

Bylaws of the Department of Sociology

Revised, April 2019

This statement describes the Department's system of governance. This includes procedures for: (1) the conduct of departmental business; (2) departmental planning and its budgetary impacts; (3) making recommendations to the Dean of Arts and Sciences with regard to the reappointment, promotion, and award of tenure to full-time faculty; (4) making recommendations to the Dean of Arts and Sciences with regard to the appointment of a departmental Chair; (5) determination and staffing of undergraduate and graduate curricula and requirements; (6) considering secondary appointments; and (7) faculty initiation of departmental discussion.

I. Procedures

The Department Meeting is the primary unit for setting departmental policies, making personnel decisions and recommendations to the Dean of Arts and Sciences as well as appointing members of Special Review Committees and Search Committees, and making nominations for departmental Chair. In the following sections, these structures are described and the sequence of activities in faculty reappointment or promotion proceedings is detailed.

A. The Department Meeting

The Chair of the Department schedules regular monthly Department Meetings during the academic year. The Chair may convene additional meetings from time to time. All full-time faculty members are expected to attend unless they are on sabbatical or leave. Absences for another legitimate reason, such as attending an academic conference, are only appropriate with prior consultation with the chair. A full-time faculty member is one who holds a tenured or tenure stream appointment in the Department or who holds the rank of lecturer, lecturer II or senior lecturer. The Department Chair chairs the meeting. The Department's Administrative Assistant attends the meeting and is responsible for taking the minutes of the meeting. The minutes are maintained and are made accessible to all faculty and graduate student representatives. Secondary appointees and student representatives may attend and participate in the meeting. Voting is limited to tenured and tenure stream faculty, non-tenure stream faculty with the rank of lecturer, lecturer II or senior lecturer, and one student representative. Students may not vote on hiring, secondary appointments, reappointment, promotion, or tenure. However, graduate students should give input through their representatives and may consult with the Department Chair or broader faculty regarding these decisions.

The Department Meeting makes decisions by a majority vote of a quorum of members. A quorum is defined as the ceiling of the number of full-time faculty members actively participating in the Department's daily affairs divided by two. Faculty members with full-time administrative appointments outside the Department are not included in this number, but faculty on sabbatical or leave are counted. For example, if the department had 13 tenured and tenure stream faculty members, two of whom held full-time administrative appointments, and three lecturers on renewable long-term contracts, a quorum would be the ceiling of $14/2$ (7). All full-time faculty (but not non-tenure stream instructors on annual contracts) have a vote on all decisions made at the Department Meeting. More than one graduate student representative may attend meetings, but graduate students have only one vote; they can vote on all matters except those specified above or on decisions about particular graduate students.

Some departmental decisions require that all faculty vote. In such cases, the vote is not limited to those present at a particular meeting, but is conducted by mail or e-mail ballot. In addition, the Department Meeting may decide that a particular issue should be decided by a mail or e-mail ballot of all eligible voters rather than by those members present. All reappointment, promotion

and tenure decisions as well as recommendations as to the Department Chair will be made in this fashion.

The Department Meeting sets departmental policies, including those regarding the graduate and undergraduate programs and the directions of future recruiting. It also takes on the functions of a planning and budgeting committee of the whole.

The Department Meeting is responsible for personnel decisions, both in the recruitment of new faculty and the reappointment, promotion, and recommendation of tenure for current faculty. In all these matters except initial appointments to the Department, voting follows the "rank above" principle. That is, assistant, associate and full professors vote on decisions regarding instructors and lecturers; associate and full professors vote on decisions concerning assistant professors; and full professors vote on decisions concerning associate professors. Faculty of all ranks participate equally in decisions concerning initial appointments. All members of the relevant faculty subset (e.g., all senior faculty in the case of promotions to tenured rank) are expected to study the candidate's dossier. They are asked to express their opinions on the proposed action through the ballots circulated among them, as required by A&S policy. All departmental decisions concerning personnel actions become recommendations to the Dean of A&S.

After a promotion or reappointment decision of the Department Meeting has been reached, the Chair transmits it as the Department's recommendation to the Dean of Arts and Sciences including a description of the steps taken in reaching the decision. The Department Chair is expected to inform the Dean of his/her own recommendations; should the Chair hold a divergent opinion from the majority she or he must inform other voting full-time members of the Department. The Chair's report will discuss dissent within the faculty when there is general agreement about the strength of the case, but the vote is divided; however, if there is significant division over the strength of the case, as reflected in the discussion and the vote, both majority and minority reports will be submitted to the Dean.

Secondary appointments are reviewed and approved by the Department Meeting. All participants take part in the deliberation before eligible faculty vote on the appointment. When secondary appointments are up for renewal, the chair will ask affiliates if they wish to be renewed and, if so, to send an updated CV and brief statement of reasons for the renewal. The department will then vote on the renewal.

The Department Meeting has the responsibility of approving Special Review Committees and Search Committees appointed by the Chair. The Department Meeting sets priorities for Search Committees.

The Department Meeting may delegate departmental tasks to standing or ad hoc committees or to individuals. Standing departmental committees include a Graduate Committee that works with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) to administer the graduate program, an Undergraduate Committee that works with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) to administer the Undergraduate Program, an Undergraduate Course Proposal Review Committee (consisting of the current and past Chairs and the DUS) to approve new courses, and a Scheduling Committee (consisting of the Chair, DGS, and DUS plus staff) to draw up teaching schedules. The graduate committee may recommend courses to be offered, but the scheduling committee, and ultimately the chair, makes the final decisions over the scheduling and assigning of courses. Individual positions include the Research Ethics Coordinator, who deals with issues arising from student research on human subjects as part of class projects, the Diversity Liaison Representative, the Library Representative, and the Speakers Series Coordinator. Committee members and individual positions are appointed by the Department Chair, except in the cases of Search Committees, which are recommended by the Chair and approved by the Department Meeting, and Special Review Committees, which are approved by the rank-above subset of the Department Meeting. The Director of Graduate Studies and the Undergraduate Advisor are appointed by the Department Chair, unless otherwise specified by contract.

Agenda. The Chair distributes an agenda prior to the regular monthly meeting, and any member of the department may add items to the agenda.

B. Planning and Budgeting Committee

The University's Planning and Budgeting process requires that each Department have a Planning and Budgeting Committee. These committees have representatives of faculty, staff, and students. In Sociology, the Department Meeting as a whole, which includes faculty, staff, and students, functions as such a committee to decide questions of departmental planning and budgetary impacts. For example, the Department Meeting may set priorities in the allocation of department funds.

C. Special Review Committee

The Department Meeting appoints a Special Review Committee (SRC) for the purpose of preparing a Departmental report on a faculty member whose reappointment or promotion is under consideration by the Department. While Special Review Committees may make recommendations, the responsibility for arriving at decisions rests with the Department Meeting, which must form a comprehensive picture of the merits of the case including evaluation of the material and recommendation found in the report produced by the Special Review Committee. The Department Meeting may accept the Special Review Committee's report as it stands or it may delegate a group (within the relevant subset) to do some rewriting. The outcome is the final Departmental report that becomes part of the materials forwarded to the Dean, as indicated above. In cases of reappointment of lecturers, or their promotion to lecturer II or senior lecturer, Special Review Committees consist of two or three rank above members of the faculty, including senior lecturers and lecturers II as appropriate. In cases of reappointment of assistant professors, Special Review Committees consist of two or three members of the tenured full-time sociology faculty. In cases of promotion to associate professor with tenure or promotion to full professor, the Committee may either consist of three departmental members of a rank above that of the person under consideration or two rank-above departmental members and one member with relevant expertise and appropriate faculty rank from another department of the university.

Special Review Committees are appointed by the rank-above subset of the Department Meeting. Although the Department Chair will normally make a recommendation as to the composition of the Special Review Committee, approval of that membership is the responsibility of the entire rank-above faculty. Before the Special Review Committee is named, the Chair will consult with the candidate on its composition. The candidate may indicate to the Chair preferences for inclusion or exclusion of faculty members for this Committee. However, the rank-above faculty subset will recommend Special Review Committees on the basis of scholarly competence and balances of judgment. It may disregard preferences expressed by the candidate.

It is the responsibility of the Special Review Committee to prepare a detailed report, presenting a profile of the candidate relating to the Department criteria. Their work will be based on the collection of materials in the candidate's dossier. The candidate may indicate the significance he/she attaches to these materials and their relative importance. Candidates may present unpublished work or work in progress if they wish, but the Special Review Committee will not use such material without permission of the candidate.

In the case of recommendations for promotion to associate or full professor, and in decisions regarding tenure, the Special Review Committee must ascertain the national and/or international standing of the candidate by soliciting letters of reference from at least six well-known authorities in the candidate's field. External reviewers will be sent a selection of the candidate's writings, research statement and CV prepared by the Special Review Committee. Candidates may present unpublished work as part of their dossier but are not required to do so. Departmental Guidelines for Tenure/Promotion Special Review Committees can be found in the Faculty

Handbook. In cases of reappointment of assistant professors and of lecturers, external letters are not solicited, but the Special Review Committee may, if appropriate, solicit the views of colleagues in other departments or programs at the University of Pittsburgh.

D. The Search Committee

The Search Committee is approved by the Department Meeting and consists of three or four full-time faculty members of the Department and a graduate student representative. (Occasionally a member of another department may be invited to serve). The Search Committee reviews the applicants for a tenured or tenure stream position in the Department and selects the candidates to be invited for a campus visit. The Search Committee reviews applicants using criteria established by the Department's planning process and confirmed by the Department Meeting.

E. The Sequence of Events in Promotion Decisions

In order to illustrate how the Departmental procedures work, a brief description of the sequence of events in decisions concerning promotion to the rank of associate professor and conferral of tenure is provided. It should be understood that this is offered for illustrative purposes only. An assistant professor must be considered for promotion and tenure during his/her sixth year of service in the tenure stream of the University unless an extension of the tenure clock has been granted owing to family, medical or research leaves. However, the procedure may be initiated prior to that time by the Department Chair or by formal application by the individual. Promotion proceedings can only be undertaken prior to the time at which they become mandatory according to University rules with the consent of the individual concerned.

As a first step, the Department Chair consults with the candidate about the tenure case and composition of the Special Review Committee, typically in the spring of the candidate's fifth year of service. At that meeting, the Chair will review with the candidate the decision process, both in and beyond the department. Next, the Department Meeting approves a Special Review Committee, which writes a report to the Department early in the fall of the candidate's sixth year. In the spring of the fifth year, before the report is written, the candidate puts together a dossier consisting of CV, statement on research, and associated materials to be sent to external reviewers, who are solicited after the research dossier is complete. Teaching and service statements and materials, which are not sent to external reviewers, must be added to the dossier by early fall. The candidate is asked to provide names of potential external referees, which the SRC may use along with others generated by the SRC. The candidate may request that certain scholars not be used as external referees. It is the decision of the SRC whether to use names suggested by the candidate or to not use names to which the candidate has objected. In deciding on external reviewers the SRC will follow appropriate Dietrich School procedures. The identity of those from whom the SRC solicits letters are confidential.

The SRC report is given to the appropriate subset of full-time faculty members, who also have access to the external letters and dossier, and this group meets in a Department Meeting to decide the case in the fall of the sixth year. The Department Meeting can accept the report or ask that the report be rewritten to reflect the views of the Department Meeting. Following discussion of the report, a formal vote of the rank-above faculty is taken by individual ballot. Individual votes are not made known to the faculty, but they are conveyed to the dean of arts and sciences.

Subsequent procedures in the University are described in the Faculty Handbook found on the Provost's website (https://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty-handbook/ch2_app_promotion).

F. Contracts and Time Tables

The duration of the contract for junior faculty varies within the framework set by the Provost of the University, and the rules of Arts and Sciences. As a rule, the Department requires the completion of the Ph.D. or the equivalent for any appointment. In exceptional cases a candidate for the

Ph.D. at another university may be appointed as instructor with the understanding of automatic promotion to the rank of assistant professor following the receipt of the doctorate. While special terms may be negotiated in individual contracts, it is the Department's policy that persons entering as instructors would be appointed to a period of such duration that the combined time in the ranks of instructor and assistant professor would equal the normal first assistant professor contract, i.e., three years. Instructors are encouraged to complete their dissertations as speedily as possible. Contract terms in that rank are for one year only. Reappointment to a second year as instructor is normally the responsibility of the Department Chair in consultation with the Department Meeting without intensive review of the candidate. However, a second such reappointment, i.e., for a third year as instructor (which would mean failure to complete the doctorate for more than two years) can only be recommended in exceptional circumstances.

Given an initial three-year appointment, the decisions bearing on the junior faculty member's status and the various possible outcomes are as follows:

(1) There is a required routine annual review of non-tenured full-time faculty. This is conducted by the Chair and other tenured members at a collective mentoring session of the Department Meeting. During this discussion, rank-above faculty discuss the junior faculty member's progress in research and teaching and provide advice, which the chair later conveys to the junior faculty member in a meeting. The chair provides a written evaluation in the annual review letter.

(2) In the third year, there is a more comprehensive review with the two possible outcomes of non-renewal of the contract and renewal for an additional three years. As indicated above, an internal Special Review Committee prepares a report and makes a recommendation. The Department Meeting makes the final decision. In the event of a negative decision, the faculty member has a fourth terminal year in the Department.

(3) In the sixth year, the tenure decision is made, using the procedures described earlier. In the event of a negative decision, the faculty member has a seventh terminal year in the Department.

(4) In cases of leaves, the tenure clock will be adjusted (or not) according to university policy. The granting of a leave is a matter of Departmental recommendation to the Dean.

G. Procedures for Recommending the Appointment of a Chair

1.
 - (a) All full-time faculty holding primary appointments in Sociology are eligible to vote.
 - (b) The term of office of the Chair is three years. Subsequent re-election is permitted. The current Chair and all prior Chairs are excluded from the ballot unless they explicitly indicate a desire to be on the ballot.
2. The selection of a Department Chair will involve these steps:
 - (a) All full professors who do not have wider University administrative responsibilities are automatically on the ballot for the Chair election (subject to the conditions outlined in item 1b).
 - (b) In the fall semester of the Chair's last year of a 3-year term there will be a dedicated Department Meeting for the election of the Chair. The selection process will be facilitated by the current Chair, if not on the ballot, or by another full professor not on the ballot. Prior to the meeting, the facilitator will collect confidential communications from faculty, staff and graduate students. The facilitator will report on these communications at the meeting after the candidates for chair leave the meeting (see c below) in a way that keeps authors anonymous. Staff and graduate students, as well as faculty, may also express views at the meeting if they so choose. Participants in the meeting must agree to strict confidentiality as

- a meeting rule. Faculty on the ballot may, if they choose, release statements in advance of the meeting about their willingness to serve as chair and their goals if elected.
- (c) The chairship meeting will include tenured and tenure-stream faculty, non-tenure stream lecturers, a representative of the graduate students, and a representative of the staff. Those on the ballot will be invited to discuss chairship questions with the meeting, and all candidates will be present for the questioning of other candidates and may participate in the questioning of other candidates. Following the conversation with the candidates, they will leave the room and the meeting will continue with additional discussion.
 - (d) Following the meeting, a vote will then be carried out by secret ballot. Only lecturers and full-time tenured and tenure stream faculty will vote.
 - (e) The candidate with the most votes will be recommended to the Dean of Arts and Sciences. In the event of two or more people being tied, a new ballot will be constructed for a runoff secret ballot. This can be iterated until a Chair is selected.
 - (f) The election results will be reported to the Dean in the form of the precise vote.

H. Procedures for Approval of New Courses

1. Undergraduate Courses. A committee consisting of the current Chair, current Director of Undergraduate Studies, and most recent available former Chair will review all proposals for new undergraduate courses in Sociology. (Approval for a course to fulfill an Arts & Sciences General Education Requirement must be submitted through Arts & Sciences Undergraduate Council.) The department committee reviews proposals, either by email communication or in meetings scheduled by the Chair as needed. Proposals for new courses should indicate the intended audience for the course (primarily freshmen and sophomores or juniors and seniors; majors or non-majors); the general content, purposes, and methods of this course; and specific course prerequisites. Proposals should also contain a proposed syllabus. In its review, the committee will consider the extent to which the course reflects state-of-the-art sociological scholarship and pedagogical approaches as well as how the course fits into the department's curriculum and complements current departmental offerings. The committee can accept a course proposal; ask for revisions and a resubmission; or reject the proposal.
2. Graduate Courses. The Graduate Committee reviews all proposals for new graduate courses in Sociology. Proposals need only contain a course title and course description, although including a proposed syllabus is encouraged. The Graduate Committee can accept a course proposal; ask for revisions and a resubmission; or reject the proposal.

II. Standards and Criteria

The Department of Sociology functions within the policy framework of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences. Its members are advised to study the university regulations on criteria and procedures for appointment, reappointment, promotion, and conferral of tenure found in the Faculty Handbook. For TTS faculty, departmental criteria and standards are elaborated in the department's Criteria for Tenure and Promotion (available in Faculty Handbook). Lecturers should consult the Faculty Handbook found on the provost's website for university policies.