

Bylaws for the Governance of the Department of Religious Studies, UTK

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-line and non-tenure-line teaching personnel.
- Section B. Voting privileges will extend to all tenure-line 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-line faculty 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 tenure-line faculty 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 the departmental newsletter, the website, events of the Religious Studies Association, the Dungan Memorial Lecture, 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 tenure-line faculty member to one of three standing committees: the Curriculum Committee, the Advising Committee, and the Assessment Committee. When possible, each standing committee should include at least two tenure-line faculty members and a committee chair, plus the Head as a non-voting ex officio member. The expectation is that committee work will be shared fairly over time.

Section B. The Curriculum Committee is charged with overseeing and making recommendations about course offerings, catalog descriptions, and other curricular issues. It administers the departmental Honors major. The

Head appoints one member of this committee as the departmental Curriculum Representative to the College's curriculum committees.

Section C. The Advising Committee is charged with overseeing departmental student advising and recruitment efforts.

Section D. 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 will hold a one-year renewable position, and will be invited by the Head to any formal conversations regarding departmental lecturers or undergraduate curriculum.

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

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

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 UTK 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 tenure-line faculty 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 tenure-line faculty. Non-tenure-line faculty 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 tenure-line faculty. 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 tenure-line faculty. 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 tenure-line faculty 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 tenure-line faculty at the beginning of each academic year, along with a report regarding other departmental funds. The projected operating budget should then be revised and finalized in consultation with the tenure-line faculty.
- Section H. Any voting faculty member may request a secret ballot for a vote.
- Section I. Each semester the Head will assign one tenure-line faculty 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 tenure-line faculty.

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 Curriculum Committee by any departmental tenure-line faculty 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 Department Head should arrange for two tenured faculty members to observe the teaching of every departmental tenure-track faculty 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 Department Head 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 tenure-line faculty 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 book 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 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.
- Section H. In all acts of departmental evaluation the following general principles will be taken into account:
1. It is the quality of publications that is most important;
 2. 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, scholarly contributions as reflected by use made by others scholars in the field;
 3. 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;
 4. 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;
 5. Both the quality and quantity of service count, and it is therefore important that service be performed both willingly and well. There are various types of service for which faculty are to be rewarded: to the Department, College, University, and profession. Professional public outreach also contributes to the faculty member's service mission;
 6. 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;

7. 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 I.

In the fourth year of a tenure-track faculty member's tenure clock, the tenured faculty will conduct an extensive review of the tenure-track faculty member's progress. The review will be carried out by an ad hoc committee composed of tenured faculty members. One member of this committee will be appointed at the request of the tenure-track faculty member under review; the others will be appointed by the Head. By September 1 of the fourth year in the tenure clock, the tenure-track faculty 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 the tenure-track faculty member's teaching, and then submit a report to the Head in time for the Head's annual retention review meeting with the tenure-track faculty member.

Article VIII.

Mentors

Section A.

The Head will provide new tenure-track faculty members with a faculty mentor in the first semester of the new appointment. The mentor should be chosen by request from the new tenure-track faculty member, who may request more than one mentor, if desired. 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 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 tenure-track faculty 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. Non-tenure-line faculty 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 tenured departmental faculty members appointed by the Head. These evaluations will be based on class observation, a current *curriculum vitae*, syllabi, and student evaluations 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 tenure-line faculty 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 tenure-line faculty 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, may be considered for nomination as a Distinguished Lecturer. Each year the tenure-line faculty 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 tenure-line faculty will review each Distinguished Lecturer to determine whether to renew the appointment.

Section E. The workload of full-time lecturers is normally a 4-4 teaching assignment with no service responsibilities. 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 tenure-line faculty at a meeting called for this purpose. Proxy voting will be permitted. No changes to Article IX can be made without offering current non-tenure-line faculty 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 tenure-line faculty, 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.

Revised 3/11/77
Revised 1/14/80
Revised 8/21/93
Revised 3/1/99
Revised 7/31/02
Revised 5/7/12
Revised 4/28/14