

## BYLAWS

### COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT OF SUNY BUFFALO STATE

Amended May 2021; April 2016; November 2012; March 2007; January 2002; April 1997;  
January 1993

#### Preamble

It is the purpose of these bylaws to provide a plan of governance and a procedure for the conduct of business for the Communication Department consistent with the legal requirements of the State University of New York, the policies of the Board of Trustees, the policies and faculty bylaws of Buffalo State College, the bylaws of the School of Arts and Humanities, and the agreement between SUNY and the bargaining unit.

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#### I. Membership and Voting Rights

- a. Voting members are those members of the full-time faculty who hold academic rank and term or continuing appointment, as defined by the policies of the Board of Trustees.
- b. Professional staff and other faculty (part-time lecturer, adjunct, visiting, emeritus, exchange, etc.) may attend and participate in faculty meetings with the exception of voting. Student members of committees may participate in relevant discussions.
- c. Temporary voting privileges may be extended by a majority vote of the departmental members for a specific period of time.
- d. Each full-time faculty member will have one vote on all matters that come before the Department, with two exceptions:
  - i. New junior tenure-track faculty will not have votes on personnel actions (effective hire date April 1, 2016)
  - ii. Current junior tenure-track faculty will be grandfathered in and retain personnel action votes, with the option to abstain at her/his discretion
  - iii. The Presiding Officer will cast only a tie-breaking vote.
- e. Any member may request a secret ballot, which will be granted.
- f. Absentee voting on formal motions which have been presented prior to the meeting (such as amendments to the bylaws or recommendations for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure, etc.) may be accomplished by written proxy delivered prior to the meeting to the Chair or the Associate Chair.
- g. Voting on personnel matters, including committee memberships, will be conducted by secret ballot.

- h. Voting members on official leave (absence, sabbatical, medical or professional) may cast a proxy vote by submitting it in writing to the Department Chair.
- i. Faculty members temporarily assigned to administrative or other duties outside the Department may participate in departmental activities, including serving on committees and voting. If the Chair or the individual faculty member considers the extra-departmental duties may create a conflict of interest, either may initiate a discussion about the possibility of the faculty member being recused from committee activity or voting on the particular issue in conflict.

## II. Officers

### a. Chair

#### i. Selection

1. When selecting a new Department Chair, the chair of the Recruitment Committee will convene the Department as a Committee of the Whole to charge the Recruitment Committee with the following tasks:
  - a. To prepare a job description for approval by the Committee of the Whole.
  - b. To file vacancy notices and appropriate forms.
  - c. To review credentials and screen applicants only for minimum stated requirements.
  - d. To make the vitae of candidates available for review by the Committee of the Whole.
  - e. To schedule a formal opportunity for candidates to make presentations to the Department and for the Department faculty to meet and question candidates.
2. Members of the Department who wish to be candidates for the position will follow the same procedures as those established for external candidates.
3. After the candidates have been interviewed, the Committee of the Whole will meet at least twice for open discussion. At least one meeting will be exclusive of active candidates among the Department faculty and the current Chair.
4. At least one week after the final discussion by the Committee of the Whole, the faculty will meet to vote on the candidates.
  - a. A written ballot will be taken.
  - b. The candidate with the majority vote will be recommended to the dean of the School of Arts and Humanities.
  - c. In the event that no candidate receives a majority, a second-round vote will be taken between the two candidates with the largest number of first-round votes.

#### ii. Term of Office

1. The Chair will be recommended for any period up to three years.

2. In the beginning of the final year of the Chair's term, the Associate Chair will convene the department members as a Committee of the Whole to review and make recommendations on the renewal of the Chair.
  3. On the petition of more than one-third of the voting faculty, a review of the Chair will be initiated. This petition will be presented to the Chair of the Bylaws and Elections Committee, which will oversee the election of a three-member Special Review Committee. This special committee will establish appropriate procedures based on the responsibilities of the Chair as set forth in this document. This committee will issue a report with recommendations, to be presented to the faculty within six academic weeks of the formation of the special committee.
- iii. Responsibilities: The Chair's responsibilities are to provide task-oriented and social-process leadership for the Department and its personnel, including the following:
1. To facilitate the administrative goals of the Department, including the following:
    - a. To structure the Department and serve as its chief administrative officer.
    - b. To assume the initiative in developing and administering departmental policies and coordinating them with those of Buffalo State College.
    - c. To facilitate the development of long-range and short-range strategic planning goals, and to monitor progress on strategic plans, action plans, and other administrative documents.
    - d. To develop and supervise appropriate academic advisement strategies and review student academic records as necessary.
    - e. To make recommendations independent of the Personnel Committee on candidates for term appointment, continuing appointment and promotion, as well as recommendations concerning graduate faculty status, discretionary salary adjustments, sabbaticals, requests for leave, termination of employment, and other personnel matters.
    - f. To monitor student academic progress, and to certify student eligibility for acceptance into majors, graduation and related academic milestones.
  2. To facilitate the administrative tasks of the Department, including the following:
    - a. To develop and administer the departmental budget.
    - b. To nominate an Associate Chair for faculty approval.
    - c. To delegate appropriate responsibilities to the Associate Chair, committee chairs and other faculty members, and to ensure that those duties are accomplished in a professional manner.
    - d. To establish agendas and preside at Department meetings.

- e. To prepare schedules of course offerings and teaching assignments consistent with the mission of the College, the needs of the students, and the qualifications of the faculty.
  - f. To ensure the preparation of materials for the College catalog and promotional items.
  - g. To oversee the development and timely updating of the Department website.
  - h. To publish all policy decisions and submit these to the Department secretary for the Department files.
  - i. To supervise and manage the physical facilities under the jurisdiction of the Department.
3. To facilitate external relationships between the Department and the College and community, including the following:
- a. To represent and advocate for the Department and act on behalf of the faculty and other departmental personnel in all business with the Dean of Arts and Humanities, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the President of the College, and other entities of the College.
  - b. To develop and maintain a relationship between the Department and school/college/community/professional/alumni personnel, and to inform the Department of the status of said relationships.
  - c. To maintain appropriate relationships with scholarly and professional organizations in the field of communication.
  - d. To recommend individuals for membership on College committees.
  - e. To adjudicate disputes between faculty and administration or staff.
  - f. To take an active role in recruitment and retention of Department majors.
  - g. To prepare and process personnel and recruitment recommendations according to College and SUNY guidelines and the academic calendar.
4. To facilitate internal relationships within the Department, including the following:
- a. To address student complaints and concerns.
  - b. To model, support and stimulate research activities and other creative endeavors on the part of faculty members.
  - c. To observe and evaluate full-time and part-time faculty for promotions, contract renewals, tenure, salary adjustments, graduate faculty status and leaves of absence.
  - d. To adjudicate disputes among the faculty or between faculty and students.

- a. To serve as an ex officio member, without voting privileges, on committees.
- b. To appoint part-time lecturers, in consultation with appropriate faculty members.
- c. To appoint and supervise professional staff and support staff.
- d. To elicit feedback from appropriate faculty prior to making decisions that would directly affect their area of specialization.
- e. To ensure that faculty advisers are assigned to student organizations associated with the Department, in compliance with regulations of both USG and the sponsoring professional organizations.

**b. Associate Chair**

- i. Selection: The Chair will nominate an Associate Chair for faculty consideration and approval at the annual election meeting.
- ii. Term of Office
  1. The Associate Chair will serve for a one-year term.
  2. It is the prerogative of the Chair to revoke the term of the Associate Chair, effective upon written notification to the Associate Chair and to the faculty.
- iii. Responsibilities: The Associate Chair's responsibilities are:
  1. To assume tasks and requisite authority as delegated by the Chair in his/her absence.
  2. To assume the full responsibility and authority of the Chair in the event of long-term incapacitation or absence of the Chair.
  3. To accept additional departmental tasks as negotiated with the Chair.

**c. Supporting Officers**

- i. Secretary
  1. Selection: The Chair will nominate a Secretary for faculty consideration and approval at the annual election meeting.
  2. Term of Office: The Secretary will serve for a two-year term.
  3. Responsibilities: The Secretary's responsibilities are:
    - a. To supervise the recording of the minutes of each meeting.
    - b. To see that these minutes are submitted to the Chair by the end of the second working day following each meeting. These minutes will be included with the agenda for the subsequent meeting.
    - c. To keep a file of departmental actions and policies in the Department office.
- ii. Parliamentarian
  1. Selection: The Chair will nominate a Parliamentarian for faculty consideration and approval at the annual election meeting.
  2. Term of Office: The Parliamentarian will serve for a two-year term.

3. Responsibilities: The Parliamentarian's responsibility is to advise the Chair regarding parliamentary procedure using Roberts Rules of Order (revised).
- iii. Accreditation Coordinator
  1. Selection: The Chair will nominate an Accreditation Coordinator for faculty consideration and approval at the annual election meeting.
  2. Term of Office: The Library Representative will serve for a three-year term.
  3. Responsibilities: The Accreditation Coordinator's responsibilities are:
    - a. To serve as a liaison between the Communication Department and the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC).
    - b. To work with the Chair to identify Standard Leaders for each of the standards required by ACEJMC.
    - c. To coordinate the gathering and analysis of data on an ongoing basis for each of the ACEJMC standards required.
    - d. To coordinate the development and writing of the Self-Study.

### III. Department Meetings

- a. Department meetings may be called at the request of the Chair or designate, the President of the College, the Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities, or by a petition of one-fourth of the members of the Department faculty.
- b. There will be a minimum of one Department meeting each month during each semester. These meetings will be scheduled by September 15 of each year for the remainder of the academic year. These meetings will be scheduled at a standard fixed time. Barring emergencies, meetings will not be scheduled during class breaks or inter-semester recesses.
- c. An agenda will be issued by the Chair to all members of the Department at least 48 hours prior to a scheduled meeting. Any Department member may propose an item for the agenda by submitting it in writing to the Chair. Items not on the agenda may be introduced at any meeting under new business.
- d. A majority of the full-time members of the Department will constitute a quorum for meetings. A quorum will be presumed unless challenged.
- e. The Chair may convene a special meeting to deal with emergency or unexpected items of business at any time, without the need for a prior-published agenda.
- f. The Chair may order a meeting into executive session with only voting members present for personnel and other confidential or sensitive matters.

### IV. Standing Committees

- a. Committees
  - i. The Department will staff the following standing committees: Faculty committees including Assessment, Curriculum, Faculty Concerns, Personnel, and

Recruitment; and Department committees including Bylaws and Elections, Student Enrichment, and Technology and Production.

b. Membership

- i. For Faculty committees, all full-time faculty members of the Department, other than the Chair, will be eligible for nomination and election, except for the Personnel Committee, which will be restricted to tenured faculty. For Department committees, all full-time faculty members and professional staff of the Department, other than the Chair, will be eligible for nomination and election. The Recruitment Committee will include its immediate past chair as an ex officio member. The Faculty Concerns Committee will be chaired by the Associate Chair of the Department and will include one faculty representative from each of the department's academic majors.
- ii. A temporary member to the Personnel Committee will be elected by the Department in the event that a regularly elected member of this Committee is scheduled to go before the Committee for a personnel action. This temporary member will be a member of the Personnel Committee only for consideration of the regularly elected member. The regularly elected member will continue to serve on the Personnel Committee for consideration of other committee charges.
- iii. All standing committees will be composed of three members (faculty or, as appropriate, professional staff) elected by the Department and by one non-voting student representative appointed by the Department Chair (with the exception of the Personnel, Bylaws and Elections, Faculty Concerns and Assessment Committees, which will have no student member).
- iv. The Chair may appoint professional staff, lecturers, alumni and other qualified persons to staff and/or advise departmental committees.
- v. The Department Chair will recognize the senior member of each committee as the committee Chair. In extraordinary circumstances, the Department Chair will appoint a committee Chair in consultation with committee members.

c. Selection

- i. By the seventh week of each Spring academic semester, the Bylaws and Elections Committee will issue a call for nominations for committee vacancies.
- ii. Nomination to committees will be by submission of a nomination form to the Bylaws and Elections Committee. The form must be signed by the nominee. Self-nominations are permitted.
- iii. By the ninth week of the semester, the Bylaws and Elections Committee will announce the entire slate of candidates.
- iv. By the 10th week of the semester, elections will be held by written secret ballot.
- v. Election will be by plurality vote for each position.
- vi. In the event of a tie vote, a run-off election will be held between the two candidates with the largest number of votes. If neither candidate receives a majority vote, the Department Chair will cast the determining vote.

- vii. In the event of multiple vacancies within the same committee, the provisions in 5 and 6 above will apply, with necessary modifications as determined by the Bylaws and Elections Committee.
- d. Term of Office
  - i. Members will be elected for staggered three-year terms.
  - ii. Terms of office will become effective on June 1.
  - iii. In the event of a vacancy, the faculty will elect a successor for the remainder of the term of the departing committee member.
  - iv. In the event of a one-semester hiatus such as a sabbatical, research leave or illness, the Department may appoint a one-semester replacement instead of a replacement for the remainder of the term.
  - v. Committee members may not succeed themselves if they have served more than 18 months of their term.
- e. Responsibilities
  - i. The Chair of each committee will submit a written report to the departmental Chair of the committee's annual activities prior to May 15 of each year.
  - ii. Responsibilities of the Assessment Committee will be:
    - 1. To implement and coordinate the Department's assessment program.
    - 2. To provide an assessment report by each September 1 for the previous academic year.
    - 3. To offer recommendations to the Department for action based on results of the assessment data.
    - 4. To develop, implement and evaluate departmental procedures for the Writing Skills Test.
  - iii. The responsibilities of the Bylaws and Elections Committee will be:
    - 1. To conduct all departmental elections.
    - 2. To provide tellers for all elections and for written ballots at Department meetings.
    - 3. To review the bylaws during the spring semester of each year evenly divisible by three (i.e., 2007, 2010, 2013, etc.), and to present changes for departmental action when appropriate.
    - 4. To make the bylaws available to all members of the Department.
  - iv. The responsibilities of the Curriculum Committee will be:
    - 1. To review course and program proposals and recommend appropriate action to the Department.
    - 2. To conduct an on-going program review using applicable standards as guides and make appropriate recommendations.
    - 3. To implement a program to recommend to the faculty appropriate revisions, and to review all course proposals and revisions at least once every five years.
  - v. The responsibilities of the Faculty Concerns Committee will be:
    - 1. To address issues supportive of the full- and part-time faculty through activities that train, mentor, guide and assist them in their academic responsibilities.
    - 2. To consider task requests from the Department Chair.
  - vi. The responsibilities of the Personnel Committee will be:



1. To develop, publish and distribute by September 15 a departmental calendar of deadline dates for submission of materials for personnel actions for the subsequent year.
2. To develop and implement necessary procedures for review in cases of renewal and promotion.
  - a. These procedures will include the following provisions:
    - i. The Committee will prepare a draft of its recommendation to the Department which it will share with the candidate.
    - ii. The candidate will be given an opportunity to meet with the Committee to discuss the addition, removal or change of any item.
    - iii. If the final Committee report is not to the candidate's satisfaction, the candidate will be given the opportunity to respond in writing. The Committee will append the candidate's response to its report.
  - b. These procedures must be consistent with the bargaining agent's contract and with established policies and procedures of the State University of New York.
  - c. These procedures will be distributed with the departmental calendar for faculty approval and will remain in effect for the academic year.
3. To present evaluations of candidates and to make recommendations regarding term appointments, continuing appointments and promotion. The faculty will vote on the recommendations. The faculty decision, along with any minority reports, will be forwarded with the committee report to the Dean of the School of Arts and Humanities.
4. To oversee the administration of regular course evaluations for student evaluation and feedback, and to consider student evaluations in personnel deliberations. These evaluations will be kept in departmental records for at least four semesters.
- vii. The responsibilities of the Recruitment Committee will be:
  1. To prepare job descriptions, file vacancy notices, and file appropriate forms, in concert with the Department Chair.
  2. To form a Recruitment Task Force to share in the reviewing and screening processes involved in (III). The Recruitment Task Force will be composed of only full-time Communication Department faculty, and all members have voting privileges. All full-time faculty members in the major for the hire will be invited to join the Recruitment Task Force.
    - a. If the Department has an active search for a faculty position and no faculty member in that major is on the Recruitment Committee, a temporary member will be elected (by the major faculty) for the semester(s) of the search.

- b. To review credentials and screen applicants for full-time positions.
  3. To make the vitae of all candidates available for review in the Department office.
  4. To provide a formal opportunity for the Department to meet and question candidates invited for interview for full-time positions.
  5. To recommend to the Department candidates for full-time positions.
- viii. The responsibilities of the Student Enrichment Committee will be:
  1. To develop, implement and evaluate departmental procedures for student advisement.
  2. To provide oversight for scholarships and awards offered through the Department, and to encourage student awareness and involvement in scholarship and award programs independent of the Department.
  3. To facilitate the student Communication Honor Society.
- ix. The responsibilities of the Technology and Production Committee will be:
  1. To develop and implement a departmental plan for acquiring and using technology.
  2. To coordinate Department-wide Media Productions for use both on campus and off campus.
  3. To undertake research and offer recommendations for purchase of equipment and the enhancement of technological facilities.
- x. The responsibilities of the Alumni Relations Committee will be:
  1. To develop strategies to increase alumni involvement with the Communication Department.
  2. To facilitate and encourage interaction between department faculty and students with alumni – e.g., Career Days, mentoring, workshops and class visits.
  3. To work with the Department Chair on additional requests involving alumni.
  4. To establish and maintain a Communication Department advisory board.

## V. Special Committees and Task Forces

### a. Definitions

- i. A Special Committee is any committee established for a purpose not already served by a Standing Committee.

- ii. A Task Force is a working group established to address an issue of limited duration.
- b. Establishment: The Department Chair may establish a Special Committee or a Task Force.
- c. Responsibility: The specific responsibility of the Special Committee or Task Force will be determined by the Department Chair when it is established.
- d. Membership
  - i. For Special Committees, an uneven number of faculty members will be elected following nomination or self-nomination. Election will be determined by plurality. A student member may be appointed by the Department Chair.
  - ii. For Task Forces, the membership will be determined by the Department Chair.
- e. Term of Membership: The term of membership on Special Committees and Task Forces will be established for the duration of the committee's work.
- f. Duration
  - i. Special Committees will be established for a specific period of time or until completion of a specific task. The Department will review the status of any Special Committee which continues for more than two years.
  - ii. Task Forces will remain in existence until the completion of the task.
- g. Chair
  - i. The Chair of a Special Committee may be elected directly by quorum majority of the Department meeting, or by majority of committee members, or by appointment by the Department Chair. The choice for electoral methods rests with the Department Chair.
  - ii. The Chair of a Task Force will be appointed by the Department Chair.

## **VI. Parliamentary Authority**

- a. The rules contained in Robert's Rules of Order (revised) will govern the Department in all cases in which they are applicable.

## **VII. Establishment and Authority of Bylaws**

- a. These bylaws will take effect immediately upon approval by a majority of the eligible voters in the Communication Department.
- b. A proposed amendment must be presented in writing to the Department at least two weeks before it is to be considered.
- c. A two-thirds vote of the voting members of the Department by written ballot conducted by the Bylaws and Elections Committee is required for adoption of an amendment.
- d. The bylaws may be suspended by a two-thirds vote of a quorum.
- e. Absent provisions in these bylaws, either the Department Chair or a majority of the Department voting members may adopt actions and policies deemed to be in the best interests of the Department.