Responsibilities of Academic Department Heads

Overview: The department head serves as the lead administrator for their academic unit. While the nature of their role may vary based on department discipline(s) as well as department history, and missions, the department head is responsible for a wide range of functions needed to ensure departmental, faculty and student success. This document describes the range of department head responsibilities, but is not intended to be inclusive. Please note, some of the academic and curriculum based responsibilities may not be required of the Department of Research Centers Head, as they are a non-degree-granting department.

Faculty Governance

- **Organize and lead regular meetings of faculty**

- **Ensure a departmental committee structure which enables the business of the department to be conducted with faculty input**

- **Ensuring faculty input in decisions impacting the department**

- **Development and implementation of a department/school strategic plan including metrics for evaluating progress and assessment of progress annually**

- **Ensuring effective departmental representation and participation on college and university committees, task forces, and faculty senate**

- **Serve as the departmental representative on college and university administrative groups**

- **Communicating college and university information and priorities**

Academic Leadership

- Provide leadership in curriculum development and revision

- Ensuring that the Department has valid student learning outcomes for all if its courses and academic programs, that they are regularly assessed, and that the results of assessment are used for continuous improvement.

- Prepare for and organize the periodic reviews of the department's academic programs

- Seek or maintain professional accreditation if available

- Developing clear guidelines for faculty recruitment, retention, and promotion

Scholarship and Research Leadership

- Ensure a productive environment for research and scholarly activity

- Foster strong graduate programs and undergraduate opportunities for research and scholarship

- Promote opportunities for internal and external support of research and scholarship

- Support trans-disciplinary collaboration

- Communicate departmental success stories/ nominate faculty, students and staff for awards and other recognitions

Resource Management

- Provide budgetary oversight

- Recommend the assignment of space for departmental needs according to university policy

- Assignment of teaching

- Ensuring sufficient technical support

- Supervision and professional development of office and support unit staff

    - Creating a collegial, respectful and supportive culture
    - Providing meaningful reviews – and opportunities for professional development
    - Demonstrating appreciation and recognition of staff performance
    - Ensuring knowledge, understanding and compliance with relevant University policies and applicable collective bargaining agreements.
    - Creating an ethical, principled work environment where diversity is encouraged, supported and valued as a measure of departmental success
    - Creating a work environment that supports and values personal and family needs and priorities including marriage, childbirth, dependent care and dual career
    - Managing conflict

Faculty Career Development

- Seek approval for faculty searches

- Organize department search committees to ensure outstanding and diverse pools of candidates

- Articulating the policies, processes and expectations for tenure and promotion
    - Maintain the department's Role and Scope document

- Providing prompt, meaningful, fair and written annual performance evaluations, including

    - Providing guidance and mentoring to faculty in managing competing demands
    - Supporting faculty development in terms of discovery, learning and engagement
    - Developing a mentoring system for faculty members throughout their careers by matching their individual strengths and abilities in ways and at times that best match the department's or school's goals and needs

- Ensuring knowledge, understanding and compliance with faculty policies

External Relations

- Maintaining collegial relationships with other department head as well as college and university administrators

- Maintain relationships with department, college and university alumni and friends. Represent the university at various events and functions.

- Sustain relationships with key public groups, organizations and state agencies

- Developing departmental communication outlets or working with university communications to celebrate and share the success of faculty, students, staff, alumni and partners.

- Work with development officers and MSU Foundation in support of donor identification, cultivation and stewardship.