Bylaws of the Africana Studies Department
University of Pittsburgh

I. Preamble

Departmental governance is most effective when procedures are clearly defined and open to full participation by all as spelled out in its governing instrument – its bylaws. Faculty members at The Department of Africana Studies unanimously adopt the following bylaws on January 10, 2006. Language used in this document is derived either wholly or in part from documents of various departments in the School of Arts and Sciences and are hereby acknowledged. The bylaws of the University of Pittsburgh and the School of Arts and Sciences supersede the departmental bylaws.

A. Conduct of Departmental Business

Frequency of Faculty meetings

(i). The Department shall meet once a month on a date agreed upon by the faculty with an agenda, and meetings shall be open, unless on matters involving reappointments, promotion and tenure restricted to tenured faculty members. Any member of the Department shall be able, upon request to the Chair, to have an item placed on the agenda. The Chairperson of the Department chairs all departmental meetings, unless otherwise designated by the Chair.

(ii) Emergency meetings other than the regular faculty monthly meeting, and others deemed to be necessary and important for the smooth administration of the department as it works towards the achievement of its goals could be called as warranted.

Minutes

(i) Minutes are required to be taken at all departmental meetings, read, modified as necessary during the meeting that immediately follows the session recorded, and adopted with or without corrections.

Quorum

(i). On major policy issues, a quorum represents two-thirds of the faculty. On other issues, a simple majority represents a quorum. Major policy issues are those pertaining to general departmental policy, proposed amendments to the bylaws, curricular, administrative, and procedural matters.
B. Voting membership

(i). The voting membership of the Department comprises the following: All tenured or tenure-stream full-time faculty members with a primary appointment in the Department; each shall have one vote. Under extraordinary circumstances absentee ballots may be granted, upon petition to the Chair and approval of the faculty as a whole.

(ii). Voting in the selection of Departmental Chair shall be by secret ballot. In other matters, voting shall be by voice or by show of hands, unless a secret ballot is requested by a voting member, in which case the request shall be honored.

C. Departmental Planning and Budgetary issues

The Planning and Budgetary Committee (PBC)

(i). The Planning and Budget Committee comprises two elected officers representing faculty and students respectively, the Chair, and the Administrative Assistant, representing the support staff. Issues pertaining to planning and budgetary matters of the Department are discussed at PBC meetings. Reports from the PBC are presented to the voting membership of the faculty for their deliberation and subsequent approval.

(ii). The Chair is responsible for daily planning, but consults with the PBC on matters of general departmental policy.

(iii). The Chair is responsible for daily budgetary decisions, but consults with the PBC on matters of budgetary policy.

D. Standing Committees

(i). Given the size of the faculty, there is only one Standing Committee namely: The Planning and Budget Committee. As and when the department expands, standing committees on the curriculum, undergraduate studies etc. may be constituted. These committees will be elected by voting members of the faculty.

E. Ad hoc Committees

(i). Ad hoc committees will be formed to deal with special events such as Film Series, the Annual Conference, internships and lecture series. Additionally, if deliberations on an item(s) on the agenda of a departmental meeting require an in-depth investigation the Chair may appoint or ask for volunteers to constitute an ad hoc committee to carry out the investigation and present a written report to the full membership during a general monthly faculty meeting or emergency meeting called by the Chair. Deliberations of the ad hoc committees will be open to faculty interested in making an input.
F. Officers of the Department

Given the size of the faculty, the bylaws mention only the positions of the Chair and the Major Adviser, until such time that the department expands, to incorporate other “officers,” or when deemed necessary by the Chair with the consent of the faculty to appoint or designate a faculty member to serve in a given position such as Director/Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies, etc.

The Chair

(i) External candidates for the Chair’s position are identified following the announcement/advertisement for the position, review of applications for the position by a Search Committee, and deliberations by the faculty on the recommendation of nominees by the Search Committee. Voting on the selection of the nominees for the Chair’s position, subject to the approval of the Dean, shall be by secret ballot and the outcome reported to members of the Department and to the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. For internal candidates, only tenured faculty members are eligible to serve and vote. Eligible candidates can be nominated by faculty or by themselves. Voting will be by secret ballot and a simple majority decision will carry. The serving Chair make the recommendation to the Dean.

(ii). The Chair has overall fiduciary responsibility for the Department. The authority of the Chair derives from the faculty, but the Chair is also the representative of the Board of Trustees as indicated by Dean Rosenberg's Interpretative Note in the University Bylaws. The Chair is thus the chief executive officer of the Department and is responsible for implementing the Dean's directives. He or she shall be responsible for the administration of the Department and shall represent the Department to the administration and the University at large in hiring and in other negotiations, and with student complaints. He or she shall exercise jurisdiction over the expenditure of Department funds, subject to advice from the PBC. The Chair shall supervise the administrative staff on day-to-day matters.

(iii). The Chair shall serve a term of three to five years, renewable by mutual agreement of the Department, the Dean, and the Chair himself or herself.

Major Adviser

(i). The major adviser, appointed by the Chair, provides academic advice to undergraduate students of the Department. He/she ascertains that students are properly enrolled for courses. The Adviser also ensures that undergraduate students fulfill all university requirements necessary for graduation. He/she has overall responsibility in the area of student advisement. S/he works in consultation with the chair, in implementing all aspects pertaining to the
curriculum and requirements. The faculty as a whole deliberates on the nature and quality of the curriculum.

(ii). Other officers of the Department shall be appointed by the Chair, with the advice and consent of the full Department, and each shall serve as long as is agreeable to the Department, the Chair, and the officer.

G. Faculty Processes and Actions

(i). Faculty processes and actions fall within applicable University and Arts and Sciences policies.

H. Amendments

(i). Any voting member or group may propose amendments. Copies indicating the proposed change shall be distributed to all Department members, and the meeting where the changes are to be discussed will be announced at least two weeks in advance. To pass, an amendment must be approved by a quorum –2/3 of the faculty – in the Department.