

Charter for the Social Sciences Department

Department/Division Philosophy and Mission:

We seek to establish and maintain a positive working environment of mutual respect for one another. As members of the Department, we have the right to be heard, respected, valued by one another, and supported as we share responsibility for implementing the Department Mission.

We establish this charter to specify the guidelines and principles we will use to facilitate the creation of the Department culture we seek. The charter outlines the process and principles for the development of policies and procedures to govern the operation of the Department.

Our Mission:

Social Sciences focus on the scientific study of human societies and social relationships. The Department incorporates distinct disciplines sharing this common focus. Faculty in each discipline work in their own academic sphere, but together we offer learning opportunities designed to help our students understand the diversity of human experiences, achieve their academic goals, and make positive contributions to society. We provide quality educational experiences so that our students can develop critical thinking skills, enabling them to meet the challenges of a complex global society, and to participate in our democracy as informed citizens.

Our objectives are:

- To help students establish lifelong habits for successful educational and occupational outcomes;
- To support faculty involvement in their respective disciplines;
- To foster an environment of collaboration across disciplines;
- To serve as a useful training resource for cultivating respect for diversity in society.

1. Guidelines for Approving and Amending the Charter:

1.1 Voting Members:

All residential faculty whose primary appointment is in the Social Sciences Department are considered to be voting members. For the purposes of this document, residential faculty are considered those with a primary appointment in the Social Sciences Department. The Department Chair votes as a regular voting member of the faculty. One Year Only (OYO), One Semester Only (OSO), and adjunct faculty with the Department are not voting members.

1.2 Proposing and Voting on Amendments:

Any residential faculty member may propose an amendment to the charter at any time during the months of accountability. A written motion via electronic mail must be submitted to members of the faculty, describing the nature of the amendment and documenting its need. All faculty members, including OYO, OSO, and adjunct faculty, will be given a minimum of ten (10) accountability days to read, consider, and provide comments on the proposed amendment prior to it being discussed in a formal Department meeting called for the purpose of discussing the proposed amendment. If, after discussion, at least 2/3 of the attending (in-person or virtual), eligible voting members vote for the amendment, it will be enacted effective immediately, subject to the approval of the College Faculty Senate for compliance with the [Residential Faculty Agreement](#) (RFA) and College Plan. Voting members who are unable to attend will have the opportunity to vote. At the request of any voting member, the vote will be held by secret ballot.

A failed motion to amend the charter does not preclude reconsideration at a later date.

1.3 Updating Charter to Ensure Compliance:

Within 12 months of a new term of a Faculty Chair term, the Department Chair will convene an ad hoc committee to review the charter in its entirety for compliance with the Residential Faculty Agreement. The Department Chair may revise the document to comply with District and College policies at any time. The Department Chair must provide an explanation to the faculty for review by the Department's voting members. Faculty may still submit an amendment to the Chair's revisions in accordance with the process outlined in 1.2.

1.4 Conflict:

The RFA takes precedence in the event of a conflict with this Charter.

2. Process of Identifying, Selecting, and Delegating Department/Division Leadership Roles:

Faculty Chairs are responsible for the supervision and management of a Department/Division within the College. Each Faculty Chair shall perform the following duties, in addition to any duties and responsibilities articulated in the College Plan, unless such duties are reassigned to other supervisory faculty as outlined in Article 7.3. The Department/Division Charter shall specify which of the duties listed below shall be performed by the Faculty Chair in exchange for their Faculty Chair stipend and required Faculty Chair reassigned time. The Department/Division Charter shall also specify the dispensation of the remaining reassigned time to other supervisory roles and which duties from below will be completed in exchange for that reassigned time. The selection of supervisory roles will be made by the faculty chair in consultation with faculty members. The remaining duties listed below may be performed by any Department/Division faculty member in exchange for compensation as specified in the Department/Division Charter and in compliance with Article 7.4.4.

- Plan, manage, and oversee the Department/Division budget
- Facilitate Department/Division meetings
- Represent the Department/Division on College leadership councils
- Ensure all other Department/Division Supervisory Duties are performed

- Review and provide final approval for the selection and evaluation of Adjunct Faculty in accordance with current Human Resources procedures
- Review and provide Department/Division level approval for Department/Division reports (e.g., annual reports, staffing requests, program reviews, assessment reports)
- Determine Department/Division class schedules subject to final approval by the VPAA or designee
- Identify, select, and evaluate other supervisory and non-supervisory roles in accordance with procedures set forth in the College Plan
- Communicate and ensure adherence to College and District objectives, policies, and procedures applicable to Department/Division faculty and staff
- Engage in progressive interventions for faculty and progressive discipline for staff, as appropriate
- Address, manage, and work to resolve conflicts
- Manage and work to resolve formally registered student concerns
- Manage program-specific budgets
- Plan, manage, and oversee the Department/Division class schedule
- Recruit, review, and recommend approval for the selection of Adjunct Faculty in accordance with current Human Resources procedures
- Supervise and support all Faculty
- Chair Residential Faculty position search committees
- Evaluate Probationary Faculty in accordance with the Residential Faculty Agreement
- Evaluate Adjunct, OYO, and OSO Faculty
- Supervise, support, and evaluate staff and temporary employees, according to the Staff Policy Manual
- Perform supervisory duties including evening and summer supervision
- Oversee occupational programs (e.g., supervise faculty and staff, administer Advisory Council meetings)
- Coordinate completion of required program reports (e.g., program reviews)

2.1 Evaluation of Compensated Supervisory Roles

Each spring in early April, all faculty performing compensated supervisory duties will be evaluated using a form similar to the faculty chair evaluation form. When the college plan taskforce updates the college plan with specific timelines, frequency, and methodology, the college plan will supersede the department charter.

3. Process for Elements of Shared Academic Freedom:

3.1 Course Materials

Course materials include any instructional resource used for teaching and learning in a course.

3.2 Courses Taught by a Single Faculty Member

Residential and Adjunct Faculty reserve the academic freedom to design and select the course materials appropriate for the classes they teach based on their pedagogical approach and in fulfillment of the course competencies.

3.3 Courses Taught by Multiple Faculty Members

All faculty teaching courses for which multiple sections are offered and taught by different instructors are encouraged to consider common materials. In such courses, the Assistant Chair responsible for the prefix may call a Course Committee to be composed of Residential Faculty members currently teaching at least one course in the prefix. Social Sciences believes it is best practice to include Adjunct Faculty in this process when practical and possible.

The Course Committee will develop a process to assess prospective course materials based on the published learning outcomes and course outline developed by the relevant Instructional Council. Any Course Committee member may propose course materials for consideration. If proposed for review, a material must be assessed using the established process. Upon completion of the review, all Residential Faculty members serving on the Course Committee will vote. The vote to adopt a common course material must be unanimous. In the absence of a unanimous vote, all faculty, Residential and Adjunct, will retain the academic freedom to select materials independently.

3.4 Review of Common Course Materials

Any course in which common course materials are used must be reviewed as outlined in Section 3.3 not less than once every five calendar years. Continued use will require continued unanimous support by all Residential Faculty in the prefix.

3.5 Implementation of Chicago Principles

The Department of Social Sciences has adopted the Chicago Principles. Nothing in this Charter supersedes the adoption of the Chicago Principles by the Department of Social Sciences, which guide our department in its mission of teaching and learning (see Appendix A for text).

3.6 Implementation of the Kalven Principles

The Department of Social Sciences has adopted the Kalven Principles. Nothing in this Charter supersedes the adoption of the Kalven Principles by the Department of Social Sciences, which guide our department in its mission of teaching and learning (see Appendix B for text).

4. Teaching and Nonteaching Assignments:

4.1 Teaching Assignments

Residential Faculty, OYOs, and OSOs will be assigned full load schedules based on scheduling needs of the department and instructor availability. Residential faculty will choose whether or not they want overloads and will develop their teaching schedule in consultation with the Faculty Chair to include any overloads. OYOs and OSOs will then be assigned overloads if they so desire. Remaining sections will be assigned to Adjunct Faculty in accordance with the procedure in 7.1.

4.2 Nonteaching Assignments

Nonteaching assignments encompass those activities required of the department by the college plan or the RFA. These assignments will be shared equally among residential faculty.

5. Department/Division Meeting Schedule:

The Chair will call the formal Department meeting to include Residential Faculty, OYOs, OSOs, and staff during the first week of accountability. The Chair shall prepare and distribute a tentative agenda prior to the meeting with sufficient time for attendees to request that items be included on the meeting agenda. At various times during the academic year, subsequent meetings may be called depending upon the needs of the department.

6. Expectations of Department/Division Faculty:

Department faculty are expected to meet their professional and institutional commitments as specified in the Department Charter, College Plan, [Administrative Regulations](#), and RFA.

7. Adjunct Rights and Support

7.1 Process for Assignment of Department/Division Adjunct Faculty Members:

Teaching assignments will be made with consideration of seniority (of adjunct faculty members) based on years of experience teaching in their discipline, teaching at GCC, experience teaching the specific course, performance/student evaluations, interests, and continuing education/professional development.

7.2 Adjunct Support:

The Department is committed to adhering to the Adjunct Faculty rights outlined in the RFA and [Adjunct Faculty Handbook](#).

[Appendix A Chicago Report on Academic Freedom](#)

[Appendix B Kalven Report on The University's Role in Political and Social Action](#)

Last updated: 9/30/2025