Reasonable Expectations in Working Together

Below are some general expectations of all members of academic departments, followed by more specific expectations for faculty, chairs, and administrative support coordinators. This document was developed in spring 2021 as part of the academic administrative support working group. The purpose of this document is to provide faculty, chairs, and administrative support coordinators insight into each other's roles, standardize expectations across departments, and foster productive working dynamics. Please read the entire document; even though we may feel that we already know, there may be nuances that we encounter while reading that may make us better colleagues.

- Treat colleagues with respect for their experience and skills, respecting the different, but equally important, skill set that each person brings and that is essential to our shared work--whether it be teaching and research, day-to-day office needs, or budget and long-term planning.
- Allow colleagues grace as they learn new tasks: a new administrative support coordinator, faculty member, and chair will need to learn the details of their new position and will need support from others who know aspects of the work—additionally, a new person is likely to approach the work in different ways than their predecessor did.
- Allow sufficient time for work to be done. Remember that we all have multiple projects that we're working on; in prioritizing workload, there will be many factors to consider, such as work schedule, complexity of the project, number of people impacted, level of impact, etc. When tasks depend on multiple people's input, make sure that you pass your part off to others in sufficient time. It is important to communicate with others involved to provide an estimated completion time and updates regarding completion.
- Because our work is heavily document based, we may be busy, even if we are not talking with someone or going somewhere: Before launching into a conversation or request of someone sitting at their desk, it is helpful to ask, "Do you have a moment?" If they don't, respect that and write an email or make arrangements to talk at a mutually agreeable time.
- Be familiar with the broad contours of each other's employment expectations: For instance, hourly employees are legally required to have 15 minutes break every 4 hours and a half hour unpaid lunch break; hourly employees cannot work more than 40 hours/week without being paid overtime (which needs to be approved in advance); staff have guaranteed sick leave, personal days, and vacation leave that they do not need to make up; faculty teach for a limited number of hours per week and each hour of class also requires hours of prep and grading; faculty also engage in research and if they are not teaching in either summer session they use the summer months for focusing on that research as well and course planning, and (often) university service, as well as for rest and rejuvenation. For more information, please see Staff Policies, Faculty Policies, and the Faculty Code.
- Be familiar with each other's job responsibilities and know when it is reasonable to ask for assistance. For faculty, if assistance is desired that is not within the administrative support coordinator's job responsibilities (e.g., research-related support such as book indexing, research-related scanning, or transcripting), seek support for research through the appropriate channels or technologies (e.g., UEC funding and/or automated online services such as Temi, Rev,

or Trint for rough transcriptions). Chairs have a special responsibility here: this means working with administrative support coordinators to review job descriptions annually and ensuring that there is a good fit between the job description and what the administrative support coordinator is being asked to do—and reinforcing to colleagues the reasonable expectations.

- Keep up to date on the technology needed to do the work. For faculty, this means preparing your own Canvas site. For administrative support coordinators, this means attending trainings on new technologies and processes, seeking assistance where needed, and maintaining fluency with technology so that chairs and faculty may rely on your assistance related to your job responsibilities. The chair and the administrative support coordinator should work together to identify areas where training is needed.
- Be aware that just because you don't understand the granular aspects of others' work doesn't mean that others are not doing their jobs well. Many processes that seem simple represent hours of labor. For example, pulling mailing addresses or scheduling multiple events for a job candidate visit may seem like simple, quick tasks, but they actually are more complex and time consuming. Similarly, preparing for a single 50-minute class session may require hours of research or extended exploration into new pedagogical methods.
- Listen to feedback from others, especially with respect to how your actions make others feel; their feelings are valid and may require action (but not reaction) on your part, even if you disagree with their specific suggestions for what you should do.

Reasonable Expectations Specific to Faculty:
- Treat administrative support coordinators with respect for their experience and skills. They are not "less" because they don't have a PhD. They have a different, but equally important skill set, and their support of the department facilitates smooth operations and allows faculty to focus on teaching rather than day-to-day office needs.
- Don't expect that a new hire will do the work in exactly the same way as the person who has had the position in the past.
- Don't ask 5 minutes before lunch break for something with a deadline.
- Don't ask 5 minutes before the end of your administrative support coordinator's shift for something that must be done that day.
- It's all right to ask administrative support coordinators if they are available to occasionally work outside of their regularly scheduled hours for an urgent matter, but don't expect administrative support coordinators to regularly work after hours or be available 24/7. Note: A chair cannot approve overtime; advance approval is needed from the Dean of Faculty Affairs for a non-exempt staff member to work over 40 hours per week or to work beyond the total approved FTE for the year.
- Administrative support coordinators are not research assistants and are not obligated to assist with faculty research.
- For larger projects, coordinate with the chair AND administrative support coordinator to ensure that proper triage is in place and that the administrative support coordinator understands how best to prioritize tasks to meet department and university needs.

Reasonable Expectations Specific to Chairs:

- Respect the expertise of the administrative support coordinator and have a plan for how to be a cohesive team—ask mutually what is needed for support, and coordinate in updating any department-specific process documentation (and create such documentation if there is none).
- Establish the administrative support coordinator's work hours and have a plan for how the administrative support coordinator's hours can be balanced out on a weekly basis to stay within the allotted FTE for the year. Communicate with the department what those hours are and ensure that the hours are posted.
- Ensure that the administrative support coordinator can convey information relevant to everyone in the department in an efficient manner. This may include an e-mail to the department from the chair, the administrative support coordinator, or both, an announcement by the chair, administrative support coordinator, or both at a departmental meeting, or any other relevant avenue.
- At times of transition, be sure the incoming chair has a clear grasp of the administrative support coordinator's job description, FTE, and workflow. Review with the new chair employees' legal rights to breaks and vacation time, and communicate clearly all legally mandated policies around overtime and how to remain with the FTE allocated for the year.
- Serve as a buffer between the administrative support coordinator and the department:
  - Review these expectations with the department at the first departmental meeting of the year
  - Remind colleagues about how vacation, lunch breaks, etc. work for hourly staff
  - Ensure that reasonable expectations are upheld throughout the year.
- Talk with administrative support coordinators about how to triage what's urgent and not when requests are made.
- Plan regular meetings with the administrative support coordinator to touch base on workload, upcoming department events, etc.
  - What types of requests is the administrative support coordinator receiving from department faculty? Do any requests seem unreasonable?
  - Does the administrative support coordinator have any training needs (e.g., web editing in the new website platform, using Google Drive, making queries) that should be addressed?
- When appropriate, invite the administrative support coordinator to a portion of or all of a department meeting, especially if the topic of conversation is directly relevant to their work.

Reasonable Expectations Specific to administrative support coordinators:

- Vacation leave is yours to use! Request vacation leave according to university policy, make sure that the department is aware of approved vacation leave, and enjoy.
- When a new professor rotates into the chair position, plan to meet with that person early in the semester or before the semester begins to go over roles, responsibilities, etc.

- Update department documentation on administrative processes in the department annually, defaulting to the centralized documentation for all administrative support coordinators available in the Google Share Drive "Administrative Resources - Academic Division."
- Communicate schedule with department, possible examples:
  - Door signage
  - Email signature line
  - Voicemail message
  - Outlook out of office message
- Communicate estimated time needed to complete a project and provide status updates.
- Keep up-to-date on university processes, practices, and policies so as to be able to follow them; keep up-to-date on technology, including alerting supervisors to campus trainings that would be helpful to develop new skills for the position.
- Know where resources on campus are located, both physical and electronic, and be familiar with the policies in these resources that pertain directly to academic administrative work; most are available in the Google Share Drive "Administrative Resources - Academic Division," and if you can think of useful resources, speak with the Dean of Faculty Affairs or the Administrative Specialist in the Provost's/Deans' Office.