

Policy on Program Coordinators: Job Descriptions and Load Reduction

The position of Program Coordinator, while widespread across the college, lacks any standard definition or compensation. In some departments, program coordinators perform a wide range of duties, while in other areas, the same or similar duties are held by the department chair. Likewise, some departments offer coordinators an annual course reduction in exchange for assuming what amounts to a considerable set of duties.

Discussions among the VPA department chairs focused on whether or not to create a standard set of duties for program coordinators and what form of compensation, if any, would be appropriate. Regarding the standardization of duties, the chairs believe it important to maintain some degree of flexibility due to the differing nature of the duties in specific units, but also believe written position descriptions would be helpful in creating greater role clarity for all concerned. Discussion regarding compensation focused on several issues, including the argument that compensation should match the duties performed rather than provide equal compensation for unequal work expectations as well as the issue of what form compensation should take. Under most circumstances, the chairs favor course reduction when the work load justifies it, but it has been noted that in smaller programs without readily available part-time instructors in the area to replace the coordinator, a stipend would be appropriate.

After considerable discussion, the chairs proposed the following policy that was approved by the VPA Faculty Council at its January 2009 meeting:

- **POSITION DESCRIPTION:** That the attached job description for the position of Program Coordinator be used as a basis for each department to write its own job description(s), consistent with the duties that need to be performed. These descriptions may vary by program within the department, consistent with the nature of the work;
- **COMPENSATION:** As a general rule, compensation, where merited, will be in the form of a one-course reduction per academic year, or a \$3000 stipend in those cases where a course reduction is not possible.

VPA Program Coordinator – Basic Job Duties

The College of Visual and Performing Arts consists of six schools/departments housing some 30 undergraduate programs and 21 graduate programs. Most of these programs are large enough that each needs to be managed by an appointed full-time faculty member. And while each program differs in terms of specific operational needs and may require differing levels of involvement on the coordinator's part, there are considerable duties in common associated with the position across the college.

Coordinators are responsible for overseeing all that is involved in the successful operation of program course offerings, including both required and elective courses. The coordinator position typically requires a substantial amount of responsibility and time, and is considered to be a significant departmental service contribution.

College-Wide Role Responsibilities

In most areas of the college, the program coordinator role includes:

Program Advocacy and Oversight

- ensuring that the goals, curricular objectives, and values of the department and their particular area are being met by the faculty, TAs, and part-time instructors (PTIs) teaching in that area
- acting as a liaison between their program faculty/instructors and the department chair
- conducting organizational meetings among faculty, TAs, and part-time instructors in their area
- creating, distributing/posting memos, announcements, schedules, procedures, and any other information pertinent to their area
- general trouble-shooting and issues-resolving before having to take other measures
- host visiting lectures, returning alumni, prospective students
- represent the program at various events

Hiring/Scheduling of Courses/Performance Evaluation

- advising and assisting the department chair in the assignment of TAs and the hiring of part-time instructors in their area
- interviewing, training, supervising, and advising TAs and part-time instructors in their area
- scheduling of course assignments within the program
- evaluate the performance of program instructors and write or contribute to the department chair's annual performance reviews of those instructors

Budget Oversight

- assess (with input of program faculty) the budgetary needs of the program
- manage the program fee and/or operational budget of the program (review, approve, and track expenditures; prepare reports to the chair, as needed)
- ordering, obtaining, and stocking supplies to meet course needs in the program

Area-Specific Role Responsibilities

The following duties (as well as others) may be included, depending on the nature of the program:

- interviewing, hiring, and supervising work-study students (if assigned to the program)
- oversight of and collaboration with college admissions regarding reviewing portfolios for prospective graduate or undergraduate students
- organizing exhibits of student work in their area
- maintaining and upgrading facilities in their area
- ensuring that there is an awareness and overall atmosphere of safety in their area
- acting as a liaison between their area and the University Health and Safety Department