

Chair/President of Academic Board/Senate Survey – Report –

In August 2004, the Chair of the Committee of Chairs issued a survey to members with the purpose of identifying “normal practice” associated with the position as Chair/President to Academic Boards/Senates. Specifically, it was hoped that answers would describe the nature of the position in terms of workload, particularly in relation to balancing responsibilities with existing duties, and the support available to Chairs.

This paper represents the final report, and incorporates responses from the 13 member universities.

A. Dimensions of the position

The position as Chair to Academic Board may be full-time (2), 80% of time (1), shared equally with other duties (2), 40% of time (1) or, in some circumstances, the workload is unspecified (2). Two (2) respondents indicated that the fraction of their position as Chair/President was zero, while another two (2) fulfilled the position of Chair of Academic Board as it was associated with their substantive position.

The majority of Chairs spend between 50-100% of actual working time devoted to Chair duties (10), with eight (8) respondents indicating such work comprises 70% or more of the working week.

A Chair’s substantive salary usually emanates from the home Faculty (6) as opposed to the central University (3) or a combination of both (1).

Some Chairs (7) simultaneously maintain a management responsibility at a non-Executive level, including responsibility for Faculty international matters, Director of a Research Centre, supervision of PhD students, Deputy Head of Division, Head of School and Head of Campus. Two (2) respondents were members of the Executive and thus Chairs of Academic Board/Senate in an *ex officio* capacity.

The majority of responses (9) highlighted that the position of Chair does not report to a manager/supervisor. Some responses (4) noted accountability lines to Council or equivalent.

B. The job

The Chair is an elected position, generally voted for by Academic Board/Senate (8). At one (1) university, the Chair is elected by members of Academic Senate *and* all Professors and Associate Professors whether members or not, while at another (1) the Chair is elected by *all* academic staff. In other circumstances (2), the Chair is an *ex officio* position associated with the respondent’s substantive position in the Executive. Similarly, at another University the governing statute states that the Chair is the Vice-Chancellor or nominee.

In terms of membership size of the Academic Boards/Senates, three broad categories exist:

21 – 40 members (8), 55-69 members (2), 85 – 120 members (3). There appears to be no correlation between the Board’s size and the number of appointed/elected members. Seven (7) universities have more appointed members than elected, and six (6) have more elected members than appointed. In all cases (13), the Vice-Chancellor is to attend Board/Senate meetings.

The scope of the role of Chair clearly extends beyond presiding over Board/Senate. The majority of Chairs are members of the University’s governing body (10) (excluding members of executive who are *ex officio* Chairs), the committee that advises the Vice-Chancellor (9), interview panels for Deans/DVC/PVC/VC positions (10), promotions committees (10), and are involved in the appointment of new professors (10). All (13) chair committees in an *ex officio* capacity and eleven (11) are *ex officio* members of between one and more than thirty committees. A smaller number (5) also participate in DEST profile visits.

Three (3) respondents indicated that, as Chair, they are a Principal Officer of the University as defined by University legislation. Further, one (1) of the respondents stated that in practice the Chair is one of three senior officers empowered to sign official documents on behalf of the University.

Collaboration and discussion with the University Executive and Registrar varies. Meetings with the Vice-Chancellor tend to be on an *ad hoc* “needs” basis (6), on a regular 2 week, 4 week or 6 week cycle (3), or/and in conjunction with other committees (5). Meetings with DVCs are generally more frequent and of a more scheduled nature, with meetings occurring 0.5 – 3 times a month (1), on a daily basis (1), weekly (1), fortnightly with the Deputy President of Senate (1), *ad hoc* two or three times a week (1), regularly one-on-one for discussion of specific issues (1), as necessary (2) and occasionally (2). Meetings with the Registrar range between none (1), on an *ad hoc* basis (3), daily (1), weekly to fortnightly (3), as necessary (2) and as part of other committees (1)

The length of term as Chair is usually two years (9). Exceptions to this are: a three-year term (1), as the Vice-Chancellor determines (1), and when resignation of substantive position incorporating the Chair role occurs (2). Where applicable, the term is formally limited to two two-year terms (6) or unlimited (3). Two respondents in the latter category reported that two terms would personally be sufficient.

C. Teaching Relief

A number of Chairs retain teaching duties in their home Department/School (7), with teaching loads varying from 10 – 20% (3), to 40 – 50% (2) to approximately 100% (2).

The majority of Chairs (8) indicated that a teaching ‘buy out’ option was available to compensate their home Department/School. This covered areas such as teaching and management responsibilities (1), a full-time Level A position (1), 50% teaching load and substantial marking assistance (1).

Most Chairs (11) are active in the supervision of postgraduate research students, supervising between two and six students.

D. Research

Research responsibilities remain a strong focus of almost all Chairs (11), with each still being active in research. Seven (7) respondents hold substantial research grants, and some Chairs (6) also applied for research grants in 2004.
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E. Support

All Chairs are supported by a Secretary to the Board/Senate, with the fraction varying between 0.33 – 0.75 (6) to 1.0 (7). Most (10) also receive assistance from the University Secretariat for other duties, mainly in chairing other committees.

A number of Chairs have a personal assistant (6), employed at a fraction of between 0.8 (1) and 1.0 (2). However, two (2) respondents particularly specified that their personal assistants were not associated with the position of Chair.

Some Chairs (5) are provided with an office/workstation in association with the position.

A number of Chairs (6) have salary supplementation related to the role. A further two (2) respondents indicated that a fully serviced vehicle was provided (1) and a Special Projects Fund of \$10,000 existed which could be used for teaching and research purposes (1).

Eight Chairs (8) have some form of expense account as Chair to Academic Board/Senate. These are either limited to travel and associated costs of the Committee of Chairs and necessary trips (3), to cover regular office needs (1), to cover office expenses, equipment upgrades, travel and hospitality costs, and an allocation for the Deputy-President (1), travel, entertainment, stationery expenses (1), and entertainment, hospitality, travel, internet use, research assistance, and special senate occasions (1). Expenses incurred by one Chair are covered on a case-by-case basis by the Secretariat but a cabcharge card is offered.