**Commentary on Workloads for Department Chairs**:

The California State University, Fresno Department Chairs have a have variable work assignments based on the number of majors, FTES, composition of faculty, disciplinary expectations, organizational environment, and departmental goals. However, the university allocates assigned time for departmental chair duties based solely on the number of FTEs and the number of majors. Thus, assigned time for department chairs is consistent across the campus but it inadequately reflects the work that department chairs actually perform.

The inadequacy of the assigned time formula is especially pronounced in departments that rely on temporary faculty. Department chairs note that a significant portion of their time is spent scheduling and managing faculty. We suspect that department chairs not only have to scramble to find and schedule temporary faculty at various points during the semester but they also must train temporary faculty. This means helping temporary faculty understand various campus policies and rules. Our committee notes that there is little training for temporary faculty on campus. With 60% of faculty being temporary employees, this administrative gap, we believe, increases the workload of department chairs.

Because of the disparate duties and responsibilities between department chairs, common struggles were sifted out from the comments amongst the respondents. Critical comments were associated with assessment (i.e. 5-year program reviews) and accreditation. These activities do not occur annually, and, thus, are an increased burden on department resources when these activities arise. Additional assigned-time for these activities may be required to support the additional burden of these vital activities. We also support institutional efforts to streamline, or even eliminate, the program review process for those departments that must be nationally accredited.

Advising activities are handled in various scenarios amongst departments. In some cases the department chair performs a significant amount of the advising. As colleges and schools are developing Advising Centers, these resources may be incorporated into departmental practices. Training on how this can occur may be required to include these practices with departments that have traditionally used in house advising exclusively.

It is important to note *landscape* observations regarding Chair service. Based on an interpretation of qualitative comments in the survey pertaining to challenges and institutional changes surrounding workload (e.g., “Lack of willingness of other faculty to do work”; many activities fall to the Chair by default…The chair is a fill-in laborer for all the work that our colleagues fail to complete”; etc.), a stronger need exists for enhancing actual or perceived *sense of community* and *shared accountability* to complete departmental tasks. A logical take-away involves the hiring, support systems, and overall retention mechanisms used to facilitate effective organizational citizenship within a university setting.

**Actionable Items**:

Department Chairs require personnel management training to be managers with little administrative authority. Chairs also are required to supervise various staff, including the ASC, ASA’s, various levels of technicians and special trained staff. The training also could include dispute resolution, practices for supporting productive faculty and staff relationships, and absent management and oversight. We suggest the creation of a Chair’s Handbook that could, in part, include materials that support these trainings. Staff development opportunities need to be part of the Chair training to better support the staff they supervise. Sharing professional advancement opportunities with staff increases their trust and desire to perform for the department.

Training is required for department (and college) personnel committees to address common APM practices and to be more advanced and handle unconscious bias. Deans require training on reading and using the College level reviews when constructing their own reports.

Department Chairs need training on how to handle the ‘ASAP’ memo from administration. These requests create unnecessary stress and training is required for chairs to equip them with the skills to deal with these interruptions. Also, some Chairs feel that these requests can constitute a form of bullying from administration. It might be useful to development training on relieving these areas of stress.

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Unanswered (unaddressed) questions:

Several areas exist as part of the ongoing conversation surrounding Chairs’ workload. One area for future exploration is examining the intersection of race and gender pertaining to Chair service due to the potential disparate impact. For example, when faculty of color and women step into Chair positions, they may carry an *extra* burden relative to service. Though some Chairs may participate in multiple service obligations due to professional development and fulfillment, we also wonder if these service obligations are due to an uneven distribution of workload among full professors. And we need to explore what additional obligations exist for Chairs of color and women, when they have to participate to fill out college or university committees to meet gender and race balances thus minimizing *choice*? How much additional institutional support be provided for these circumstances?

Another area for potential exploration is the idea of *extraordinary service*, which is often interpreted as solely direct interaction with students. However, for departments that meet a diversity need for the university in support of students of color, how might this aspect of the conversation be elevated in the context of Chair’s workload?