Bylaws of the Department of Neuroscience
(April 19, 2010)

The Bylaws of the Department of Neuroscience are meant to describe the operating principles of the department. These bylaws fit within the broader bylaws and regulations of the School of Arts and Sciences and the University of Pittsburgh.

Department Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of the Department of Neuroscience are:

First, to promote outstanding programs of research and scholarship in Neuroscience.

Second, to provide outstanding instruction and training in Neuroscience to students at the undergraduate, graduate, and post-doctoral levels. Undergraduate students require a general education in science that will enable them to think logically and critically, and encourage them to seek understanding, regardless of their ultimate career goals. Graduate students and post-doctoral trainees require training that will enable them to become successful, independent scientific investigators or help the prepare for other careers making use of their expertise in neuroscience.

Finally, as citizens of the University of Pittsburgh we appreciate our responsibility to provide service within the larger University community and the still larger public community on matters that concern the function of the nervous system, including mental health and neurological diseases as well as more general matters of education in science.

It is the responsibility of the faculty of the Department to insure that the Department works towards fulfilling these goals and objectives.
Faculty

The faculty members of the Department of Neuroscience are made up of the Tenured and Tenure Stream (T/TS) faculty with primary appointments in the department, faculty with appointments in the Research Track, faculty with secondary or adjunct appointments, and faculty who serve a part-time undergraduate teaching role. While the T/TS faculty with primary appointments forms the core of the department, the other faculty members are essential components as well.

Faculty in the Tenure Stream

When a tenure stream faculty position is available in the department, it is the responsibility of the faculty to recruit an appropriate individual to fill that opening. Initially, the faculty will meet to discuss the research areas that might be addressed by a new hire. Once the area of the new hire is determined, a search committee and a chair of that committee will be appointed by the Department Chair. It is the responsibility of the search committee to appropriately advertise the position, screen applications, and present the top candidates to the faculty. (Still, any faculty member is invited to review applications and to comment.) The faculty will then select the individuals to be brought onto campus for interview. It is the Department Chair’s responsibility to convey this information to the Dean and to receive permission for the interviews. Ultimately, all interviewed candidates will be fully discussed at a well-advertised faculty meeting. After thorough discussion of the candidates, a closed-ballot vote will be used to select the top candidate. In the case of 3 or more candidates there will be a run-off vote of the top two candidates. At least 75% must vote in favor of a candidate for the process to move forward.

The procedures for recruiting faculty are well developed in the School of Arts and Sciences, and it is the responsibility of the Chair of the Department to insure that all relevant rules and regulations are followed during the recruitment process.

Faculty with appointments in the Research Track

Hiring a faculty member in the Research Track can be considered whenever sufficient grant funds exist to support such a position. When a potential position is identified by the T/TS faculty, a request is made to the Dean to create such a position and initiate a national search for a suitable candidate. Once permission to hire a faculty member in the Research Track is granted, the search committee will provide a suitable advertisement for national distribution. After review of the applications by the search committee, the search committee will make a recommendation to the full faculty. The candidate’s CV and letters of support are circulated to the faculty and then the candidate is discussed at a full faculty meeting. Following this discussion, there is a closed ballot vote, and the candidate must receive at least two thirds of the votes in order for the department to request permission from the Dean to hire this individual. Either prior to moving into this position, or shortly thereafter, the candidate is required to present a seminar to the department and to meet with any members of the faculty.
requesting such a meeting. (The purpose of the seminar and the meetings with the faculty is to familiarize the candidate with the department and to help integrate them into the research community.)

Faculty in the Research Track will typically have no responsibilities other than their research, and this research will typically be tied to the research of one or more T/TS faculty. Furthermore, the department will provide no lab space other than that provided by the primary T/TS with whom the Research Faculty member is working. Such faculty will not be invited to faculty meetings and cannot serve as the primary faculty mentor of a graduate student.

In the event that a Research Faculty member becomes more involved in departmental matters, the department may choose to provide them with independent laboratory space including limited start-up funds from the departmental budget, allow them to supervise graduate students, and invite them to attend faculty meetings. The transition to a more ‘departmental’ Research Faculty requires full discussion at a faculty meeting and approval of at least 75% of the faculty. The candidate must present a research seminar prior to the faculty meeting to discuss the promotion. Negotiation of space, salary, and start-up package is the responsibility of the department chair in consultation with the executive committee.

**Faculty members with Secondary or Adjunct appointments**

The department will aim to maintain an active faculty of approximately 25 members by the judicious use of secondary and adjunct appointments. Faculty members from other departments at Pitt or CMU can be nominated for such an appointment, typically the result of on-going or developing collaboration with members of the department. Faculty members with secondary or adjunct appointments are expected to expand the expertise of the department and maintain a critical mass in key research areas. Once nominated, the candidate must present a seminar to the department and meet with department faculty members. The candidate’s CV is distributed to the department faculty and the candidate is then discussed at a faculty meeting. Following this discussion there is a closed ballot vote and at least two thirds of the faculty must approve the position in order for the department to proceed with requesting it from the Dean. These positions are for three-year terms and can be renewed by mutual consent pending approval of the Dean.

Faculty with secondary or adjunct positions in the department are expected to attend faculty meetings, contribute to departmental activities, and participate in graduate education. While undergraduate teaching is not required of faculty with secondary or adjunct appointments, they are encouraged to contribute to the undergraduate teaching mission of the department.

At faculty meetings, faculty members with secondary or adjunct positions are considered full voting members of the faculty. While it is understood that votes forwarded to the Dean’s office pertaining to hiring and tenure decisions will need to be separated to make it clear how the faculty with primary appointments votes, within the department this distinction is not considered.
Faculty who serve a part-time undergraduate teaching role

Occasionally, part-time instructors need to be hired to cover the undergraduate teaching responsibilities of the department. This is the responsibility of the Chair, in consultation with the executive committee.
Departmental Governance

The Department is governed by the faculty, and all decisions regarding departmental policy are made by the faculty at faculty meetings. The day to day running of the department is the responsibility of the Chair, but all substantive administrative or procedural issues must involve the full faculty.

Chair

The Chair is the Chief Executive Officer of the department. The Chair is responsible for the administration of departmental business. Included in the many responsibilities of the chair are: insuring the smooth day-to-day operation of the department and department programs, representing the department to the administration on issues of hiring and promotions, representing the needs of the department and individual faculty to the dean and university administration, representing the Dean and university administration to the department, preparing the department’s annual report, conducting annual evaluations of the faculty and staff that are formally communicated via letters to each individual and the Dean, making decisions regarding allocation of space and resources, making decisions regarding teaching assignments, making decisions regarding faculty sabbaticals and leaves, determining departmental staffing needs and overseeing the hiring and work distribution of departmental staff, overseeing the departmental budget and making annual salary decisions, dealing with problems that may arise concerning the management of research funds or involving departmental personnel or courses, and scheduling and running faculty meetings.

The departmental process for recommending to the Dean the appointment of Chair is described in Appendix A.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee exists to assist the Chair with difficult departmental issues. The Executive Committee consists of the Director of Undergraduate Studies (appointed by the Chair), Director of the Graduate Program (appointed by the Chair), the Head of the Common Facilities Committee (appointed by the Chair), and a member of the primary tenured faculty elected by the department each time a Department Chair is appointed and serving for the duration of that Department Chair term. The immediate past department chair also serves as an ex officio member of this committee. Meetings between the Chair and Executive Committee can be called by either the Chair or Executive Committee whenever an issue requiring such a meeting dictates.

Faculty meetings

Faculty meetings will occur at least twice each academic term, but more typically they will occur on a monthly basis during the academic year. (During faculty
recruitments they will occur more frequently.) The Chair is responsible for scheduling faculty meetings, developing the agenda for these meetings, and presiding at the meetings. While an effort will be made to reach consensus on important issues, many issues require votes; T/TS faculty with primary, secondary, or adjunct appointments are voting members of the department, as are Research Faculty who have been granted voting status by the faculty. For most issues, voting is done by a show of hands, and a simple majority of the votes cast will determine the outcome.

Standing committees

Budget and Space: This committee will consist of the Chair of the Department (who Chairs this committee), the faculty member chairing the Common Facilities Committee, the department’s senior administrator, a staff member elected by the staff, and two graduate students elected by the graduate students working with faculty of the department. This committee will meet at least once annually to review budget and space allocations and decisions. This committee is advisory to the chair regarding decisions on space and budgetary issues.

Common Facilities: This committee will oversee the common facilities of the department and make recommendations to the Chair regarding additional common facility needs and purchases. The Chair of this committee will be appointed by the Chair of the Department for three-year renewable terms. The committee will consist of at least two other members of the faculty, appointed by the Chair of the Department in consultation with the committee chair. Common facilities of the department include computer facility, machine and electronics shops, microscopy facility, histology facility, dark room, and audio-visual equipment. Each common facility will have a faculty member appointed to oversee its use.

Undergraduate Program: The Director of Undergraduate Studies will be appointed by the Chair for three-year renewable terms. This faculty member will be responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the undergraduate program and the supervision of the Undergraduate Advisor. The Director of Undergraduate Studies oversees the Bradler Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Research and the Neuroscience Research Excellence Award. The Director is also responsible for organizing the departmental breakfast associated with spring graduation. Along with the Department Chair, the Director of Undergraduate Studies is responsible for ongoing assessment of the undergraduate program. The Director of Undergraduate Studies will be assisted by an Undergraduate Curriculum Committee consisting of the following members: two additional faculty members appointed by the Chair in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies (and one of these two faculty members may be the Department Chair), and the Undergraduate Advisor (ex officio). On at least an annual basis, this committee will review the undergraduate program in the department and present this review to the faculty, including any suggested changes, at a full faculty meeting (typically in April).
Faculty members interested in teaching new undergraduate courses will submit proposals to the Director of Undergraduate Studies any time during the year. The proposals should consist of a course description, a syllabus, the targeted enrollment, and a rationale explaining how the new course meets the long term pedagogical needs of the department. The construction of the syllabus should begin with the model proposed by the School of Arts & Sciences on their Teaching website. Proposals should demonstrate that they advance the instructional needs of the department, adhere to rigorous academic standards, have clear grading standards and policies, and have a focus different from that of existing courses. The Director of Undergraduate Studies, in conjunction with the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, will review proposals, requesting additional information and offering suggestions for improvement as needed. The revised course proposal will then be brought to the full faculty at its next scheduled meeting for course approval. The Arts & Science Undergraduate Council will then be notified of the new course. Any courses that are intended to satisfy the General Educational Requirements of the University, including the Writing requirements, will require final approval by the Council.

Graduate Program: The Director of the Graduate Program will be appointed by the Chair (in consultation with the Co-Director of the CNUP) for three-year renewable terms. This faculty member will be responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the graduate program and the supervision of the graduate program administrator. As the Departmental doctoral program operates in conjunction with the Center for Neuroscience, this individual will also be Co-Director of the CNUP Graduate Program. As such, this faculty member will work with the other Co-Director of the CNUP program in administering the doctoral program but will also have responsibility for oversight of the departmental Masters Degree program. Annual evaluations of the students in the Masters program will be conducted by the Director along with the departmental Graduate Advising and Evaluation Committee. This committee will consist of three faculty appointed by the Chair in consultation with the Director of the Graduate Program. (These committee members will also serve on the CNUP Graduate Advising and Evaluation Committee.)

Admission into the graduate program is overseen by the Graduate Admissions Committee. The Chair of the Admissions committee (appointed by the Department Chair in consultation with the Co-Director of the CNUP for a 3-year term) also serves as Co-chair of the CNUP admissions committee, which is responsible for handling applications for the doctoral program. The departmental admissions process relates solely to the Master’s Degree Program. The Chair is assisted by a committee of three faculty appointed by the Chair of the Department in consultation with the Chair of the Admissions Committee. This committee reviews applications to the Masters Program and presents recommendations to the faculty. Decisions are then made by the faculty at a faculty meeting.

Decisions Regarding Faculty and Staff

Annual Salary Increases: The Chair of the Department is responsible for recommending annual raises for faculty and staff to the Dean. While the Chair is
encouraged to discuss the process with the Executive Committee and to make it clear what criteria are used, the decisions regarding salary increase recommendations are the sole discretion of the Chair.

**Sabbaticals and Leaves:** Requests for sabbaticals and leaves should be made in writing to the Chair. While requests for leaves can be made at any time, requests for sabbaticals must be made by October 1 for the next academic year. It is then the responsibility of the Chair to decide what recommendations to make to the Dean.

**Promotions:** The promotion process is well described by the School of Arts and Sciences. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair to insure that the department adheres to all relevant rules, regulations, and timelines.

The decision of when an Associate Professor might be ready to be considered for promotion to full Professor is made by the Full Professors in the department. Each August, the Department Chair will schedule a meeting of the Full Professors to discuss the progress of the Associate Professors. At this meeting it will be decided if any Associate Professor has progressed to the point of being ready to be considered for promotion. If it is determined that an Associate Professor should be considered for promotion, the process will be initiated by the Chair discussing the process with the candidate. For every Associate Professor who has been at that rank for at least 8 years but is not being considered for promotion, the Full Professors will discuss what will be communicated to that faculty member as to what they might do to improve their credentials for the following year.

**Amendments and Changes to the Bylaws**

The Bylaws described in this document may be changed at any time by a majority vote of the T/TS faculty with primary appointments.
APPENDIX A

Guidelines for Selecting a Chairperson of the Department of Neuroscience
(approved by the faculty, February 2001)

This document outlines the process by which the faculty of the Department of Neuroscience selects a candidate for departmental chairperson to recommend to the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

One year prior to the end of the existing Chairperson’s appointment, the department faculty (tenured, tenure stream, and primary non-tenure stream) will begin the process of identifying candidates for the position. This process may be started earlier at the request of the chairperson or the Dean.

Initial Faculty Meeting

The Executive Committee will oversee the process of selecting a candidate for Chair. The Executive Committee will select one of its members to be in charge of this process. This individual will call a faculty meeting. This faculty meeting will have two purposes. First, these guidelines for selecting a chair will be discussed, to remind all faculty of the process that is about to start. Second, the faculty meeting will be used to discuss issues that face the department that might have an impact on the selection of the chair. At this meeting, the current chairperson will briefly summarize his/her impressions of the issues facing the department. Additional faculty meetings to continue discussions of these issues will be scheduled as needed.

The department can recommend one of three options to the Dean: reappoint the existing chair, appoint an internal candidate, or initiate a search for an external candidate. These options should be discussed at the initial faculty meeting. The expectation in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is that the chair will be appointed from the current tenured faculty. A recommendation for an external search should be made to the Dean only if the other two options are not viable.

Nominations

Following this initial meeting, the faculty member chairing the selection process will notify all tenured or tenure stream faculty with primary appointments, in writing, that nominations for chair are being accepted. This notification should include the dates during which nominations are accepted, typically one week. Nominations are to be made, in writing, to the faculty member chairing the selection process. The faculty may wish to discuss their intentions with the person(s) they wish to nominate. Each tenured or tenure stream faculty with a primary appointment may nominate one or two members of the tenured faculty. The current chair may be nominated for reappointment, and tenured faculty members may nominate themselves. In the event that the faculty member chairing the selection process is nominated, and he/she is willing to accept the nomination, then
he/she must notify the Executive Committee immediately and another Executive Committee member will be selected to chair the selection process.

As faculty members are nominated, the faculty member chairing the selection process will immediately notify them and ask whether they are willing to be candidates. At the end of the nomination period, the faculty member chairing the selection process will notify the entire departmental faculty of the list of nominees who have agreed to be considered.

**Faculty Meeting to Discuss the Candidates**

A faculty meeting will be called to discuss the candidates. Faculty with primary and secondary appointments will be invited to this meeting. At the beginning of the meeting tenured and tenure-stream faculty with primary appointments will have an opportunity to nominate additional candidates. The candidates will be present at the beginning of this meeting to answer any questions that the faculty may have for them. The faculty member chairing the selection process will chair this meeting. If faculty members would like to ask questions anonymously, they can provide the chair of the selection process with the questions. The candidates will also be allowed to provide brief statements regarding their candidacy. After this initial question and answer period, the candidates will leave the meeting and the faculty will discuss the candidates. The faculty may choose to invite back the candidates for additional questions.

**Voting**

Approximately one week following the faculty meeting at which the candidates are discussed, there will be another faculty meeting to vote on the candidates. Although faculty with secondary appointments or primary appointments not in the tenure stream may attend and participate in the discussion, only faculty with primary tenured or tenure stream appointments may vote. This meeting will begin with additional discussion of the candidates, if necessary. At the end of the discussion, the chair of the selection process will call the vote. The vote is closed ballot, with each tenured or tenure stream faculty with a primary appointment casting one vote. The ballots are coded so the Dean can determine how individual faculty members voted. The chair of the selection process will immediately count the votes and state the outcome, though the actual vote counts will remain secret. In the event that there are more than two candidates and none receive a majority of the votes cast, there will be a run-off between the top two candidates. The candidate receiving the majority of the votes cast will be recommended to the Dean for appointment as chairperson.

Once one candidate has received a majority of the votes, a second vote will be taken in which the question is simply: Is this candidate for chair acceptable to you, yes or no? In the event that there is only a single candidate, this is the only vote that will occur. The numerical results of this second vote will be made known to the faculty as well as to the Dean.
In the event that there is a tie in the voting, with two candidates receiving 50% of
the votes cast, there will be a separate vote asking if each candidate is acceptable. If so,
then both candidates will be recommended to the Dean.

The Chair of the Selection Process will notify the Dean of the outcome of this
process. All ballots will be forwarded to the Dean. Any faculty member may include with
this material a confidential letter to the Dean regarding selection of a Chairperson of the
Department.