

Department of Philosophy Bylaws

Preamble

The voting members of the Department of Philosophy are dedicated to contributing to the mission of George Mason University through service, teaching and scholarship. The Department shall operate in accord with the Faculty Handbook and with all equal opportunity policies of the University.

1. Membership and voting

1.1 The probationary and tenured faculty in Philosophy will govern the Department collectively.

1.1.1 Each member of the probationary and tenured faculty] will have one vote in departmental meetings, except in Renewal, Promotion and Tenure matters, where eligibility will be limited to tenured members of the faculty.

1.2 While every attempt will be made to reach consensus, decisions will be made by majority vote. In all cases, the principles of open and democratic forum shall prevail.

1.2.1 In the context of these procedures and principles, the Department recognizes the responsibility for independent judgement borne by the chair in accordance with the stipulations of section 2.13.1 in the Faculty Handbook.

2. Chair

2.1 The Chair of the Department shall be the principal administrator of the Department and the Department's principal representative in external matters.

2.1.1 As principal administrator, the Chair shall be responsible for administering Department business; for presiding over regular meetings during the academic year as well as over extraordinary meetings; preparing a budget; supervising the classified staff as well as the part-time faculty; coordinating the recruitment of both classified and teaching personnel in accordance with equal opportunity guidelines; referring business to committees within the Department and acting on the business either brought forward by those committees or approved by the Department; presiding over meetings and ensuring that the minutes are published in a timely manner.

2.1.2 As principal representative, the Chair shall be responsible for informing the Department of major issues and major pending business; informing the Department of University decisions related to Departmental interests; informing the administration of majority and minority views of the Department on specific issues as well as the Chair's own opinion; and

informing the Department of the reaction of the administration to departmental policies and decisions.

2.2 The Chair will evaluate all full-time faculty members every year in accordance with the criteria outlined both in section 2.4 of the Faculty Handbook and as determined in consultation with the Department.

2.2.1 The standing committee on salary will advise the chair on these evaluations.

2.3 The Chair will handle all student grievances.

2.3.1 If a student appeals a grade, the Chair, after consultation with the student's professor, may appoint three independent department readers to read the student's exam(s) and/or paper(s) as stipulated in the George Mason University Catalog ¹and report their findings in writing to the Chair. The chair will then

¹ Appeal of Grade

Although faculty are generally the best judges of the performance of students in their classes, there may be instances when a student believes a grade is unfair. In such cases the student should ask the faculty member to reconsider the grade. If the student is not satisfied, an appeal may be made to the head of the unit offering the course (the department chair, institute director, or his/her designee). The chair (or other recipient of the appeal) should ask the student to return to the faculty member who assigned the grade for further consultation.

If a mutually satisfactory agreement is not reached, the student may request that the chair form a committee of three faculty peers of the faculty member who assigned the grade. If the chair believes the student's complaint is not legitimate, this reservation is reported to the chair's supervisor (usually the dean), and no review is conducted unless the dean believes the complaint has merit.

The faculty member or the student may challenge, and have replaced, one of the three members of the committee without giving a reason for the challenge. The committee meets separately with the faculty member and the student to explore the full particulars of the case. A nonparticipating observer of the student's choice may attend the meeting. Every effort is made to avoid an adversarial relationship.

After the committee has reviewed the case thoroughly, it issues to the chair (with a copy to the faculty member) a written recommendation including the reasons for its findings. At this time, the faculty member has an opportunity to take the recommended action, if any. If the matter is not resolved at this point, the chair considers the committee recommendation and makes a recommendation to the dean. The decision of the dean is not subject to further appeal. If the dean decides that a change of grade is appropriate, and the faculty member refuses to make the change, then the dean may direct the registrar to do so.

Grade appeals are not accepted after the last day of classes of the following semester (spring for fall grades, fall for spring and summer grades).

Pending Grade Appeal

In select cases, a student may request a delay from the dean in imposing academic suspension because of a pending grade appeal that could change the student's status. An approved delay

meet with the student and make a final recommendation. This process shall take no longer than 30 days.

3. Committees

3.1 Normally, the Department will have standing and adhoc committees. As a rule, these committees should contain no fewer than two and no more than five members, although exceptions are permitted as occasion demands.

3.2 The Department as whole will elect standing committees as well as Departmental representatives to College and University governance bodies no later than the first departmental meeting of academic years during which there will be vacancies on these standing committees and/or on these bodies. Each member of a standing committee will serve for two academic years. Except for the Philosophy standing committees, no committee will have fewer than two members and none shall contain more than five.

3.2.1 Each standing and ad hoc committee will determine its own policies for choosing a committee chair and for voting. The Department Chair will serve ex officio on all standing committees, but will only be eligible to vote when there is a tie.

3.2.2 Each committee shall develop policy statements and recommendations for action by the Department sitting as a whole. The chair of each committee will submit a brief annual report to the Chair of the Department.

3.3 Committee Charges:

3.3.1 The members of the Philosophy faculty will constitute the Philosophy standing committee.

3.3.2 Chair evaluation committee: At the request of the Dean of the College of Arts and Science, the Chair is evaluated annually.

3.3.3 Salary committee: This committee will advise the Chair on merit raises

3.3.4 Ad hoc search committees: These committees will be constituted by the Chair and at least two members of the faculty.

allows the student to register.

If the grade appeal is successful, the official transcript is corrected and the student continues in classes as a student in good academic standing. If the grade appeal is not successful, the student is required to stop attending all classes immediately. No record of registration for the academic period appears on a transcript, and the student receives the appropriate refund as of the date of decision.

3.3.6 Ad hoc Renewal, Promotion and Tenure committees: These committees will be constituted by at least three members of the faculty

4. Personnel Actions

4.1 After appropriate deliberation, the appropriate ad hoc search committees will present candidates for full-time positions in the Department to the Department as a whole.

4.1.1 While the Department, acting as a committee of the whole, will vote after due deliberation by secret ballot on hiring these candidates, the Chair will assume final responsibility for all recommendations regarding initial appointments.

4.2 The department and Chair acting separately shall make renewal, promotion and tenure decisions.

4.2.1 Initial considerations of promotion and tenure cases will be made by individual ad hoc RPT committees and then presented to the Department as a whole.

4.2.2 While all voting members of the Department are *eligible* to discuss the merits of the case and offer recommendations, such participation is *expected* of all tenured members of the faculty.

4.2.3 Tenured members of the Department alone are entitled to vote on renewal, promotion and tenure and will do so in the absence of probationary faculty. They will only be permitted to vote if they have attended the final RPT meeting in which a candidate is discussed. No proxy votes will be accepted and all ballots will be cast in secret.

4.2.4 The department will forward its recommendation to the chair who will review the case and submit a separate recommendation to the Dean of CAS.

5. Amendments and Ratification

5.1 Any voting member of the Department may propose amendments to these bylaws.

5.1.1 Such proposed amendments will be sent to voting members of the Department at least 14 days prior to the meeting at which they will be discussed and they shall be brought forward for consideration.

5.1.2 An amendment shall be adopted on the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the voting membership. Proxy votes will be accepted.

5.1.3 An amendment, once adopted, will then be forwarded to the Dean, the Provost, and the President for their approval.

5.2 These bylaws shall be ratified on the affirmative vote of at least two thirds of the full-time faculty of the Department.