

**Bylaws for the Governance of the Department of Religious Studies  
University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

These bylaws supplement the *Faculty Handbook*, the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*, the Faculty Senate's *Resources Manual*, and the Provost's guide for *Peer Evaluation of Teaching*.

**Article I. Composition of the Faculty**

- Section A. For purposes related to the governance of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, the faculty shall be understood to be composed of full-time departmental tenure-track and non-tenure-track teaching personnel.
- Section B. Voting privileges will extend to all tenure-track members of the faculty unless otherwise specified in these bylaws or in the *Faculty Handbook*. Proxy voting will be permitted, provided that the arrangements are made known to the Head before the vote takes place.
- Section C. The person who holds the University's endowed Chair in Judaic Studies is a tenure-track faculty (TTF) member in the Department of Religious Studies, and the Director of the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies. For authorizations and responsibilities, see the bylaws of the Judaic Studies Program.

**Article II. Adjunct and Affiliated Faculty**

- Section A. A TTF member from another department or unit may be recommended for adjunct or affiliated appointment if the individual has an area of specialization that supports the Department and has a record of participation with the Department.
- Section B. Adjunct or affiliated faculty members are appointed for renewable five-year terms.
- Section C. Adjunct and affiliated faculty appointments must be recommended to the entire voting faculty and receive at least 2/3 support from the faculty present (or voting by proxy).

**Article III. The Department Head and Associate Head**

- Section A. The Department Head is a member of the faculty who has been given certain administrative responsibilities and the authority to carry them out in consultation with the faculty. The Head will not vote on any decision that is advisory to the Head. It shall be the responsibility of the Head:

1. to preside at departmental meetings;
2. to implement departmental decisions (or to arrange for their implementation);
3. to provide leadership in departmental planning;
4. to recommend hiring, promotion, and salary increases;
5. to employ and supervise clerical and supporting personnel;
6. to assume responsibility for departmental budget and operations;
7. to represent the Department within the life of the College, the University at large, and the wider community; and
8. to oversee and make recommendations about departmental events and outreach, including but not limited to departmental media and communications, the Board of Visitors, public fundraising initiatives, and other departmental public events.

It shall also be the responsibility of the Head to review each departmental faculty member's work as a scholar and teacher in relation to the total program of the Department, and to notify in writing each departmental faculty member of any changed provisions of appointment for each academic year.

Section B. Following consultation with the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and a 2/3 majority approval of the departmental voting faculty in residence, the Head shall appoint an Associate Head who will serve in the absence of the Head and assist the Head within reason in departmental affairs, particularly those related to course scheduling.

Section C. Each departmental faculty member will have the opportunity to submit an annual evaluation of the Head's performance to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, following procedures that are consistent with University policy.

#### Article IV. **Department Committees**

Section A. At the beginning of each academic year, the Head will appoint each TTF member to one of three standing committees: the Undergraduate Committee, the Performance Review Committee, and the Student Engagement Committee. In addition to its members, each standing committee will include a committee chair, plus the Head as a non-voting ex officio member. The expectation is that committee work will be shared equitably over time. Committees will submit reports on their activities at least once each semester, and will present items to be voted as needed. Committee reports may be sent electronically or presented at department meetings.

Section B. The Undergraduate Committee is charged with overseeing and making recommendations about course offerings, catalogue descriptions, and other curricular issues; and the departmental Honors major. The chair of this committee is also the departmental Curriculum Representative to the College's curriculum committees.

Section C. The Performance Review Committee is charged with overseeing peer teaching evaluations; planning and implementing departmental assessment plans; and advising the Head on lecturer renewals and promotions. This committee will also assist the Head and the candidate's mentor in cases of promotion and tenure.

Section D. The Student Engagement Committee is charged with overseeing departmental advising; student recruitment; the events of the Religious Studies Association; and student awards.

Section E. The Lecturers Committee is comprised of all full-time departmental lecturers. This committee should meet at the beginning of each academic year to choose a departmental representative by majority vote. This Lecturer Representative should normally be a Senior or Distinguished Lecturer, and will be invited to any formal conversations regarding departmental lecturers or undergraduate curriculum. The position of Lecturer Representative is a one-year renewable position.

Section F. Committee meetings should be announced in advance and open to all interested faculty members.

Section G. The Head may appoint and dissolve ad hoc committees as necessary.

The appointment and role of search committees will be governed by the rules set forth in the Faculty Handbook and by the guidelines established by the Office of Equity and Diversity, and the Dean's and Provost's offices. The Department Head appoints the chair and members of the search committee in consultation with the faculty. Such committees should be composed of at least three TTF, including the committee's chair.

## Article V. **Conduct of Department Business**

Section A. Departmental faculty meetings shall, in usual circumstances, be called by the Head under the following conditions:

1. The Head shall schedule at least two faculty meetings each semester;
2. Meetings may also be called on the agreement of 50% or more of the

- faculty in residence;
3. These meetings will customarily be held on the UT Knoxville campus during business hours;
  4. Meetings should customarily be announced at least two weeks in advance.

- Section B. An agenda will be prepared by the Head; other items will be added by the agreement of two faculty members. The agenda should be distributed to the voting faculty at least two working days before the meeting.
- Section C. At least 70% of the full-time TTF in residence shall constitute a quorum at departmental faculty meetings.
- Section D. Decisions concerning matters of substantial import to the life and work of the Department shall be made, whenever possible, in consultation with departmental TTF. Non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) should also be consulted when the decisions directly affect them. Recommendations of departmental faculty shall be determined by the majority vote of eligible faculty at a given meeting (proxy voting is permitted). In usual circumstances, the decisions by the Head will reflect the recommendations determined by the majority will of the voting faculty. In instances in which the decision of the Head is at variance with the expressed will of the majority of the faculty, the Head will make the decision and supporting reasons known to the faculty and provide opportunity for their response.
- Section E. Decisions regarding the appointment of new members to the departmental faculty on an academic year basis shall be made with the participation of the TTF. In usual circumstances it is expected that the Head's recommendations relative to the appointment of new members to the faculty will reflect the majority will of the TTF. If in an unusual case it does not, the Head is to advise the faculty of this departure from their expressed judgment in order that said faculty may prepare a report to the Dean explaining their alternate judgment and reasons for it. It is understood that, in certain circumstances due to time constraints, it may be necessary for the Head to appoint qualified persons to part-time and/or limited-term positions on the departmental faculty, but every effort should be made to include the TTF in the decision.
- Section F. Departmental decisions and recommendations concerning tenure and promotion shall be made in full accordance with the procedures defined in the *Faculty Handbook* and the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*. It is expected that in usual circumstances the Head's recommendation on tenure and/or promotion will reflect the majority will of the eligible voting faculty on these recommendations. If in an unusual case it does not, the Head is to advise appropriate colleagues of this departure from their expressed will, and they shall have an opportunity to prepare a report for the Dean explaining why they do not agree with the Head's

recommendation.

Section G. A departmental operating budget, indicating the projected expenditure of allocated operating funds, shall be presented by the Head to the departmental TTF at the beginning of each academic semester, along with a report regarding other departmental funds. The projected operating budget should be revised and finalized in consultation with the TTF. At the end of the spring semester, the Head shall present the actual expenditures to date.

Section H. Any voting faculty member may request a secret ballot for a vote.

Section I. Each semester the Head will assign one TTF member to take minutes for the Department's business meetings. Subsequently the minutes should be circulated to the voting faculty for correction, approved at the next meeting by a majority of voting faculty, and filed in the departmental records.

Article VI. **Procedures for Curricular and Program Changes**

Section A. Responsibility for departmental curricular revisions and the definition and alteration of departmental curriculum and degree programs shall rest with the departmental TTF.

Section B. Proposals for curricular revision or additions and for program definition and revision may be submitted for action to the chair of the departmental Undergraduate Committee by any departmental TTF member.

Article VII. **Performance Evaluation, Retention, Promotion, and Tenure for Tenure-Line Faculty**

Section A. The following guidelines and criteria are specific to the Department of Religious Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. They are designed to supplement the criteria and procedures for implementation of formal evaluations set down for the University in the *Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3) and in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*. These guidelines should inform and be reflected in (1) annual reviews by the Head, and (2) intermittent reviews by the faculty, or by components thereof, and by the Head on specific, formally prescribed occasions when faculty are considered for the granting of tenure and/or promotion.

Section B. The Performance Review Committee Chair should arrange for two tenured faculty members to observe the teaching of every untenured departmental

TTF member every year. The observing faculty members should write a report that should be included in the observed faculty member's annual review. The observed faculty member has the right to write a response to the review, also to be included in the file.

Section C. The Performance Review Committee should arrange for one tenured faculty member to observe the teaching of every departmental tenured faculty member once every three years. The observing faculty member should write a report that should be included in the observed faculty member's annual review. The observed faculty member has the right to write a response to the review, to be included in the file.

Section D. Departmental TTF members undergoing review should be able to assume that discussions concerning performance evaluation, promotion, and tenure center on, and judgments follow from, performance in three areas – scholarship, research, or creative activity; teaching; and service – and are based on evidence made available before and during deliberations.

Section E. Associate professors and professors evaluate assistant professors. Professors evaluate other professors and associate professors.

Section F. The Department normally expects that a candidate for tenure and promotion to associate professor will have published at least one scholarly monograph judged by the tenured faculty to be of sufficient quality or, in the judgment of the evaluator(s), the equivalent thereof. Except under extraordinary circumstances, the publication(s) must be in the final form or be at the stage of the process of production in which it is under contract and in page-proof form (or its electronic equivalent). Usually an additional research and publication record of comparable quality and quantity is expected for promotion to professor.

Section G. Normally it is expected that a tenured faculty member, as evidence of an on-going research agenda, meets expectations by producing each year a scholarly article or the equivalent thereof. For purposes of the annual review, as regards research and publication, a faculty member who publishes more than one peer-reviewed article a year or the equivalent thereof in the period since the last major review may be judged to have exceeded expectations.

It is the quality of publications that is most important. Judgments, based as they are on the perceived value of the publications, may be informed by such matters as length and place of publication, readers' reports, reviews, and scholarly contributions as reflected by use made by others scholars in the field. Expectations as to the quantity of publications may vary in

accordance with views as to the degree of difficulty of the project undertaken, with some projects requiring more time and effort than others.

Section H. Normally it is expected that a TTF member will provide quality teaching to their students. Both the quality and quantity of teaching count, and judgments as to the academic quality of teaching and general teaching effectiveness depend on several types of evidence, such as peer evaluations, syllabi, distribution of grades, student evaluations, quality of assignments, the development of new courses and the ongoing revision of established courses, effective use of new technologies, and impressions otherwise received by faculty evaluators.

Faculty who teach independent studies, honors by contract, college scholars, chancellor's honors program, or other forms of undergraduate research mentoring for credit will be viewed as doing additional teaching beyond expectations. Faculty may accumulate banked course credit for teaching these students. Credit will be accumulated at a rate of 1 credit hour of banked time for every 12 student credit hours (SCH) generated. 36 student credit hours banked shall be viewed as the equivalent of one 3-credit course banked, which can be used for course release.

Section I. It is normally expected that all TTF will engage in service to the department. Untenured TTF in their first three years are only expected to do service for the department. Untenured TTF after their first three years and associate professors, in addition to departmental service, are expected to do some service external to the department such as service to the College, University, and profession. Full professors are expected to do service beyond that expected of individuals at lower ranks. Both the quality and quantity of service count, and it is therefore important that service be performed both willingly and well. Professional public outreach also contributes to the faculty member's service mission.

Section J. In all acts of departmental evaluation the following general principles will be taken into account:

1. Because levels of achievement in research, teaching, and service are likely to vary from year to year, it is the pattern of achievement in each area over time that matters most;
2. In cases of extraordinary achievement in one, or especially two, of the areas of research, teaching, and service, and expectations met in the other one or two, a faculty member may be judged to have exceeded expectations.

Section K. In the fourth year of a TTF member's tenure clock, the tenured faculty will conduct an extensive review of the TTF member's progress. The review will be carried out by an ad hoc review committee composed of tenured faculty members. One member of this committee

will be appointed at the request of the TTF member under review; the others will be appointed by the Head. By September 1 of the fourth year in the tenure clock, the TTF member will provide the faculty with the following materials:

1. A written summary describing past research, teaching, and service, as well as future research plans;
2. Copies of all previous publications and of any manuscripts or articles submitted for publication;
3. Copies of past course syllabi and teaching evaluations;
4. A current *curriculum vitae*; and
5. Other materials that the candidate deems supportive of retention.

The review committee will evaluate these materials, observe TTF member's teaching, and then submit a report to the Head in time for the Head's annual retention review meeting with the TTF member.

#### Article VIII. **Mentors**

- Section A. The Head will provide new TTF members with a faculty mentor in the first semester of the new appointment. The mentor should be chosen by request from the new TTF member, who may request more than one mentor, if desired. Tenured faculty at the associate professor rank may also request a faculty mentor at the professor rank, which the Head will choose in consultation with the faculty member. The Head will consult with the potential mentor(s) to confirm willingness to serve in this capacity. See the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* and the Best Practices for Faculty-to-Faculty Mentoring in the Faculty Senate's *Resources Manual*.
- Section B. Either the mentor or the mentee may discontinue the relationship at any time, leading to the appointment of a new mentor.
- Section C. At retention and promotion and tenure meetings, the mentor will report on the TTF member's progress. It is the mentor's responsibility to be well informed about the mentee's work and academic activities.

#### Article IX. **Appointment, Evaluation, Promotion, and Workload of Non-Tenure- Line Faculty**

- Section A. NTTF will be appointed by the Head for one-year renewable positions with no term limits. Full-time lecturers will normally hold the Ph.D. in an appropriate field, or at least have completed all requirements for the Ph.D. except the dissertation. Appointments of lecturers will be based on departmental teaching needs and annual evaluation of each lecturer. See

Chapter 4 of the *Faculty Handbook*.

- Section B. Each full-time lecturer should have a class observed by a tenured faculty member in his/her first semester of teaching, and the observation report should be added to his/her file. In addition, unless otherwise specified, full-time lecturers will be evaluated each spring semester by the Performance Review Committee. These evaluations will be based on class observation, a current *curriculum vitae*, syllabi, student evaluations and related correspondence if available. This evaluation will be given to the Head, who will then hold an annual evaluation meeting with each full-time lecturer before the end of spring classes. Lecturers may present a formal response to the annual evaluation to be added to their portfolio.
- Section C. A full-time lecturer who has demonstrated outstanding teaching, normally through five or more years of service, may be considered for the position of Senior Lecturer. Each year the Performance Review Committee will review and evaluate all eligible candidates for appointment to the rank of Senior Lecturer, and will make a recommendation to the Head. Evaluations will be based on class observations by tenured faculty members, student evaluations, and annual departmental evaluations. Other criteria used to determine promotion are related to the enhancement of teaching. Each Senior Lecturer should have a class observed by a tenured faculty member every second year, and the observation report should be added to his/her file. Every five years the TTF will review each Senior Lecturer to determine whether to renew the appointment.
- Section D. A full-time lecturer who has demonstrated consistent excellence in teaching at the rank of Senior Lecturer, typically for a period of three to five years, and who has performed one additional form of departmental service (as described in Section E), may be considered for nomination as a Distinguished Lecturer. Each year the Performance Review Committee will review and evaluate all eligible candidates for appointment to the rank of Distinguished Lecturer, and will make a recommendation to the Head. Other criteria used to determine promotion are related to the enhancement of teaching. Each Distinguished Lecturer should have a class observed by a tenured faculty member every second year, and the observation report should be added to his/her file. Every five years the TTF will review each Distinguished Lecturer to determine whether to renew the appointment.
- Section E. The workload of a full-time NTTF member at the rank of Lecturer is normally a 4-4 teaching assignment with no service responsibilities. If full-time Lecturers take on service responsibilities at the request of the Head, they will receive compensation in the form of additional pay or a course release for the service hours. NTTF at the rank of Senior Lecturer are expected to take on one service responsibility without additional compensation, such as advising students, serving as the Lecturers'

Representative, acting as faculty advisor to the Religious Studies Association, or an equivalent task. NTTF at the rank of Distinguished Lecturer are expected to add one additional service responsibility without additional compensation by serving on the Undergraduate Committee, Performance Review Committee, or Student Engagement Committee. All lecturers are encouraged to attend the first faculty meeting of each semester and to promote the undergraduate major and minor. They are welcome to participate in the departmental seminar and other departmental activities to the extent that they wish. See the *Faculty Handbook* 4.2.1.

Article X. **Ratification and Amendment of Bylaws**

Section A. The bylaws shall be ratified by a two-thirds vote of TTF at a meeting called for this purpose. Proxy voting will be permitted. No changes to Article IX can be made without offering current NTTF at least two weeks to evaluate the changes and make recommendations to the Bylaws Committee. The bylaws shall go into effect immediately upon their ratification.

Section B. These bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of the TTF, provided that the proposed amendment has been circulated to the departmental faculty at least five work days before the meeting at which it will be considered. Proxy voting will be permitted.

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