Department Chairs’ Resources/Toolkit

Showcase “Best Practice”

► **Process Improved:** Take an online walk through the Department Chairs’ Toolkit. This Web site provides useful resources for department chairs including: key campus contacts, a full list of chairs and directors, documents, policies, reports, and recommended readings. Subjects include budget, personnel, data for decision making, faculty programs, and professional development offerings.

► **Unit(s):** Provost's Office, Office of Quality Improvement, WISELI, Office of Human Resources

► **Customers of the Process and Their Needs:** Department chairs are key leaders/administrators on a university campus with important responsibilities over budgets and personnel, as well as overall leadership over the academic mission of the unit. But because of the decentralized nature of our institution and the volume of materials available, department chairs, department administrators, deans and others sometimes do not know about the resource materials, training opportunities, policies, web sites and other resources available to help them perform their duties. This poster was designed to showcase the variety of informational tools, materials and workshops/training sessions/orientations designed specifically for department chairs and administrators.

► **Changes Made:** The Department Chairs’ Toolkit ([http://www.provost.wisc.edu/deptChairs](http://www.provost.wisc.edu/deptChairs)) provides links to nearly all of the resources and policy documents that are critical for department chairs to know and use. It also has a resource list of key individual and office contacts for consultation, as well as information about workshops and lunch gatherings designed specifically for department chairs. A key feature is the effort to tailor the delivery of information to the chairs' needs – orientation in the fall, sessions throughout the academic year, and less formal “chairs’ chats” over lunch where they can share advice, brainstorm ideas and give feedback to administration. Additionally, efforts are underway to provide more information for the chairs’ role in recruitment of faculty and staff.

► **Results:** The Toolkit provides an easy entry-point for department chairs to access key documents, gain advice, and identify key personnel contact. It also provides information on workshops and discussions organized around specific topics for department chairs. The other workshops are in a constant state of revision to improve content and delivery of information.

► **Lessons Learned:** Communication is always a challenge - we make efforts to connect with chairs and department administrators and get information to them on a “just in time” basis, as well as provide a website that places crucial information at their fingertips.
Next Steps: We intend to continually improve the orientation sessions for new chairs, offer sessions for center directors and also improve websites that provide information for prospective faculty and staff. We also will work with WISELI to provide search committee chair training and workshops on department/unit climate, as these are high-priority areas for us.

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