

**Creating a Climate for Achievement:
The Role of the Unit Head in Faculty Development
University of Illinois at Chicago**

This document describes the role of the unit head in the development of faculty in the areas of librarianship, research, and service. It is the responsibility of the unit head to create a culture enabling library faculty to achieve excellence in librarianship, to become productive researchers, and to serve the library, UIC, the community, and the profession.

UIC is a public, urban land-grant university with a mission of teaching, research, and service. The Library's Strategic Plan reinforces the same mission: (http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/staff/strategic/inprogress/LibStratPlanv2_2Final.pdf).

“The Library supports, enhances, and collaborates in the education, research and service activities of the University by:

- Supporting and collaborating with faculty in teaching, research, and practice;
- Instructing students as they pursue learning and research to ensure that they acquire information competencies that will be of value throughout their personal and professional lives;
- Conducting original research that contributes to the overall understanding of library and information science; and
- Engaging in outreach to the community.” (Page 2, Strategic Plan)

The Library's Strategic Plan addresses the organizational culture of the library:

“The Library situates itself as a leader in many areas of the profession through its research and publication, its commitment to professional associations and service, and through the mentoring of new librarians. Faculty benefit greatly from professional development opportunities.” (Page 11, Strategic Plan)

Development in the area of librarianship benefits both the operation of the library and the individual, who is better able to perform in the present job and more prepared to advance either here or elsewhere. Development in the area of research allows library faculty to contribute to the knowledge base of librarianship and to enhance the operation of the library through informed decision-making. Development in the area of service permits library faculty to make contributions to the library, the university, the community, and the profession of librarianship.

Librarianship is central to the work of library faculty. The profession's tradition of service, the nature of the library's organization and operations, and the library's mission to advance the work of all others at UIC needs to be balanced with research and service. Even so, what has made the UIC Library unique is that its faculty have historically combined excellent librarianship with internationally respected research and outstanding service. To maintain UIC's unique contributions, library department heads must support faculty research and service as described in the faculty norms document.

Within the library, the research and service environment is influenced both by the institutional resources available and the climate set by those in leadership positions. The university librarian and leaders of library units are responsible for supporting research and service. Their support will show other professionals and support staff the value of research and service in the overall functioning of the library.

The library should support faculty by providing:

- workshops and brainstorming sessions to generate research ideas,
- formal classes in research methods and grant writing,
- lists of people, resources, consultants and software options available to researchers,
- mechanisms to share current research projects of librarians.

Specific ways the library supports faculty research and professional development includes:

- _ The present policies and processes for dispersing FDAC funds.
- _ Grant up to 15 days of non-cumulative leave per year to tenure track faculty.
- _ Grant up to 10 days of non-cumulative leave per year to clinical faculty.

In the interest of departmental schedules, leaves should be arranged ahead of time.

Faculty should be made aware of library support through such mechanisms as the new faculty orientation guidelines (<http://www.uic.edu/depts/lib/about/facexec/facorient.pdf>) and University support mechanisms for research, such as campus research board funds, sabbaticals, and rollbacks, when appropriate.

Unit heads should encourage faculty to assess each opportunity for research or service in terms of its overall value in a balanced and focused program of librarianship, research, and service. Furthermore, unit heads should assist faculty in understanding the implications of decisions made when undertaking a particular research project or service opportunity.

Unit heads can create a climate for faculty development by:

- conducting informative employment interviews including open discussions of UIC's expectations of faculty
- providing an ongoing dialog fostering individual development
- instilling the importance of research and establishing its place in relation to service and librarianship
- assisting in setting individual goals and establishing priorities
- encouraging identification of a research focus
- encouraging development of research skills
- assisting in establishing research projects of appropriate scope
- providing administrative support in juggling duties so that goals in librarianship, service, and research can be met

- providing release time both at the workplace and formal granting of faculty leave; time should be granted for an appropriate mix of service, research, scholarship, association meetings, outside committee work, and attendance of workshops and short courses
- informing the faculty about the library faculty mentoring program and encouraging them to participate in it
- informing the faculty about access to needed resources, including funds provided through the Faculty Development Allocation Committee
- providing guidance in appropriate and productive avenues of communicating research results, including where and how to publish
- promoting communication with colleagues within the library to promote research interest and professional development

Research and Service are the responsibility of each individual professional in a collegial environment, yet the unit head is encouraged to assist by promoting a supportive and creative environment.

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