

By-
Laws
of
The Department of
Sociology Washington
State University
23 October 1997, fourth revision, April
2002
Revision: March 2019

Business of the Department and its component units shall be conducted according to the By-Laws set forth below.

I. Official decisions

- A. When possible, faculty meetings shall be the occasion for making official decisions.
- (1) Official decisions may only be taken when a quorum is present. Quorum is defined as half of all faculty in the Department of Sociology, plus one. All faculty who are not on professional leave, unpaid leave, or expense reassignment are included in calculations of quorum and majority votes. A faculty member taking professional leave will not be part of the quorum the summer that immediately precedes and/or follows the professional leave semester(s) unless they so choose.
 - (2) Faculty meetings are to be held periodically, convened at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Department, or whenever the chair is petitioned by at least 20% of the faculty members.
 - (3) Meetings are open to faculty members, participating members and other interested persons. When personnel (e.g., the hiring, review, or grievances of faculty members with tenure-accruing appointments) or other sensitive matters are to be discussed, faculty with tenure-accruing appointments will meet in executive (closed) session.
 - (4) Faculty meetings will proceed according to written agendas which will be circulated at least two days in advance. This provision does not preclude discussion/actions on items not on the advance agenda.
 - (5) Proxy votes are limited to specific agenda items and must be conveyed in writing to the chair.
- B. When it is not possible to convene a faculty meeting (e.g., during the summer and between semesters), official decisions may be made through electronic discussion (e.g., email or web- based forum).
- C. Unless otherwise specified in the Department Constitution or these By-Laws, all official decisions or recommendations of the faculty shall be by majority vote of a quorum.

II. Committees

A. COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND CHAIRS. Each committee, except the Executive Advisory Committee, is composed of a chair and other persons, both chair and committee appointed by the Chairperson of the Department.

B. EXECUTIVE ADVISORY COMMITTEE. Three faculty members serve on the Executive Advisory Committee, each serving a one-year term. Two members should be tenured faculty and one member should be non-tenured (clinical faculty or assistant professor). At least one member should be a faculty member with an appointment on a non-Pullman WSU campus. Faculty will submit ballots voting for 1 tenured faculty and 1 non-tenured faculty member. The tenured faculty member with the highest number of votes and the non-tenured faculty member with the highest number of votes will serve. If one of these two faculty members is on a non-Pullman campus, the tenured faculty member with the next highest number of votes will also serve, regardless of campus; if not, the non-Pullman tenured faculty member with the highest votes will serve. If sabbaticals, faculty vacancies, or other departmental circumstances make it impossible for the Department to staff the EAC according to these criteria, the Department Chair has the authority to make temporary exceptions to these guidelines. The Chair also has the authority to make temporary substitutions to the committee if an EAC member chooses (or is asked) to recuse him or herself from a matter under consideration by the EAC. If the EAC is investigating a grievance pertaining to the Department Chair and a temporary exception to the EAC membership guidelines is needed, the EAC will have the authority to make temporary substitutions to its membership.

The Executive Advisory Committee elects its own chair who shall conduct meetings of the Committee. Meetings may be called by either the Chairperson of the Department or Chair of the Executive Advisory Committee. Three members of the EAC shall constitute a quorum.

- (1) The Executive Advisory Committee shall advise and provide recommendations to the Chairperson of the Department on matters that he or she brings before it regarding general administrative, procedural, and Department policy issues. The Executive Advisory Committee shall review the Department's Constitution and by-laws yearly, and shall advise and provide recommendations to the Chairperson of the Department on matters it initiates regarding the general welfare and policies of the Department.
- (2) The Executive Advisory Committee shall provide advice to the Chairperson of the Department on matters related to personnel policies.
- (3) The Executive Advisory Committee will receive and address grievances of any kind that are not resolved satisfactorily through routine procedures. These grievances may come from any faculty member, staff member, or participating member as defined in Article II of the Constitution, or undergraduate student in the Department, insofar as permitted by existing University and Department rules, and in accordance with the Codes of Ethics promulgated by the American Sociological Association and the Department of Sociology at Washington State University.
- (4) In the event that a member of the EAC has notified the chair of his or her intent to resign his or her position or is unable to continue serving on the EAC an election will be immediately conducted to replace this person in the EAC position he or she was elected.

C. STUDENT MEMBERSHIP ON COMMITTEES. Graduate students may hold two seats on the Graduate Studies Committees and two seats on the Undergraduate Studies Committee. They may also serve on other committees at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Department.

III. Chairperson and Other Administrative Positions

A. CHAIRPERSON. The duties, expectations, and responsibilities of the Chairperson of the Department, as well as the process by which a chairperson is selected, are set forth in the *Washington State University Faculty Manual*, which states that a chairperson is “expected to provide leadership in the formation of departmental policies and to hold meetings with all available members of the faculty on matters of policy. Except as limited by applicable general regulations and policies or as otherwise directed by the dean or by the Provost and Academic Vice President, it is the department chair’s responsibilities to execute the policies determined by this procedure. When this is not done, he or she should notify the administrative superior and the members of the faculty of action being taken and the reasons therefore. However, department chairs must have sufficient latitude to permit the making and execution of day-to-day operating decisions and the exercise of leadership responsibilities.”

The Chairperson of the Department is a member *ex-officio* of each standing department committee. The chairperson is responsible for maintaining documentation on current departmental policies.

B. OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS. The Chairperson of the Department, in consultation with the Executive Advisory Committee and with the approval of the faculty, may create administrative positions to meet departmental needs (for example associate chair, director of graduate studies, director of undergraduate studies, and so forth). Once created, the Chairperson of the Department appoints faculty members to fill these positions.

IV. Personnel Policies

A. SELECTION OF NEW FACULTY WITH TENURE-ACCRUING APPOINTMENTS. All members of the department faculty with tenure-accruing appointments may vote on candidates recommended at each rank for appointment to positions in the department. The consent of a majority of a quorum of faculty with tenure-accruing appointments present at a regularly scheduled meeting is necessary to authorize the Chairperson to proceed with negotiations on recruiting new faculty with tenure-accruing appointment. Clinical faculty and participating members of the department are encouraged to attend faculty meetings or submit candidate recommendations to the Chairperson of the Department or the search committee.

B. PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENTIALITY. The development of information, the exchange of opinions and decisions concerning evaluations of the performance of students, faculty, staff, and candidates for those positions, shall be regarded as confidential, and shall not be communicated except by those who have the authority to communicate it; and shall not be communicated except to those who are authorized to receive it; and shall not be communicated so that the names of individual evaluators are associated with the evaluations they provide. The waiving of confidentiality shall be authorized only when consent is obtained from those who fall under the protection of confidentiality.

V. Graduate Student Participation and Representation

A. All sociology graduate students in good standing are participating members of the department entitled to serve on departmental committees.

B. The Sociology Graduate Student Organization (SGSO) is a student organization whose purpose is to provide sociology graduate students with the opportunity to develop professional leadership skills, to foster collegial peer and faculty relations, to provide a mechanism for Sociology graduate student involvement in departmental and university-wide decision-making, and to provide a venue for sharing professional and academic information.

C. The SGSO shall conduct elections of graduate students to represent graduate students and participate in department meetings and on departmental committees.