussion about Departmental Handbooks** (3:35 P.M.–4:15 P.M.)
(See attached information that was sent earlier)
4. **Questions** (4:15 P.M.–4:30 P.M.)

Future Meeting Dates (all regular meetings are from 3:00 P.M. to 4:30 P.M.)

- Friday, September 24 Via Zoom
- Friday, November 12 TBA

Dear Colleagues,

I look forward to seeing you at the first chairs' meeting of the new academic year, which will be held on Friday, September 24, at 3:30 P.M. This meeting will take place via Zoom, though it is my hope to meet in person next time if we can.

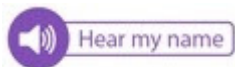
Thank you for your excellent work on the department and program handbooks; it was a pleasure to read them over the summer, and I appreciate all the work that went into these documents. I think that the handbooks will prove to be a very useful source of information for current and future members of our community. I found that they offer clarity and guidance about some procedures, practices, and policies that are an important part of the operation of departments, and the daily lives of department members. My hope is that the exercise of creating the handbooks will also foster a level of consistency and equity across departments, perhaps resulting in a set of best practices.

My bird's-eye view of this project, born of reading all of these documents, revealed items that were covered in some handbooks that could be helpful to have in all of them. While I will be writing to many of you individually to offer specific feedback on your handbook, I would like to discuss at our upcoming meeting some elements/practices that we might consider adopting and including in all handbooks. As a starting point for conversation, I attach here some ideas that I noted while reading the handbooks.

All best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Winkley Professor of History
Amherst College



THOUGHTS ABOUT DEPARTMENT HANDBOOKS: A STARTING POINT FOR CONVERSATION

ELEMENTS/PRACTICES THAT WE MIGHT CONSIDER ADOPTING AND INCLUDING IN ALL HANDBOOKS

DEPARTMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

- Note how department minutes are taken and preserved.
- Articulate principles according to which the next chair is chosen.
- Note that voting will occur if consensus cannot be achieved, and that steps are taken to address the concerns of those whose priorities are not met by the departmental decision.
- Note that assistant professors are encouraged to speak and are allowed an equal vote, with the exception of voting on faculty personnel matters.
- Note that visitors are invited to attend department meetings (unless hiring or other personnel matters are on the agenda) and have the right to speak.
- Describe the matters that the department will discuss together.
- Describe the issues on which the department will vote.
Note that anonymous voting is permitted.
- Describe the matters that the chair can decide without consultation with other department members.
- Note whether a simple or other majority is necessary in departmental voting and if that varies by topic.
- Note how often department meetings occur (at least once per month during the academic year is recommended).

ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AMONG DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

- Note that chairs should strive for equity in allocating departmental duties.
- Note that pre-tenure colleagues should not have more departmental advisees than senior colleagues.
- Note that pre-tenure colleagues should not advise more senior theses than senior colleagues.
- Note that pre-tenure colleagues should be given preference in choosing preferred teaching times.
- Note that the department should strive to give colleagues with caregiving responsibilities preference in choosing preferred teaching times, prioritizing pre-tenure colleagues.
- Note that, whenever possible, associate professors should be protected from chairing for at least three years after receiving tenure, and for four years afterward, if possible.
- Note that faculty members should be told the “normal” number of advisees and senior thesis advisees within the department.
- Note that chairs should account for invisible labor as they allocate workload responsibility, perhaps by encouraging faculty to track the hours that they spend meeting and mentoring students.

MENTORING OF PRE-TENURE COLLEAGUES

- Include a link to [“Welcoming New Colleagues: A Checklist for Department Chairs:”](#)
- Detail protocols around class observations:
 - Include the rubric according to which observations will take place.
 - Note that all senior members in the department must observe every pre-tenure colleague at some time during the pre-tenure years. Note that class observations should occur in one class session of every course taught by a pre-tenure colleague.
 - Note that no observations should take place during the first semester of an untenured faculty member’s time at the college (unless the new colleague asks for a class observation).

- Note that one observer (as opposed to multiple observers) should be present at each class observation.
- Note whether the department has chosen to adopt the practice of observing multiple consecutive classes (such as one course unit).
- Note that a conversation will follow all class observations; note that the observer should provide a summary of the class, and that the observed faculty member should have the opportunity to provide feedback on the summary.
- Note that summaries should be submitted to the department and should be referred to during the reappointment and tenure processes.
- Detail protocols around the annual conversation:
 - Note that annual conversations must include a discussion of teaching evaluations from both the fall and spring semesters, and should be scheduled accordingly.
 - Note that, in advance of the annual conversation, all tenured faculty members in the department should meet and discuss the scholarship, teaching, and service of the pre-tenure faculty member.
 - Note that, at the annual conversation, the chair and at least one other senior colleague (preferably a mentor) should be present.
 - Note that following the annual conversation, the chair or other senior colleague must write a summary of what was conveyed to pre-tenure colleague. Note that the pre-tenure colleague should have an opportunity to provide feedback on this summary.
 - Note that the chair must notify the Office of the Provost that the annual conversation has taken place. Note that the summary of the annual conversation is not shared with the provost's office, but is filed with department records and referred to during reappointment and tenure processes.
- Note that the department identifies either a single mentor or a formal mentoring committee for all new tenure-track faculty members.
- Note that mentoring committees should include two or three tenured colleagues (if the department is large enough).
- For small departments that cannot provide a mentor, note that a mentor outside of the department will be chosen. That person's work should connect to that of the pre-tenure faculty member.
- Note the protocols that the department has in place to review mentoring relationships and to substitute another mentor if the mentee or mentor are so inclined.
- In regard to the annual conversation:
 - Note that no more than three senior colleagues should be present at the conversation (the chair and two senior colleagues, one of whom preferably is the mentor).

FACULTY PERSONNEL PROCESSES

- Note that the department follows the college's practices and procedures surrounding reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

SUPERVISION OF THE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR (ADC)

- Include a section detailing the ADC's primary duties.
- Note that chairs have a weekly scheduled meeting with the ADC.
- Include a section detailing what the ADC does NOT do:
 - Note that the ADC does not perform personal secretarial duties for faculty.
 - Note that the ADC does not run errands for faculty or babysit faculty members' children or animals.

- Note that the ADC should not be asked to cook food for department events.
- Detail additional tasks that the ADC should NOT be asked to do.

BUDGET

- Detail the maximum payments that the chair can approve without departmental consultation (\$100 or \$200 are the suggested maximums).
- State that once per year, in a department meeting, the department must review together its available budget, as well as funding available through restricted funds.

VISITORS

- Note that visitors are invited to attend department meetings (unless hiring or personnel matters are on the agenda) and that visitors have the right to speak at department meetings.
- Note the department's expectations concerning multi-year visitors, including expectations around multi-year visitors advising majors and supervising senior theses.
- Include a link to "[Supporting Visiting Faculty.](#)"

LECTURERS

- Detail expectations around lecturers' service in the department.
- Note that the department explains to lecturers the resources that are available to them.
- Note that lecturers have the opportunity for mentoring.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

- Detail what the department is doing to support diversity, equity, and inclusion, including efforts to diversify the curriculum and/or programming, build inclusive and anti-racist pedagogies, and promote equitable outcomes in student success. Include efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented faculty
- Detail how student voices are heard in the departments
- Detail how the department will facilitate participation in the First-Year Seminar Program.
- Create a calendar of administrative workloads to be passed onto new chairs so as to ease transitions. Consulting the [college's chairs' calendar](#) will be helpful.
- For science departments, include explicit protocols around research safety, including detailed protocols around students being alone in laboratories.
- If a department uses TAs, detail the duties of TAs and other information related to them, providing information such as the following:
 - Do TAs grade? If so, what do they grade?
 - How are TAs distributed among faculty members?
- Note that individuals on phased retirement should not be involved in the search for their replacements (including decisions about the field of specialization).
 - Note that individuals on phased retirement may interview candidates and submit feedback to the department, but may not participate in search committee discussions or in departmental discussions (or votes) around the selection of the successful candidate.

HANDBOOKS FOR PROGRAMS

State how one becomes a member of the program.

- Note who determines who can be a member of the program.
- Note that home departments and the provost's office are notified when an individual joins a program.

- Note service expectations of those involved in the program, and that pre-tenure faculty must seek approval from their home departments to take on such service.
- Note the role of the program in evaluating a candidate for reappointment and tenure, which must be in accordance with college practices.
- Note whether a memorandum of understanding is in place for individuals involved in the program.

September 14, 2021

From: Catherine Epstein
Date: Wed, Nov 3, 2021 at 10:03 AM
Subject: Revised Document about Department Handbooks

Dear Chairs,

Attached please find a revised version of the document that provides guidance about department handbooks, which we discussed at the last chairs' meeting. As you will see, as requested, we have divided the elements and practices into categories. These are "strongly encouraged," "ideas to consider," and "required."

I am slowly getting back to all departments with comments about their draft handbooks. If you have not yet heard from me, you will in the coming weeks.
Thank you for your patience with this matter.

All best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
Provost and Dean of the Faculty
Winkley Professor of History
Amherst College

ELEMENTS/PRACTICES THAT WE MIGHT CONSIDER ADOPTING AND INCLUDING IN ALL HANDBOOKS

DEPARTMENTAL DECISION-MAKING

Strongly Encouraged

- Note how department minutes are taken and preserved.
- Articulate principles regarding the succession of chairs.
- Explain that voting will occur if consensus cannot be achieved, and that steps are taken to address the concerns of those whose priorities are not met by the departmental decision.
- Say that assistant professors are encouraged to speak and are allowed an equal vote, with the exception of voting on faculty personnel matters involving tenure and promotion.
- Note that visitors are invited to attend department meetings (unless hiring or other personnel matters are on the agenda) and have the right to speak.
- Include the matters that the department will discuss together.
- Describe the issues on which the department will vote.
- Detail the matters that the chair can decide without consultation with other department members.
- Note whether a simple or other majority is necessary in departmental voting and if that varies by topic.
- Articulate how often department meetings occur (at least once per month during the academic year is recommended).

Ideas to Consider

- Note that anonymous voting is permitted and may be preferred by pre-tenure faculty.
- For more impactful decisions (e.g., hiring), considering saying that more than a simple majority of yes votes.

ALLOCATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AMONG DEPARTMENT MEMBERS

Strongly Encouraged

- Note that chairs should strive for equity in allocating departmental duties, which can mean different responsibilities depending on one's tenure status and other factors.
- Comment that pre-tenure colleagues should not have more departmental advisees than senior colleagues.
- Articulate that pre-tenure colleagues should not advise more senior theses than senior colleagues.
- Say that pre-tenure colleagues should be given preference in choosing preferred teaching times.
- Note that the department should strive to give colleagues with caregiving responsibilities preference in choosing preferred teaching times, prioritizing pre-tenure colleagues.
- Comment that faculty members should be told the "normal" number of advisees and senior thesis advisees within the department.
- Say that chairs should account for invisible labor as they allocate workload responsibility, perhaps by encouraging faculty to track the hours that they spend meeting and mentoring students.
- Note that chairs should try to alleviate some of the invisible labor that some faculty take on, such as by naming the duties and asking other colleagues to provide support when possible.

An Idea to Consider

- Note that, whenever possible, associate professors should be protected from chairing for at least three years after receiving tenure, and for four years afterward, if possible.

MENTORING OF PRE-TENURE COLLEAGUES

Required: There is a College Procedure Governing this Matter.

- Detail protocols around the annual conversation.

- Note that, in advance of the annual conversation, all tenured faculty members in the department should meet and discuss the scholarship, teaching, and service of the pre-tenure faculty member.
 - Say that, at the annual conversation, the chair and at least one other senior colleague (preferably a mentor) should be present.
 - Note that following the annual conversation, the chair or other senior colleague must write a summary of what was conveyed to pre-tenure colleague and included in the department's records.
 - Say that the chair must notify the Office of the Provost and dean of the faculty that the annual conversation has taken place.
 - Comment that the summary of the annual conversation is not shared with the provost's office, but is filed with department records and referred to during reappointment and tenure processes.
- Note the requirement that the evaluation should derive from, but need not be limited to, conversations about courses with some members of the department; attendance by some members of the department at a number of class meetings at mutually agreed upon times; assessment, by the candidate with at least one senior member of the department, of the accomplishments of at least one of the candidate's courses at the end of a semester.

Strongly Encouraged

- Detail protocols around class observations:
 - Comment that annual conversations must include a discussion of teaching evaluations from both the fall and spring semesters, and should be scheduled accordingly.
 - Include the rubric according to which observations will take place.
 - Note whether the department has chosen to adopt the practice of observing multiple consecutive classes (such as one course unit).
 - Say that all senior members in the department must observe every pre-tenure colleague at some time during the pre-tenure years. Note that class observations should occur in one class session of every course taught by a pre-tenure colleague.
 - Comment that a conversation will follow all class observations; note that the observer should provide a summary of the class, and that the observed faculty member should have the opportunity to provide feedback on the summary.
 - Comment that summaries should be submitted to the department and should be referred to during the reappointment and tenure processes.
- Include a link to ["Welcoming New Colleagues: A Checklist for Department Chairs:"](#)
- Note that the department identifies either a single mentor or a formal mentoring committee for all new tenure-track faculty members.
- Comment that mentoring committees should include two or three tenured colleagues (if the department is large enough).
- For small departments that cannot provide a mentor, articulate that a mentor outside of the department will be chosen. That person's research and teaching interests should connect to that of the pre-tenure faculty member.
- Detail the protocols that the department has in place to review mentoring relationships and to substitute another mentor if the mentee or mentor are so inclined.
- In regard to the annual conversation:
 - Note that no more than three senior colleagues should be present at the conversation (the chair and two senior colleagues, one of whom preferably is the mentor).

- Note that the pre-tenure colleague should have an opportunity to provide feedback on the summary that is provided following the annual conversation.

Ideas to Consider

- Say that all senior members in the department must observe every pre-tenure colleague at some time during the pre-tenure years.
- Note that class observations should occur in one class session of every course taught by a pre-tenure colleague
- Comment that no observations should take place during the first semester of an untenured faculty member's time at the college (unless the new colleague asks for a class observation).
- Articulate that one observer (as opposed to multiple observers) should be present at each class observation.

FACULTY PERSONNEL PROCESSES

There is a College Procedure Governing this Matter.

- Note that the department follows the college's practices and procedures surrounding reappointment, tenure, and promotion.

SUPERVISION OF THE ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT COORDINATOR (ADC)

Strongly Encouraged

- Include a section detailing the ADC's primary duties.
- Say that chairs have a weekly scheduled meeting with the ADC.
- Note what the ADC does NOT do:
 - Make it clear that the ADC does not perform personal secretarial duties for faculty.
 - Comment that the ADC does not run errands for faculty or babysit faculty members' children or animals.
 - Say that the ADC should not be asked to cook food for department events.
 - Detail additional tasks that the ADC should NOT be asked to do.

BUDGET

Strongly Encouraged

- Discuss as a department and detail the maximum payments that the chair can approve without departmental consultation (\$100 or \$200 are the suggested maximums for most departments).
- State that once per year, in a department meeting, the department should review together its available budget, as well as funding available through restricted funds.

VISITORS

Strongly Encouraged

- Note that visitors are invited to attend department meetings (unless hiring or personnel matters are on the agenda) and that visitors have the right to speak at department meetings.
- Articulate the department's expectations concerning multi-year visitors, including expectations around multi-year visitors advising majors and supervising senior theses.
- Include a link to ["Supporting Visiting Faculty."](#)

LECTURERS

Strongly Encouraged

- Detail expectations around lecturers' service in the department.
- Note that the department explains to lecturers the resources that are available to them.

- Comment that lecturers have the opportunity for mentoring.
- Note that lecturers are voting members in their department except for XXXXX matters.

ADDITIONAL ITEMS

There are College Policies Governing This Matter

- For science departments, include explicit protocols around research safety, including detailed protocols around students being alone in laboratories

Strongly Encouraged

- Detail what the department is doing to support diversity, equity, and inclusion, including efforts to diversify the curriculum and/or programming; build inclusive, accessible, and anti-racist pedagogies; and promote equitable outcomes in student success. Include efforts to recruit and retain underrepresented faculty
- Note the ways in which student voices are heard in the departments
- Explain how the department will facilitate participation in the First-Year Seminar Program.
- Create a calendar of administrative workloads to be passed onto new chairs so as to ease transitions. Consulting the [college's chairs' calendar](#) will be helpful.
- If a department uses TAs, detail the duties of TAs and other information related to them, providing information such as the following:
 - Do TAs grade? If so, what do they grade?
 - How are TAs distributed among faculty members?
- Note that individuals on phased retirement should not be involved in the search for their replacements (including decisions about the field of specialization).
 - Note that individuals on phased retirement may interview candidates and submit feedback to the department, but may not participate in search committee discussions or in departmental discussions (or votes) around the selection of the successful candidate.
- Include a process for giving holiday gifts to staff. For example, in early December, the chair could solicit donations from all departmental faculty (including visiting faculty, those on leave, and those on phased retirement) for holiday gifts (typically cash, sometimes a gift certificate) for the ADC, the custodian, and other staff in the department. A standard donation amount could be set for tenured and untenured faculty; once the funds are in hand, the proportion that will be allocated to each category of staff can then be determined.

HANDBOOKS FOR PROGRAMS

There is a college procedure governing this matter.

Note the role of the program in evaluating a candidate for reappointment and tenure, which must be in accordance with college practices.

Strongly Encouraged

State how one becomes a member of the program.

- Say who determines who can be a member of the program.
- Note that home departments and the provost's office are notified when an individual joins a program.
- Comment on the service expectations of those involved in the program, and that pre-tenure faculty must seek approval from their home departments to take on such service.
- Say whether a memorandum of understanding is in place for individuals involved in the program.

From: Catherine Epstein
Date: Thu, Oct 13, 2022 at 8:58 AM
Subject: Department Handbooks: Final Step!
To:

Dear Chairs,

Many thanks to all of you for your excellent efforts to create departmental handbooks. I think that these documents will be a very useful tool going forward.

Please post a link to your handbook on your departmental web site on the "about the department" page. This document should be password-protected so that only Amherst faculty and staff may be able to view it. You may also feel free to share the document with candidates for faculty positions.

On a final note, please do not include departmental tenure criteria in your handbook. I will be sending guidance about the dissemination of that document once I have completed my review of your drafts.

All best,

Catherine

Catherine Epstein
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Henry Steele Commager Professor of History
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