

**University of Washington, Seattle**  
**Bylaws of the Department of English**

**(With Amendments of April and May 1973, November 1975, March 1977, May 1981, May 1983, June 1986, November 1990, April 1994, June 1998, May 2003, and February 2005, June 2007, January 2008, June 2010, December 2011, June 2015, April 2021, June 2021, May 2023, April 2024)**

**Section I. Voting Members of the Department**

Department members who are voting members of the University Faculty shall be voting members of the Department.

**Section II. Delegation of Authority by Voting Members of the Department**

- a. The department shall decide all matters of department policy and practice delegated to it by the faculty code in scheduled meetings, by majority vote.
- b. These bylaws embody the principle that the English Department Faculty acts on its own behalf through its appointed committees and committed debate at faculty meetings. On occasions when a faculty meeting cannot be scheduled or when faculty meetings have reached non-quorate conclusions, the Executive Committee will represent the voting members of the Department in all actions except those (such as appointment, tenure, promotion, and distribution of salary increases) where formal procedures established by the Faculty Code require decisions to be made by the faculty as a whole.
- c. Statements of action taken at meetings of the Executive Committee shall be sent to voting members of the department within four school days after each meeting, and unless a written objection signed by 10 voting members is submitted to the Chair of the Department within five school days thereafter, the action shall become final. If such written objections are submitted, the Executive Committee shall meet to consider them. If the Executive Committee reaffirms its previous decision, and objection is again entered as prescribed, the action shall be settled by a vote of the Department in a meeting called for that purpose.
- d. The standing committees of the department shall represent the voting members of the department in discharging the duties assigned to them.
- e. Voting members of the department may establish alternative procedures for making decisions that delegate authority to a smaller group, as long as these alternative procedures remain in accord with the Faculty Code.

**Section III. Department Governance**

- a. Department Program Directors (including PWR, PWAC, MA/PhD, MATESOL, Undergraduate Studies, and Creative Writing, along with department scheduler) shall direct their various programs in consultation with the department Chair and their EC-appointed committees, when applicable, in ways guided by the department strategic plan. In order to promote cross-program communication and coordination, Program Directors, the department Chair, and (when appointed) the department

Associate Chair shall meet at least once per quarter to report on program plans, share resources, align goals, and discuss matters of relevance across programs, such as distribution of instructional funds, graduate student recruitment, and policies and guidelines. Program directors shall report to the department on their program accomplishments and goals at the beginning of every academic year.

- b. The Associate Chair shall be appointed by the Chair and shall assist the Chair in executing the Department's policies and managing departmental governance. The Associate chair serves as acting chair in the temporary absence of the Chair, and performs whatever other occasional duties are assigned by the Chair. The Associate Chair's term of office will be determined by the Chair, in consultation with the Associate Chair. The responsibilities of the Associate Chair may include managing personnel and recruiting matters; working on development projects; putting together nomination packets for awards; assisting in reappointment, tenure, and promotion cases; working with department committees and program directors to spearhead department initiatives; developing short and long-term plans for increasing departmental resources and improving their use; and helping to prepare department self-studies and review materials. The Associate Chair is an ex officio, non-voting member of the Executive Committee.
- c. Program Directors (MATESOL, Creative Writing, MA/PhD, PWR, PWAC, Undergraduate Studies) along with department scheduler and program coordinators such as London Program, Humanities Data Lab, Internship program, and Technical and Professional Writing program, etc.) are appointed by the chair, in consultation with program faculty, after the positions have been announced in advance and faculty have an opportunity to indicate interest.

#### **Section IV. Membership and Organization of the Executive Committee**

- a. The Executive Committee shall consist of six members elected from the voting membership of the department, the Department Chair (ex officio), and, should there be one, the Associate Chair (ex officio). Members shall be elected for two-year terms, with three of the six members elected in each spring quarter.
- b. Every member of the Executive Committee (with the exception of the Associate Chair) shall be a voting member of the committee.
- c. Any voting member of the department except for the Chair and the Associate Chair shall be eligible for election to the Executive Committee unless they:
  - 1. are scheduled to be on leave for more than one quarter per year during the academic years in which service would be required; or
  - 2. are currently serving a second consecutive year as an elected member of the committee, being thereby ineligible for reelection for two years.
  - 3. have served as an alternate for two or three quarters of the current academic year, being thereby ineligible for reelection for one year.

4. are an Assistant Professor or Assistant Teaching Professor or are serving as a Program Director who has chosen to opt out of serving by informing the Assistant to the Department Chair before the first round of ballots is circulated.

d. Each fall, the Executive Committee shall elect from its membership a chair and a secretary for the new academic year.

#### **Section V. Election of the Executive Committee**

- a. Elective members of the Executive Committee shall be chosen annually by vote of the Department during the first two weeks of May. They shall take office on September 15 of the same year and serve until September 14 of the year in which their term expires.
- b. All voting for members of the Executive Committee shall be by secret ballot.
- c. Election of an Executive Committee shall be considered valid when two-thirds of those eligible have voted.
- d. The first ballot in the election of an Executive Committee shall be a nominating ballot, containing the names of all Department members eligible for election. Voting members of the Department shall vote for six names, and those six receiving the highest number of votes shall become the six nominees by ballot from this list. If, because of a tie vote, the number of nominees cannot be determined as the six highest in the balloting, the number chosen shall be increased to include all participants in the tie.
- e. A candidate who receives a majority vote on either the nominating ballot or a subsequent election ballot shall be declared elected. Balloting shall proceed until all positions have been filled. If more than one election ballot is required, the name of each nominee still lacking a majority shall be accompanied by the number of votes they received on the previous ballot; the name(s) of the nominee(s) with the lowest number of votes on each ballot, however, shall be removed from the following ballots. If on any ballot the number of candidates with majorities exceeds the number elected, the higher majorities shall determine election.
- f. If any elective member of the Executive Committee is granted on-leave status or is otherwise unable to serve, the next runner-up in the previous election shall be designated to fill the vacant spot for the quarters during which the elected member is unable to serve.

#### **Section VI. Functions of the Executive Committee**

- a. The Department Chair shall consult with the Executive Committee on department governance. Any item on the chair's agenda that will eventually be put to a full faculty vote shall first be presented to and discussed by the Executive Committee. The chair shall consult with the Executive Committee on all decisions pertaining to policy changes; strategic planning; and general salary policy; or that otherwise have significant bearing on the future of the department. Executive Committee members shall assume an active role in bringing to this committee's attention matters of departmental governance and policy not included on the chair's agenda. The Executive Committee shall be responsible for coordinating long-term planning about matters such as hiring priorities and resource allocation and determining agendas for faculty meetings. When deliberating on matters of hiring planning, retention, and searches, the Executive Committee will consult pertinent

policy documents approved by the department. The Executive Committee shall maintain ongoing consultation with the committees it has appointed, working in collaboration with the chairs of those committees to set their annual agendas.

- b. At its first meeting during the Autumn Quarter, the Executive Committee shall appoint the standing department committees and, except in cases where a program director serves as committee chair, shall appoint a chair for each. All faculty who are committee members have voting privileges. The EC shall also be given access to department documents relevant to its work.
- c. The Executive Committee may appoint other department committees (standing, ad hoc) as needed. The Executive Committee may appoint nonvoting graduate student representatives to serve on such ad hoc committees as it deems appropriate. The Executive Committee may also appoint staff members as voting or nonvoting members of any standing or ad hoc committee.
- d. The Executive Committee may define the duties of the committees it appoints.
- e. The Executive Committee shall appoint Part Time Lecturers or delegate the process to the Department Chair.

## **Section VII. Standing Department Committees**

At the end of each academic year, standing committee chairs will write a report, taking stock of what has been done in the past year and what to prioritize next, to facilitate continuity in the committee's work from year to year. This report can be brief (1 page and under), and can be written in bullet points or narrative-style, depending on the committee chair's preference. The report should include the following information: The number of committee meetings and who attended (optional: If minutes are kept, these may be appended to the report). A delineation of the committee's activity over the course of the year, and what remains to be done (many chairs include such an accounting in their own merit review materials; this accounting can also be used as the year-end report).

1. **Creative Writing Committee** (constituted by the Creative Writing Faculty). The Creative Writing Committee shall advise the Director of Creative Writing, who serves as chair of the committee, on matters of policy and practice in the Creative Writing Program, such as curriculum, allocation of discretionary funds marked for Creative Writing, student writing awards, Department-sponsored publications, admission and degree requirements for the MFA program, and the selection, supervision and evaluation of Teaching Assistants for Creative Writing courses.
2. **Graduate Studies Committee** (three to five appointed members; the Director of Graduate Studies, who serves as chair of the committee; and up to two graduate student representatives [nonvoting] as appointed by the Graduate Student Organization [GSO]). The Graduate Studies Committee shall advise the Director of Graduate Studies on matters of policy and practice in the literature and culture and the language and rhetoric graduate programs, such as admission and degree requirements, curriculum, awards of financial support, graduate student petitions, and applications for admission to graduate degree programs, including delegating application reviews to field-specific groups. Graduate student representatives shall participate in discussion on matters of policy and practice in

the Graduate Program, but shall not participate in the admissions of graduate students, awards of financial support, or other types of personnel review.

3. **MATESOL Committee** consisting of all members of the MATESOL teaching faculty, with the current director of the MATESOL program as chair. The MATESOL Committee shall be responsible for matters of policy and practice in the MATESOL Program, such as admission and degree requirements.
4. **Undergraduate Education Committee** (four to six appointed members, including the Director of Undergraduate Programs, who serves as chair of the committee, plus two graduate student representatives [nonvoting] as appointed by the Graduate Student Organization [GSO]). The Undergraduate Education Committee will consult with undergraduates as needed in the course of its work. The Undergraduate Education Committee shall advise the Director of Undergraduate Programs on matters of policy and practice in the Undergraduate Program, such as the offering of special topics courses, the improvement and evaluation of teaching, general standards for undergraduate education, and curriculum.
5. **The Program for Writing Across Campus Committee** (constituted by the Program for Writing Across Campus Faculty). The Program for Writing Across Campus Committee shall advise the Director of PWAC, who serves as chair of the committee, on matters of policy and practice in the Program for Writing Across Campus, such as curriculum and program development; selection, training and mentoring of Teaching Assistants; and collaboration/consultation on writing-related work with other UW programs, departments, writing centers and librarians.
6. **Writing Programs Advisory Committee.** Chair appointed by EC. (four appointed members, including the Associate Director of Writing Programs. One or two members should come from PWAC and remaining members from other segments of the department. The PWAC and PWR directors will be ex officio members). Facilitates coordination across PWR and PWAC as well as supports coordination between the two programs and the department. As needed, the committee should consult with other department programs and committees in matters of shared interest. Advises the Writing Program Directors on topics needing faculty/departmental input. Reviews and selects Writing Program Awards.
7. **Professional Preparation Committee** (three appointed members. Whenever possible, one member should be a senior graduate faculty member. The DGS should be an ex officio member.) The Professional Preparation Committee shall coordinate with the Graduate Programs to offer support for graduate students who are developing career skills (e.g., learning to represent themselves as a scholar and teacher).
8. **Diversity Committee** (five or six appointed members, including two graduate students [nonvoting] elected by a majority of 50% of graduate students currently enrolled; faculty members to be selected with input from current Diversity Committee, with an expectation of service for two consecutive years, when possible; members to be drawn from all departmental divisions, when possible). The Diversity Committee shall advise the department on the development and implementation of strategic planning pertaining to all areas of departmental diversity, such as best practices for creating and sustaining diversity in faculty hiring, promotion, and retention; graduate student recruitment and retention; undergraduate and graduate curriculum development; and participation in College and University-wide diversity planning.

9. **Awards and Scholarships Committee** (three appointed members). Awards departmental prizes and scholarships. These include: undergraduate essay prizes (Hilen, etc) and scholarships; graduate publication, essay, and dissertation prizes (Brown award, etc.); as well as the faculty departmental teaching award. Graduate fellowships and awards that fall within the purview of the Graduate Studies Committee shall remain there; Creative Writing awards shall remain in Creative Writing.

### **Section VIII. Meetings of the Executive Committee**

Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held when called by the Chair of the Department, the Chair of the Executive Committee, or by two or more members of the Committee. Tentative agenda of the Executive Committee shall be published in advance. The presence of two-thirds of the elected members of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

### **Section IX. Meetings of the Department**

- a. Meetings of the Department shall be held when called by the Chair of the Department or by the Executive Committee, or when requested in writing by 10% of the voting members, or by the Department representative in the Senate.
- b. The Chair of the Department or, in the Chair's absence, the Chair of the Executive Committee, or another faculty member designated by the chair, shall preside at meetings of the Department, and a faculty member appointed by the Executive Committee shall take minutes of the meeting.
- c. The agenda for Department meetings shall be published in advance.
- d. A quorum at Department meetings shall consist of a majority of the voting members of the Department.
- e. Absentee ballots will be admitted where they relate to specific items on a pre-circulated agenda. Absentee ballots must be submitted in advance of the faculty meeting and shall be deemed admissible. In the case where the ballot has been amended in the course of the faculty meeting, the amended ballots will be resubmitted to those who voted absentee.
- f. Secret ballots will be used in the ranking of job candidates, votes on tenure and promotion, ranking hiring proposals, election of the Executive Committee, other personnel matters (such as merit recommendations), or other action items where faculty might hesitate to publicly vote their true sentiments.
- g. A proxy is a power of attorney given by one person to another to vote in his or her stead. Proxy voting stands in conflict with the concept of the equality among faculty participants, as it effectively grants to one participant more votes than to another. Accordingly, proxy voting is not allowed.
- h. Recommendations for continuing appointments and reappointments of faculty shall be discussed and voted on at a Department meeting called for that purpose. Recommendations for appointment and reappointment of faculty to annual, acting, adjunct, affiliate, or part-time positions shall be discussed and voted upon by the Executive Committee, who will forward its recommendations to the eligible voting members of the Department for their vote by written ballot.
- i. In the absence of a quorum at a Department meeting the Executive Committee shall decide whether to take action, table the action item(s) or proceed to a(n) (e)mail ballot.

## **Section X. Amendments and Additions to the Bylaws**

- a. Any member of the Department may propose amendments to the Bylaws in writing to the Executive Committee, which will record in the minutes its consideration of such proposals, either rejecting them by a majority vote or submitting them to the Department with its recommendation.
- b. Amendments by the Bylaws may also be proposed by a petition of 10% of the voting members, as under IX. a., subject only to the restrictions in c. and d. here following.
- c. Any proposed amendment must be published at least two weeks before it is to be voted on.
- d. Amendments to the Bylaws shall be in force when approved by a majority of the voting members of the Department. A mail ballot is required if a majority vote in open meeting is not a majority of voting members of the Department.

## **Section XI. Institutional Record**

All policies and procedures adopted by the faculty (e.g., the policy on partner hires; department hiring procedures) shall be considered in effect absent a faculty vote to revise or eliminate a specific policy or procedure. All such policies and procedures will be included in the Department Handbook.