

**BY-LAWS of the DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE
LITERATURE
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY**

ARTICLE I. NAME AND PURPOSE

The name of the Department shall be the Department of English and Comparative Literature. Department governance shall be determined by the articles enumerated in this document. Policy issues, which shall emerge out of the governance practices delineated by this document, will be recorded, and updated, within the Department of English and Comparative Literature Policy Handbook. Departmental policies shall be determined by the Faculty, as defined in Article II, Section 1, whose voting rights are defined in Article VI, Section 1..

ARTICLE II. COMPOSITION OF AND RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT FACULTY

Section 1. Composition of the Department Faculty

The Department of English and Comparative Literature is comprised of tenure-line faculty and temporary lecturers.

Section 2. Rights and Responsibilities of the Department Faculty

Department faculty of the English and Comparative Literature are expected to teach their classes well, stay current in their fields of study, and when they receive compensation for service, to participate in the life of the department through serving on committees, attending appropriate committee meetings, and attending department meetings. Temporary lecturer faculty are not required to attend department meetings, but are welcome to attend.

ARTICLE III. DEPARTMENT ADMINISTRATION: CHAIR

Sec. 1. The Department Chair

- A. The Department shall have a Chair who will have the ultimate responsibility for the functioning of the Department in the total structure of the University.
- B. The University's ["Selection and Review of Department Chairs and Directors"](#) dictates all appointment, election, and other relevant procedures regarding department chairs. The policy is posted on the Academic Senate website.

Sec. 2. Department Chair Duties and Responsibilities

The duties of the Department Chair are delineated in the College of Humanities and Arts Chair's Responsibility Document.

ARTICLE IV. DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES

Sec. 1. Departmental Committees

- A. The department has seven standing committees: (1) Policy; (2) Recruitment; (3) Retention, Tenure, & Promotion (RTP); (4) Curriculum; (5) Composition; (6) Graduate; and (7) MFA Committee.
- B. Elections for all committees will take place during the fall semester, governed by the policies in Article VI.
- C. Minutes shall be taken at all meetings either by the Chair of the committee or by the Chair's designee.
- D. Minutes from all committees shall be made available to all members of the faculty through electronic distribution of minutes normally within two (2) weeks but no later than four (4) weeks of the meeting. The only exception to this is in cases of confidential actions (e.g., confidential personnel issues or grade appeals). Electronic copies of non-confidential minutes shall be kept on file through the departmental office.
- E. Significant changes proposed by the Policy Committee will be placed on the agenda for the next department meeting. Any significant changes proposed by any other committees [e.g. a curricular redesign of major; proposal of new program or certificate] will be referred to the Policy Committee. If the Policy Committee endorses these changes, these significant changes will be placed on the agenda for the next department meeting.

Sec. 2. Policy Committee

- A. Objectives and Goals
 - i. Advising Chair regarding budget allocations, including department resource allocation, intellectual events planning, and program development;
 - ii. Setting goals and identifying priorities of the department; and working to create and implement plans of action to help the department meet those goals;

- iii. Evaluating and suggesting revisions to Department policy, including by-laws or suggested amendments to constitution, brought to the Policy Committee's attention either via regular faculty meetings or individual requests. Suggestions for changes or a reconsideration of Department policy can be brought to the policy committee by any member of the Department. A referendum on any policy or procedure may be called by submission to the Policy Advisory Committee of a petition with the signatures of at least 25% of the Department.

B. Membership and Terms of Office

The Policy Committee shall consist of 7 (seven) faculty members, including the Department Chair.

- i. The Department Chair
- ii. The Department's Associate Chair.
- iii. Two full professors elected by the tenure-line faculty.
- iv. Two other members elected by the tenure-line faculty.
- v. One member of the lecturer staff, to be voted on by lecturers. Each lecturer will vote according to his/her entitlement. Lecturers must have taught in the department for at least one year to be placed on the ballot. This position will be a voluntary one; if no lecturer is willing to serve in this position, it will remain vacant.
- vi. The term of office on the Policy Committee shall be two years, except for the Department Chair and Associate Chair, who will serve for the length of their term. Elected committee members will have staggered terms.

C. Procedure:

- i. The Department Chair chairs the policy committee.
- ii. All members of the committee have an equal vote; the department chair does not vote within the policy committee.
- iii. Although the Chair is not bound by the decisions of this committee, in instances when the Chair contravenes the majority opinion or recommendation of the committee, he or she must explain in writing the reasons for this action.
- iv. The Policy Committee shall meet as needed each semester.

Sec. 3 Recruitment Committee

A. Objectives and Goals

Will tend to the hiring needs of the department (as voted on by the tenure-line members of the department and as approved and funded by the dean and provost of the university. The committee will draft position descriptions, establish criteria, review applications, and recommend hiring of candidates.

B. Membership and Terms of Office

- i. Four tenure-line faculty, at least two of whom must be full professors. These four faculty members will be voted on by the tenure-line faculty. A probationary faculty member can serve on the Recruitment committee with permission from the Dean and the Associate Vice President of Faculty Services. A faculty member participating in the FERP program can participate on a Recruitment committee if a) the majority of faculty members are not FERP participants and b) permission has been received from the Dean and the Associate Vice President of Faculty Services.
- ii. In addition to the four elected members, the Department Chair shall serve as a voting member on the committee and will not make a separate recommendation on recruitment decisions.
- iii. The committee will elect the chair of the committee at their first meeting; the Department chair is eligible to chair the recruitment committee.
- iv. Term is two years and can be renewed if elected by one's peers

C. Procedure

- i. The Department Chair will lead a discussion at a Department Meeting near the end of each Spring term to discuss recruitment needs and conduct a vote on the department's priorities.
- ii. Following a review of applications and phone or video interviews, the entire Recruitment committee shall meet to select at least three candidates for on-campus interviews.
- iii. All committee reviews of applications and discussions of candidate qualifications are *strictly confidential*.
- iv. The committee will meet as necessary to complete the recruitment for the position(s); all committee members must attend all such meetings.

- v. The committee shall be guided by the University's required Search Committee Training for the appropriate year and documents laying out University policy for hiring of temporary faculty.

Sec. 4 Retention, Tenure, and Promotion Committee

A. Objectives and Goals

To review all temporary and tenure-line faculty in accordance with College and University guidelines, to write evaluations of temporary and tenure-line faculty, in accordance with contract regulations.

B. Membership and Terms of Office

- i. Five (5) tenured members of the tenure-line faculty, elected by the tenure-line faculty members. A faculty member participating in the FERP program can participate on the RTP committee if a) the majority of faculty members are not FERP participants and b) permission has been received from the Dean and the Associate Vice President of Faculty Services
- ii. The Department Chair only serves on the Department RTP committee if elected to the committee by the tenured and tenure-line faculty members.
- iii. Two year term, not renewable, except for the Department chair and the WPA (Writing Program Administrator) who may serve multiple terms if elected onto the committee. One year must elapse between terms for all other eligible faculty members.
- iv. No member may serve simultaneously on the department RTP Committee and on the RTP committee at the College or University level.
- v. Due to the large size of the department's lecturer faculty, we will elect one tenured professor to a spring-only appointment to help the 5-member team from the Fall to complete annual and cumulative evaluations of lecturer faculty.

C. Procedure

- i. All committee reviews of all faculty are *strictly confidential*.
- ii. No member may participate in his or her own review.
- iii. If elected to the RTP committee, the department chair will not have a separate recommendation on tenure, promotion, and renewal cases.
- iv. If not elected to the RTP committee, the department chair will have a separate recommendation on tenure, promotion, and renewal case.

- v. The department chair sets the RTP schedule. The RTP committee will meet as needed, but no less than one time in the fall to discuss range elevations for lecturer faculty as well as dossiers for probationary faculty or tenure-line faculty undergoing promotion, and once to three times in the spring to discuss temporary faculty annual and cumulative reviews as well as mini reviews for assistant professors. Full professor members of the committee will also review any Post-Tenure reviews each spring.

Sec. 5. Curriculum Committee

A. Objectives and Goals

- i. to review and develop Department curricula at the undergraduate level
- ii. to review assessment procedures within the undergraduate program
- iii. to make recommendations concerning course proposals and catalog copy.

B. Membership

- i. Curriculum and Assessment Coordinator, who will chair the committee
- ii. the Department Chair, or the chair's representative
- iii. Associate Chair
- iv. Representative from each of the following curricular concentrations in the department:
 - a. Literature (may also be filled by Curriculum Chair, Chair, or Associate Chair)
 - b. Creative Writing Director or designee
 - c. English Education Director or designee
 - d. Professional and Technical Writing Director or designee
 - e. Writing Program Administrator or designee
 - f. Undergraduate Advisor(s)
- v. Other members of the department who wish to attend
- vi. Term is one year, renewable.

C. Procedure

- i. The curriculum committee will meet as needed during the academic year.

Sec. 6. Composition Committee

A. Objectives and Goals

- i. to originate new composition course proposals or revisions of present catalog descriptions and carry such recommendations to the Curriculum Committee
- ii. to oversee the teaching and content of composition courses
- iii. to draft, revise, and clarify guidelines, and review composition syllabi for compliance with guidelines and catalog
- iv. to prepare and articulate policy on composition to the Department and the University.

B. Membership

- i. Writing Programs Administrator (WPA) serves as committee chair
- ii. Assistant Writing Programs Administrator
- iii. Department Chair, or the chair's representative.
- iv. Several faculty members appointed by the WPA in consultation with the Department chair.
- v. One member of the lecturer staff, to be voted on by lecturers. Each lecturer will vote according to his/her entitlement. Preference given to three-year entitled, and if no one wishes to serve, then those without three-year contracts are eligible.
- vi. Term is one year, renewable

C. Procedure

- i. The composition committee will meet as needed during the academic year.

Sec. 7. Graduate Committee

A. Objectives and Goals

- i. to recommend policies regarding all graduate programs
- ii. to recommend changes or additions to the graduate curriculum
- iii. to be a liaison to the College and University graduate committees and the Graduate Office
- iv. to consider student petitions
- v. to approve M.A. and M.F.A thesis proposals
- vi. to arrange for the creation and administration of M.A. examinations
- vii. To propose guidelines and review policy for the M.A. examinations.
- viii. to advise on M.A. admissions

B. Membership and Terms of Office

- i. Graduate Coordinator, who chairs the Graduate Committee
- ii. MFA Director
- iii. Department Chair, or chair's representative
- iv. 2 - 4 other faculty members, appointed by the Graduate Coordinator in consultation with the Department Chair. The proportion of students in the M.A. and M.F.A. programs will determine the composition of the entire committee.
- v. Term is one year, renewable

C. Procedure

- i. The graduate committee will meet as needed during the Academic Year. The review thesis proposals and exams will constitute a significant portion of the committee's workload.

Sec. 8 MFA Committee

A. Objectives and Goals

- i. to recommend changes or additions regarding the MFA creative writing program, policies, and curriculum,
- ii. to consider student petitions
- iii. to arrange for the creation and administration of M.F.A examinations;

B. Membership and Terms of Office

- i. Director of Creative Writing, who will chair the committee
- ii. Department Chair, or chair's designee
- iii. Representatives from each genre (fiction; nonfiction; poetry; scriptwriting); these positions may also be filled by the Director of Creative Writing or the Department Chair
- iv. Term is one year, renewable

C. Procedure

- i. The MFA committee will meet as needed during the Academic year..

Sec. 9. Limitations

- A. No faculty member, except for the department chair, will serve on more than three departmental committees. Except in extraordinary circumstances, no faculty member would serve, other than the chair, on both Recruitment and RTP. Faculty should limit themselves to no more than two additional committees outside of the department.
- B. A faculty member elected as a replacement for a member of an elected committee shall serve for the period of the replacement only and shall not serve beyond the remaining term of office of the person being replaced unless elected during the regular election cycle.

Sec. 10. Ad Hoc committees

- A. Ad Hoc committees may be appointed as necessary by the Department Chair in consultation with the Policy Committee and may be discontinued at the Chair's discretion. Operating committees shall serve special functions but they shall not establish Department policies, though they may recommend policies to the appropriate policy-developing committees.

ARTICLE V. DEPARTMENT MEETINGS

A. Objectives and Goals

The full department will review significant changes to policy, practice, or curriculum. Department meetings will also allow for communication of and conversation about smaller changes to policy or curriculum, as well as discussion of larger, long term goals of the department. No discussion

of RTP or Recruitment decisions will take place in department meetings, pursuant to University procedure and the CFA Collective Bargaining Agreement.

B. Membership

All members of the department are considered voting members at a department meeting. Tenure-line faculty have full votes. Faculty in the FERP program have a full vote in semester(s) they are teaching. Temporary faculty have proportional voting rights in a department equal to the amount of time they are serving in that department. (See Senate policy F02-4).

C. Procedure

- i. Regular meetings of the Department shall be called by the Chair, who will designate the time and place and will distribute an agenda one (1) week in advance of all meetings.
- ii. Department meetings shall be held at a minimum of two (2) times and more as needed during an academic year.
- iii. Special/Emergency department meetings may be called by the Policy Committee and/or the Department chair.
- iv. Votes of the full faculty will take place only when the issue at hand concerns the entire department and does not involve personnel issues.
- v. All full votes cast in a department meeting will be taken anonymously, though in votes of the full faculty lecturer faculty will be provided a mechanism to indicate their teaching percentage (.2; .6; 1.0) for the semester, which will be recorded on their ballots. Votes may need to be counted after the meeting, and if so, all results will be reported to the department within 48 hours.
- vi. Proxy votes will be accepted from eligible voting faculty members who have a demonstrated conflict (class conflict; hospitalization). Disputes over the acceptability of individual proxy votes will be referred to the Policy Committee.
- vii. Minutes or some other record (such as AI notes, power point, a video recording, etc.) of meetings will be made available to faculty within four weeks of a meeting. Electronic copies shall be kept on file through the departmental office.

ARTICLE VI. NOMINATIONS, ELECTIONS, AND VOTING

Sec. 1. Committee Elections and Voting Procedures

- A. The Associate Chair makes a calendar of necessary elections, devises and distributes the ballots, and publishes the results. All eligible faculty names will appear on the ballot for each elected committee.
- b. All votes, whether for committee members or in department meetings, shall be secret. Secret ballots shall be created that will allow no tracing of votes to an individual. Acceptable secret ballot mechanisms may include secure electronic voting or paper ballots; whatever mechanism is deployed, it must not allow for an individual's vote to be traced to that person.
- b. All committees shall be elected in the opening two weeks of the fall semester. All eligible faculty shall have the opportunity to vote within five days of the ballots being disseminated by the Associate Chair.
- c. Those faculty members receiving the highest number of votes will be elected to the open position or positions on departmental committees.
- d. The vote to elect members of personnel committees (RTP and Recruitment) shall be determined by a secret vote of the tenure-line faculty. Lecturers shall vote for representatives for committees on which they are eligible to serve; lecturers will vote according to their proportion of time they are teaching that semester (.4; .6;.8).
- e. In the case of a tie, a run-off election will be held to determine the winner.

ARTICLE VII. REMOVAL OF COMMITTEE MEMBER OR COMMITTEE CHAIR

- a. An elected committee member may be removed from a committee or from said position by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the faculty who elected the committee member.
- b. A request for such removal should be presented to the department chair, who will investigate the issue and, if the issue is deemed serious enough, will then bring the vote to the floor of a department meeting.

ARTICLE VIII. AMENDMENTS

Sec. 1. Amendment of the Constitution

- a. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds ($2/3$) vote of the Department. In these votes, a complete “count” of faculty will be attained by combining those who have full votes and those who have proportional votes. Once that number is obtained, $2/3$'s of the total vote must be to approve the amendment.

- b. A secret ballot vote shall be initiated within five (5) working days of the full department reading of the revised text.

Approved by the faculty on August 24, 2016

Revised by the faculty on Feb. 22, 2017

Revised by the faculty November, 2025.