

University of Illinois

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY BYLAWS

(Revised version adopted by a majority of the voting members of the Department on 1 September 1993)

(updated 22 September 1998, 3 September 2003, 16 October 2008, 3 September 2014, 3 May 2017)

Article I: Administration of the Department

The Department of History shall be administered by a chair, assisted by an executive committee elected by voting members of the department, as defined by the University Statutes (art. IV, sec. 2B). The chair may have such faculty and administrative personnel assistance as is approved by the executive committee. Guidelines and departmental administrative policies not detailed in the bylaws are listed in the annually up-dated History: Department Operating System (History.DOS).

Article II: The Chair

The chair shall be appointed by the Board of Trustees in accordance with the University Statutes (Art. IV, sec. 2a) ". . . on recommendation of the chancellor and the president after consultation with the dean of the college and with the Executive Committee of the department. . . ." The chair shall be chosen to serve a term of five years which may be renewed. In accordance with revised university statutes, the executive committee will be consulted on the chair's performance annually by the dean of the college, but during the third year of a term the committee will be expected, to conduct a thorough review of the chair's performance. During the academic year preceding the expiration of the five year term, but no later than March 1, the department shall make known its wishes regarding the renewal of an incumbent's term either through individual consultation with the dean of the college or by secret ballot, or both, as decided by the executive committee. When a new chair is to be selected, the dean shall be asked to consult department members on an individual basis.

Article III: Executive Committee

Section a. The executive committee shall consist of the chair of the department serving as its chair (with a vote) and four (4) elected members (with a vote each). The Director of Graduate Studies, who also serves as Associate Chair, shall be a non-elected, non-voting ex-officio member of the Executive Committee, able to substitute for the chair when the chair is absent. There shall be no restrictions for these offices as to rank or field, except that the current Statutes require members to be of the rank of assistant professor and above.

Section b. Members other than the chair and the secretary (if appointed) shall be elected for a two-year term, two members to be elected each year, and such members shall not be eligible for more than two consecutive two-year terms or parts thereof.

Section c. Elections shall be held each year in April, and those elected shall take office at the beginning of the next academic year. All tenure track and non-tenure track faculty members with at least a 25% appointment in the department will be eligible to vote in the election. (Non-tenure track faculty members include those with the titles of lecturer, senior lecturer, teaching assistant professor and teaching associate professor). By April 1 the chair shall circulate a list of all department members who are eligible for election and who have not specifically asked the chair to excuse them; each member shall have as many votes as vacancies. Any member of the department who receives four or more votes on that initial secret ballot shall be a candidate duly nominated.

Section d. A ballot listing those duly nominated shall then be submitted to the departmental membership in mid-April. In even-numbered years two positions shall be filled, and each department member shall be entitled to one vote for each position. Committee members will be elected by obtaining an absolute majority of the ballots cast. If one or both positions are not filled on the first ballot, the department shall proceed to vote on the most popular nominees in the number of vacancies plus one. The process may be repeated if necessary. In the event of a tie for a single vacancy, the candidates in question shall draw lots to resolve the tie.

In odd-numbered years two positions shall be filled, and each department member shall have two votes; these may be cast entirely for one nominee or distributed among the nominees in units of not less than one vote. The three persons receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot will be placed on the second ballot, and voting will proceed in the same manner. The two persons on the second ballot receiving the highest number of votes shall be declared elected. Ties for third place on the first ballot or for second place on the second ballot will be resolved by drawing lots.

Section e. In the event any member of the executive committee dies, retires, resigns, goes on leave, or leaves the University's employment, the voting members of the department shall nominate and elect a member to complete the unexpired term by a simple majority vote as specified in the first paragraph of Section d.

Section f. The executive committee shall meet at the call of the chair of the department. In the event of his or her absence, the Associate Chair shall convene the committee for all necessary purposes and retain the right to vote in the absence of the chair. If three members of the committee so request in writing, the chair shall convene the committee within five days after receipt of the request.

Section g. Whenever a new department chair is designated, the chair elect shall become an ex officio, non-voting member of the executive committee from the time of selection by the executive committee of the department and the dean of the college.

Section h. Substantive minutes of each meeting of the executive committee shall be circulated in duplicated form to the department members within three working days after said meeting.

Article IV: Department Minutes

Section a. The department chair shall nominate and the department shall confirm a recording secretary at the first department meeting of the academic year. A secretary pro tem shall be appointed by the presiding officer at any meeting from which the recording secretary is absent.

Section b. The recording secretary shall keep minutes of all department meetings.

Section c. The minutes shall record every action taken, together with the names of the mover and seconder. Any person may request that his or her vote, affirmative or negative, be recorded, and it shall be entered in the minutes accordingly. Summaries of debate and discussion need not be included in the minutes provided that final action on all matters brought to the attention of the department are specified and all actions taken are recorded. At every meeting of the department, the minutes of the previous meeting shall be read. After approval, the minutes, in typewritten form signed by the secretary, shall be preserved in a substantial binder in the departmental office, where they shall be open to the inspection of any voting member on request. No action of the department shall be final, binding, or effective unless recorded in the minutes.

Article V: Duties of the Chair, the Executive Committee, and the Grievance Committee

Section a. The respective duties of the chair and executive committee are laid down in general terms by the University Statutes and in more particular terms by Sections b through j below. All matters not otherwise detailed in the Statutes or the Bylaws shall lie within the province of the chair.

Section b. In dealing with matters of general policy, the chair and executive committee shall make recommendations to the department for its decision. In dealing with the budget and with the appointment of visiting faculty members, the chair and the executive committee shall be empowered to make final decisions, provided that the matters involved have been presented in general terms to the department for discussion. In confidential matters where general departmental discussion is inadvisable, the executive committee shall consult all voting members of the department individually, except as provided in Sections d and e below.

Section c. The voting members of the department shall be consulted on new appointments in a meeting of the department. The chair and executive committee shall recommend one or more persons for any vacancy, indicating an order of preference if desired. The dossiers on these persons shall be made available to all voting members in the department office one week before the meeting. The department will discuss the candidates at the meeting. Any vote taken on the recommendations shall have the status of an advisory opinion of the department, leaving unchanged the ultimate responsibility of the chair and executive committee.

Section d. Every tenured or tenure-track faculty member shall be reviewed annually, according to Provost Communication #21 to assess their “contributions to the mission of the department.” Procedures for pre-tenure reviews, for third-year reviews, and for annual post-tenure reviews are outlined in Hist.DOS. This guide to department procedures shall be distributed annually at the beginning of the academic year to each faculty member.

Section e. Recommendations to the university with regard to the renewal or non-renewal of appointments in the rank of instructor or assistant professor shall conform to the stated policy of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Such recommendations shall be made by the chair and the executive committee during the first semester of the academic year after consultation (individually in confidence and subsequently at a general meeting) with tenured members of the department in residence.

Section f. Recommendations to the university on promotion to the rank of associate professor shall normally follow the procedure outlined in Section d. Recommendations to the university on promotion to the rank of professor shall follow this same procedure, except that consultation shall be limited to department members of professorial rank. General procedures and criteria for promotion are detailed in the History: Operating System publication.

Section g. Any tenured or tenure-track member of the department who feels aggrieved because the chair and executive committee have failed to recommend either the renewal of his or her contract or promotion shall have the right to request reconsideration of the decision by the chair and executive committee. That member shall have the right to present in written and/or oral form all evidence which might have bearing upon such a reconsideration. The timing of any oral presentation shall be determined by the chair. Such an appeal shall not preclude recourse to other procedures of appeal provided by the University. Other grievances relating to action or inaction by the chair and/or executive committee may be taken to the elected departmental grievance committee. If this committee agrees to consider the case, its deliberations will result in a confidential written report to the executive committee with a copy provided to the grievant. Failing a final resolution by the executive committee, the procedures for “broader faculty review” outlined in Provost’s Communication #21 may be invoked.

Section h. Full and associate professors are eligible for election to the grievance committee, which shall consist of three members serving two-year terms. The voting members of the department shall elect two members in the spring of even-numbered years and one member in the spring of odd-numbered years by a simple majority as specified in the first paragraph of Article III, section d. In elections held in odd-numbered years, only full professors shall be eligible for election. Members of the Executive Committee shall not be eligible to serve on the Grievance Committee. The Committee shall elect its own chair.

Section i. Teaching assistants shall be appointed by the chair with the approval of the executive committee.

Section j. Stenographic and clerical personnel shall be chosen by the chair.

Section k. The chair shall have the authority to appoint members of the department to departmental committees in accordance with Article VII.

Article VI: Department Meetings

Section a. The department of history shall hold a regular meeting on the first Wednesday of every month (except in June, July, August, and January) at 3:30 p.m. If the stated time falls on a holiday or a day not within term time, then the meeting shall be postponed until the next Wednesday that is not a holiday and that is within term time. In the event that no items of new or old business have arisen one week in advance of a regular meeting, the chair may cancel it.

Section b. Special meetings of the department may be called with less than the required notice by the chair or executive committee. Special meetings shall also be called by the chair if so requested in writing by at least 25% of the voting members of the department, such request shall state the purpose of the meeting; and such meeting shall be called within ten days after receipt of the request.

Section c. A written notice of every meeting of the department shall be sent at least one week in advance to every voting member of the department, including members not in residence, to whom notice shall be sent by email. It shall also be sent to 0% faculty members. The notice of the meeting shall include a substantive agenda. Items except for amendments to these bylaws may be added to the agenda after the notice of the meeting has been sent out.

Section d. Hereafter, faculty members with a minimum of .25 FTE tenure track appointment in the department will vote on all matters. Non-tenure track faculty members will vote on all matters with the exception of personnel and budget issues. Faculty members with a 0% appointment may attend meetings but not vote. At regular and special meetings of the department a quorum shall consist of a majority of all tenure track and non-track faculty members with a minimum of .25 FTE. At meetings held otherwise than during the two regular semesters of the academic year, a quorum shall consist of two-thirds of the voting members officially in residence; provided that actions taken at a meeting attended by less than a majority of the voting members shall be final only after the minutes of the meeting have been circulated to all voting members and a majority of them have signified in writing their approval of the actions taken.

Section e. At least one meeting each year shall be devoted to a consideration of the graduate students in the department.

Section f. In accordance with University Statutes, at least one meeting during each academic year shall consider "questions of departmental governance and educational policy."

Article VII: Committees

Section a. Standing committees of the department may be created by the executive committee, the members to be appointed each year by the chair with the approval of the executive committee.

Section b. The chair, with the approval of the executive committee, may appoint ad hoc committees. Insofar as the work of an ad hoc committee deals with general policy, its conclusions shall be reported by the chair and executive committee to the department.

Section c. All standing committees shall render oral or written reports to the department at least annually.

Section d. The chair shall have the authority to appoint undergraduate and/or graduate students to appropriate committees. In making such appointments, the chair shall take into account the recommendations of representative student organizations.

Article VIII: Review and Amendment

Department bylaws shall be reviewed at the beginning of the term of each new chair and amended as appropriate. Bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the department. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the department and shall be submitted in writing to the chair. The chair shall circulate proposed bylaws to all voting members of the department at least two weeks before their consideration in departmental meetings, and they shall not be adopted unless approved by a majority of the voting members of the department.