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**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION**  
**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**

**BYLAWS**

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**BYLAWS  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION  
UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**

Rev. and adopted on April 22, 2020

**1. PREAMBLE**

In the belief that the work of an academic Department can be carried out most responsibly, effectively, and equitably when its procedures are as clearly defined and as open as possible and provide for a high degree of participation by its members, the Department of Communication of the University of Pittsburgh adopts the following Bylaws.

*1.1 Procedure.* Where procedural matters are not covered by any Departmental Bylaw or regulation, the transactions in a Departmental meeting shall be governed by *Robert's Rules of Order Revised*.

**2. THE FULL DEPARTMENT**

*2.1 Powers and Responsibilities.* All powers and responsibilities delegated by the University of Pittsburgh to the Department reside in the body of its voting members. The delegated powers and responsibilities of the Departmental executive officers, the Departmental committees, and in fact all Departmental employees are granted by and subject to review by the voting members of the Department.

*2.2 Voting.* The voting membership of the Department shall be defined as that group whose members hold a full-time tenured or tenure-stream appointment or that hold a full-time appointment at the rank of Lecturer I, Lecturer II, or Senior Lecturer, hereafter referred to as Appointment Stream Lecturers or AS Lecturers, formerly Non-Tenure Stream or NTS. Graduate students have one vote cast at faculty meetings by a representative chosen by the graduate students. In those cases when the full voting membership can vote, a quorum shall be defined as a majority of the voting members. In those instances when only tenured and tenure-stream faculty are eligible voters, the quorum shall be defined as two-thirds. Instances when only tenured and tenure-stream faculty may vote include: the tenure and promotion of tenure-stream faculty, the hiring of tenure-stream and externally recruited tenured faculty, and the hiring of visiting faculty at the rank of Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor. Only tenured faculty, tenure-stream faculty, and graduate students may vote on graduate faculty and graduate student issues. These issues include matters pertaining to Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows, and exclude personnel matters or matters that include confidential information about graduate students. In general, faculty at whatever level vote on appointments at their rank and below, and all tenured faculty have a Departmental vote on appointments with tenure regardless of rank. Voting members who are on leave or on remote assignment may vote at meetings when they are physically present but are not counted in the determination of quorums unless they are physically present.

2.3 *Departmental Stakeholders.* Departmental stakeholders are the faculty, staff, students, and alumni.

2.4 *Decision Making.* Policy issues, procedural matters, or any substantive questions are to be discussed by the stakeholders of the Department. Decisions resulting from these discussions will be made by the voting members of the Department. Any Department stakeholder can ask the Department Chair to place an issue, matter, or question on the agenda for a future faculty meeting. The Chair will make a good faith effort to schedule the concern in a timely way. Unless otherwise noted in these Bylaws, a majority vote by a quorum of the Department will carry any motion put forward, seconded, and discussed. Voting will normally be by a show of hands or voice vote except in the case of personnel decisions where a secret ballot will be required. At any time, however, the request for a secret ballot will be honored by the Chair. On decisions for new appointments, the Chair shall conduct a sequential advisory vote, determined on separate ballots, first, second, and third choices of all voting members at this meeting. The balloting for the second choice shall not be conducted until the results of the first ballot are known; the balloting for the third choice shall not be conducted until the results of the second ballot are known. Absentee ballots will be allowed only under extraordinary circumstances, and then only with the consent of two-thirds of the Department's voting members. It shall be understood that an absentee ballot shall be cast only if the voting member is fully informed on the issue at hand, especially in personnel matters. All absentee ballots shall be provided to the Department Administrator prior to faculty meetings. Proxy votes are prohibited.

2.5 *Meetings.* Faculty meetings will be held at least once each month for the months September through April of a given academic year. An agenda will be distributed prior to each meeting. Faculty meetings will be open to all tenured and tenure-stream faculty members and to all full-time AS Lecturers in the Department, with the exception of meetings concerned with the tenured and tenure-stream issues listed in Section 2.2 (Voting) above. The decision on expanded attendance will be determined by the Bylaws of Arts and Sciences and/or the voting members of the Department. Minutes recording the proceedings of Department meetings will be taken, maintained and made accessible to all faculty.

2.6 *Election of Chair.* The Chair is appointed by the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. The Department initiates the process by making its recommendations to the Dean concerning a successor chair. The term of the Chair is four years. During the Spring Term of the Chair's third year of service, the Chair will call for nominations for candidates for Departmental Chair for the subsequent four-year term. The Chair shall serve no more than two consecutive terms. An election will be held, and that election will be managed by a non-candidate faculty member. The results of the secret ballot election will be shared with the voting members of the Department and forwarded to the Dean of Arts and Sciences, and may include a distinction, if appropriate, between the views of tenured/tenure-stream faculty and full-time AS Lecturers. The current Chair, who ordinarily oversees the election of a new Chair, or a designated surrogate from among the tenured faculty in the instance

of a Chair's re-election, shall be instrumental in arranging for this and other expressions of opinion and shall take all these expressions under advisement. Open discussions of Departmental directions and challenges are encouraged.

*2.7 New Faculty Appointments, Reappointments, and Promotions.* Procedures to be followed for recruiting new faculty members, appointing and reappointing them, and promoting them are described in the most recent edition of the Chair's Handbook (which can be found online) in Sections I., II., III., and IV. These documents clearly state that all faculty may vote on initial appointments at their own level and below. On reappointment and promotion decisions, all tenured and tenure-stream faculty may vote but AS Lecturers may vote only on reappointment and promotion decisions below their own rank and not on decisions equal to their own rank.

*2.8 Standing Committees.* Standing Committees focus their attention on specific aspects of the Departmental mission and bring to the full faculty recommendations that emerge from their deliberations. Recommendations from a standing committee have the power of a motion that has been put forward and seconded. Therefore, when a standing committee reports, discussion can begin, and a vote can follow. All standing committees have graduate student representation except Admissions and Financial Aid and Faculty Liaison. Graduate student representatives are selected by the Graduate Student Organization. Graduate student members take full part in policy discussions and decisions, but do not have access to other students' records nor do they participate in discussions about other students or other stakeholders in the Department. The standing committees in the Department of Communication are:

*2.8.1 The Admissions and Financial Aid Committee.*

The mission of The Admissions and Financial Aid Committee is to:

- Actively recruit and review graduate applications and make decisions on selections and rejections.
- Make decisions on advanced standing and externally funded applicants.
- Provide interim report to the faculty on deliberations.
- Do the initial selections for Teaching Assistants and Fellows.
- Renew Teaching Assistantships and Fellowships.
- Nominate candidates for pre-doctoral fellowships.
- Process and act upon, if necessary, information garnered in the Role Call Meeting.

*2.8.2 The Graduate Curriculum Committee.*

The mission of The Graduate Curriculum Committee is to:

- Annually review the graduate curriculum for its coherence, relevance, and adherence to Arts and Sciences guidelines.
- Report to faculty on long-term curriculum planning.
- Formulate options for faculty deliberation concerning all graduate

- curriculum concerns.
- Update the Handbook for Graduate Study annually.
- Review proposals for new graduate courses and make recommendations to the voting members of the faculty based on the reviews.

### *2.8.3 The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.*

The mission of The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee is to:

- Annually review the undergraduate curriculum for its coherence, relevance and adherence to Arts and Sciences guidelines.
- Solicit proposals for new undergraduate courses and review those proposals in preparation for making recommendations to the voting members of the faculty and, eventually, to Arts and Sciences.
- Set guidelines for and monitor non-course, credit-awarding experiences, e.g., internships, independent studies, senior theses, and capstones.

### *2.8.4 The Faculty Liaison Committee.*

The mission of The Faculty liaison Committee is to oversee and assess policies and practices related to visiting instructors and part-time faculty.

### *2.8.5 The Planning and Budget Committee.*

The majority of The Planning and Budget Committee (PBC) shall be elected; other members may be selected for reason of particular knowledge or expertise, such members to be agreed upon by the unit head and the elected PBC members. Faculty, staff and students must be represented on this committee and they must have ample opportunities to participate in the development of proposed plans and budgets.

### *2.8.6 The Mentoring Committee.*

The mission of The Mentoring Committee is to lead the implementation and ongoing improvement of the Department's mentoring practices relative to Appointment Stream (Adjunct/Part-Time, Visiting Instructor, and Full Time) and Tenured/Tenure-Stream faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, and staff.

Mentoring is a collaborative relationship in which both parties have important contributions to make. It facilitates professional development, retention and promotion (including graduation), and work-life balance. It also fosters success and well-being in our Department, University, field, and broader communities, both for individuals and the aforementioned collectives. On the part of both mentors and mentees, mentoring entails a self-conscious practice of articulating and developing the skills and experiences that are necessary and valuable in a profession and in other aspects of life.

- Recurring duties include:
  - Facilitates mentor and mentee training by regularly initiating programming (e.g., inviting speakers, planning workshops);

publicizing mentoring-related events and circulating general mentoring resources; and compiling and publicizing Department members' relevant micro-skills.

- Monitors and assesses routine faculty, staff, and graduate student development processes (e.g., onboarding, renewal and promotion).
- Designs and administers annual surveys of mentoring experiences—of mentors and mentees—based on mentoring assessment best practices.
- Makes annual recommendations to Department's voting body based on survey results.
- Designs, distributes and collects forms to encourage and record the fact that shared expectations and goals have been established in formal mentor-mentee relationship(s), while recognizing that much good mentoring is informal.
- Full-Time, Appointment Stream, Tenured/Tenure Stream faculty and graduate students must be represented on the committee. Adjunct/Part-Time faculty, Visiting Instructors, and staff may officially represent their constituency, but are not required to do so.
- The committee has two Co-Chairs—one from the Tenured/Tenure Stream faculty and one from the Appointment Stream faculty. The committee also has a notetaker, who may be one of the co-chairs.
- Ordinary membership is annual. Each Co-Chair serves for two years, except for the founding Co-Chairs, one of whom is appointed for one year. Co-Chair membership will therefore be staggered.
- The Committee and Co-Chairs are appointed at the discretion of the Department Chair.

#### *2.8.7 The Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Climate Committee.*

The mission of The Belonging, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Climate Committee is to (1) sustain conversations in the Department as a whole on issues of inclusivity, equity, diversity, belonging, and climate and (2) evaluate progress in these areas and to suggest improvements to the Chair of the Department, committee chairs, and the Department as a whole.

- Recurring duties include:
  - Observing progress towards equity, diversity, and a climate of inclusivity and belonging.
  - Drafting and presenting a minimum of one annual report to include:
    - An assessment of progress.
    - The degree to which gains have consolidated or eroded.
    - Suggestions for improvement.
- Committee composition varies but includes (at a minimum) representatives from the full-time Appointment Stream faculty, tenure stream faculty, and graduate students. Staff and part-time faculty are invited but not required to participate.
- The Committee is led by a single Chair.

- The term length is a suggested one year for members to encourage labor sharing and prevent Department stakeholders from being overburdened with diversity/inclusion service work. Chairs should serve one-year terms with a maximum of three consecutive terms.
- The Committee and Chair are appointed at the discretion of the Department Chair.

#### 2.8.8 *The External Communication Committee*

The mission of The External Communication Committee is to oversee the creation and maintenance of the digital and print materials in service of promoting the Department, such as the website, social media platforms, newsletter(s), etc., as deemed necessary.

- Principal responsibility is overseeing the creation of a strategic plan for external communication which includes:
  - Regular audits and revamps of the Department's website.
  - Social media.
  - Promotional materials (newsletter).
  - Department monitors content.
- Composition of the committee will be two Co-Chairs, one faculty member and one staff member, as well as a designated committee member to serve as the notetaker and committee's point-of-contact with the Department.
- Term lengths for membership and Co-Chairs is two years with Co-Chairs terms ending in different years.
- The Committee and Co-Chairs are appointed at the discretion of the Department Chair and on a volunteer basis.

#### 2.8.9 *Ad Hoc Committees*

As the need arises, the Chair may, or may be requested to, form *ad hoc* committees to address a particular need or issue. *Ad hoc* committees meet, discuss the issue at hand and then make recommendations to the full faculty.

### 3. EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

#### 3.1 *The Chair*

- Is the Chief Executive Officer of the Department.
- Is responsible for the administration of Departmental business.
- Shall represent the Department to the administration, the University at large, and the profession in hiring and other negotiations.
- Deals with Departmental stakeholders' constructive suggestions and complaints.
- Presides over meetings of the full Department, the faculty, and the executive committee.
- Approves the final course schedule for any given term.

- Prepares the Departmental budget and negotiates the budget with the Dean.
- Exercises jurisdiction over the expenditure of Departmental funds.
- Supervises Departmental staff.
- Is responsible for the execution of the Department's Bylaws, regulations, policies, procedural guidelines, and the general, day-to-day functioning of the Department.
- Keeps the Department informed on matters that concern it.
- Appoints members to committees.
- Works in tandem with the Department Administrator.

### 3.2 *The Director of Graduate Studies*

- Presides over meetings of the Admissions and Financial Aid Committee.
- Presides over and is a member of the Graduate Curriculum Committee.
- Serves as Chief Recruiting Officer.
- Is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the regulations for graduate study.
- Interfaces with the Arts and Sciences graduate office on meta-Departmental regulations on graduate study.
- Certifies graduate students for graduation.
- Manages the records on graduate recruitment, retention, and placement.
- Checks compliance with University policies and procedures.
- Works in tandem with the Graduate Administrator.

### 3.3 *The Director of Undergraduate Studies and Advising*

- Chairs the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee.
- Is responsible for undergraduate advising and registration for the Department.
- Oversees the internship program.
- Informs the Chair on enrollment figures during the registration process.
- Certifies undergraduate students for graduation.
- Works in tandem with the Undergraduate Administrative Assistant.
- Interfaces with the Arts and Sciences Administrators on meta-Departmental undergraduate regulations.
- Manages the Oratory Contest, the Spiegel Competition, the Communication Club, and Phi Kappa Eta.

### 3.4 *The Director of Debate*

- Supports WPDU intercollegiate policy debate programming and supervising essential team functions, including meetings, travel, research, and practice.
- Supervises debate Teaching Assistants focusing on intercollegiate policy debate.
- Organizes and supervises policy debate preseason work sessions.
- Administers proceeds from the Robert P. Newman debate fund.



- Recruits prospective undergraduate and graduate students interested in joining the WPDU.
- Supervises and works in tandem with the WPDU program administrator.
- Shares responsibility for management of the debate operating budget with the Director of the WPDU.

### 3.5 *The Director of William Pitt Debating Union*

- Supports WPDU public debate programming by organizing and supervising essential team functions, including meetings, event design, advertising, research, and practice.
- Organizes and supervises the Marcella L. Finegold Memorial Public Debate Series.
- Supports WPDU outreach programming by linking the University to surrounding schools and serving as faculty liaison to the College in High School Argument program.
- Coordinates WPDU development initiatives, including alumni networking.
- Prepares and circulates news updates on WPDU activities, including maintenance of the WPDU website.
- Organizes and supervises debate Teaching Assistants focusing on public debate and debate outreach.
- Supervises and works in tandem with the WPDU program administrator.
- Recruits prospective undergraduates and graduate students interested in joining the WPDU.

### 3.6 *The Director of Public Speaking*

- Teaches the Practicum course for new Teaching Assistants/Fellows.
- Reviews TA/TF's course syllabi.
- Mentors TA/TFs and part-time instructors.

### 3.7 *The Executive Committee*

- The Executive Committee (EC) advises the Department Chair on annual review evaluations and other personnel matters.
- Recurring duties:
  - At the end of each academic year, the EC conducts annual review evaluations of all full-time faculty.
- The EC is composed of the Department Chair, two TTS faculty members, and one AS Lecturer. The Chair of the EC may also invite one TTS faculty member or one AS Lecturer to join the committee to give it balance with regard to diversity, equity, and inclusion while being mindful of maintaining equitable service loads for all faculty.
- The EC has a Chair, who shall be the Department Chair.

- The Department Chair is a member of the committee for the duration of their tenure. Other members of the committee serve two-year terms.
- The Department Chair is elected (per Section 2.6 of the Bylaws). Two TTS faculty members and one AS Lecturer are nominated and then elected by the full faculty. One further member may be invited as needed by the Chair of the EC. Nominees and invitees are free to accept or decline.

#### 4. PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

Performance evaluations for all stakeholders in the Department will be conducted on a regular basis.

##### *4.1 Students*

*4.1.1 Undergraduate Students.* Undergraduate students are, of course, routinely evaluated in their courses, by their advisors in non-course registration experiences, and by appointed faculty members in non-course, non-registration experiences, the Oratory Contest, for example.

*4.1.2 Graduate Students.* Graduate students are evaluated in their courses and are comprehensively evaluated annually in the Roll Call session. In the Roll Call session, chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies, students are evaluated with respect to their progress toward the degree, and with respect to their teaching performances. All Teaching Assistants and Fellows are to be evaluated by their students (via the Office of Evaluation of Teaching) in each class that they teach and are to be evaluated by a tenured or tenure-stream faculty member annually.

##### *4.2 Part-Time Faculty*

Part-time faculty members are to have their courses evaluated by the Office for the Evaluation of Teaching and are to submit these evaluations along with a once-per-year video recording of one of their classes to the Faculty Liaison Committee.

##### *4.3 Full-Time Faculty*

Annual evaluations of the full-time faculty will be made each Spring Term. In preparation for this evaluation each faculty member will submit to the Department Chair an updated Vita and documentation on teaching, research, and service.

###### **4.3.1 Teaching.**

- The Teaching Portfolio: Each full-time faculty member must establish, and maintain current, a teaching portfolio. The teaching portfolio should contain a working draft of the faculty member's teaching philosophy and goals; course materials such as syllabi, reading lists, instructional software, and examinations; proposals for new courses, instructional programs, and/or innovative instructional materials; records of independent study projects with undergraduate and graduate students; and peer and student evaluations of teaching.

- Peer Evaluations of Teaching are to be conducted at least once per academic year for full-time AS Lecturers and tenure-stream faculty, and at least once every two years for tenured faculty. The peer reviewer critically reviews the teacher's teaching portfolio and observes (either live or by video recording) and critically evaluates the teacher's teaching performance. Peer evaluations are submitted to the Department Chair.
- Student evaluations of teaching, conducted by the Office for the Evaluation of Teaching, are to be conducted for each class taught per term for full-time AS Lecturers and tenure-stream faculty members, and once per academic year for tenured faculty members.

4.3.2 **Research.** Research efforts are evaluated by the criteria of quality, significance, and coherence.

*Quality.* Indicators of quality may include:

- Acceptance of work by referred communication or appropriate interdisciplinary journals of national or international reputation in the faculty member's area of interest.
- Completion of a scholarly book accepted by a reputable press and judged to be of high quality.
- Selection of written work for proceedings, edited volumes, anthologies, book reviews, and book collections.
- Recognition of research such as awards, competitive grants, or reprinted articles.
- Positive evaluations by external reviewers.
- Recognition of research presented in other venues, such as conference papers, public debates, or electronic media, when judged to be of high quality.

*Significance.* Significance can be evidenced by:

- Signs of originality or innovation in the field of communication, such as the development of new theories or approaches, or creative use of existing ones. In the case of co-authored work, an assessment of the relative contribution of each contributor will be made.
- Impact on the field as indicated by citations or responses in journals or academic forums.
- Recognition by peers.

*Coherence.* There should be evidence of coherent, sustained research, guided by a discernible set of research questions or objectives. Changes of scholarly direction will be examined in terms of intellectual rationale and evidence of deepening contributions to the field.

4.3.3 **Service.** Service can be to the Department, to the University, the profession, or to the community.

- Departmental service includes serving on committees, mentoring new faculty members, advising students, and so on.

- University service includes serving on University-wide committees, take a legislator to lunch programs, volunteering for University functions, and so on.
- Professional service includes peer review of articles for publications in the Communication profession, editorial work, organizing conferences, invited paper presentations at other institutions, committee service, and holding elective office in professional organizations.
- Community service consists of doing pro bono work for the greater good of the community. More specifically it consists of using one's scholarly expertise in serving the community.

## **5. WAIVING PROVISIONS OF THE BYLAWS**

Any provision of these Bylaws may be waived at any faculty meeting of the Department for the duration of that meeting or part thereof, by consent of two-thirds of the voting members present. Voting shall be by secret ballot.

Any provision of these Bylaws may be waived outside of a Departmental meeting if two-thirds of the voting members consent. Voting shall be by secret ballot in response to a written proposal to waive the provision, indicating the duration of the proposed waiver. The written proposal shall be given to the Chair who will then distribute the proposal to the voting members for their consideration and vote.

Two-thirds of the voting members in both cases above will be determined according to eligibility rules established in Section 2.2 above. The intent of this provision is to restrict waiver votes to appropriate groups: tenured and tenure-stream faculty for graduate faculty issues (as identified in Section 2.2 above) and entire faculty for all other waiver votes.

## **6. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES**

Violations of Bylaws should be reported to the Chair.

## **7. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed upon petition by at least one-third of the Department voting membership. Copies of the proposed amendments shall be distributed to all members of the Department and the date of the meeting in which the proposed amendment is to be discussed and acted upon shall be announced at least two weeks in advance of any formal action. Two-thirds of the voting membership must approve of the proposed amendment for its passage. Instances when only tenured and tenure-stream faculty may vote on Bylaw revision include: changes affecting the tenure and promotion of tenure-stream faculty; the hiring of tenure-stream and externally recruited tenured faculty; the hiring of visiting faculty at the rank of Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor; and all graduate faculty and graduate student issues, including all matters pertaining to Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows.