

BYLAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO
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I. Authority

The bylaws of the department are authorized by Section 6 of the University Bylaws.

II. Mission and Priorities of the Department

- A. The Department of Sociology, a unit of the School of Social Research and Justice Studies of the College of Liberal Arts, is committed to the production of knowledge and to the transmission of this knowledge. These two goals are directly related to a third major mission of the department: service to both the profession and to the community.
1. As part of a research-oriented discipline, the department is committed to the production of new knowledge. This goal is accomplished by ongoing faculty research, supervision of graduate and undergraduate student theses, directing independent research, and critically evaluating past research in order to contribute and to provide alternative theoretical schemes.
 2. The department is committed to the transmission of knowledge, both old and new, within the context of a liberal arts tradition. The teaching functions of the department are carried out in many diverse but complementary fashions; classroom and on-line instruction, tutorials, internships, reading groups, discussion groups, informal discussion and debate, assignment of supervised projects, supervised independent reading, counseling of students, and serving on student committees. Within this liberal arts tradition, the department views one of its major functions to be that of providing the student with alternative ways of interpreting social processes. Our commitment is to both graduate and undergraduate education. We view sociology as a discipline that requires scientific rigor in the critical analysis of societal processes.
 3. As a service unit, the department contributes in several different ways. Foremost, of course, are the teaching and research functions. Through their intimate relations with each other, teaching and research provide the basis for addressing old problems from new perspectives; they also

provide the possibility for examining novel problems from perspectives, which are critical of preconceived solutions. In other words, some of our major bases for service center on the production of knowledge and provisions for creative and critical dialogue, which inform outreach activities of the department.

Several areas of contribution for these professional services are: engaging in college and university committee work, and providing service to various governmental, civic, and professional groups.

III. Organization of the Department

A. Department Faculty and Staff

1. The department faculty is defined as those members of the department staff who occupy continuing .50 or more professional positions within the department. Members of the sociology faculty may hold joint appointments in other divisions or departments of the Nevada System of Higher Education provided that all arrangements are made with the full knowledge and consent of the Department of Sociology and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts. The continuing department professional faculty shall have full voting privileges at department meetings.
2. The department staff is defined as consisting of the department faculty plus the following:
 - (a) individuals who hold continuing positions of less than .50 FTE;
 - (b) the department administrative assistant;
 - (c) graduate students who hold Teaching or Research Assistantship positions;
 - (d) individuals who hold adjunct positions in the department;
 - (e) any other individuals with a current teaching or research appointment in the department;
 - (f) emeritus faculty who previously served in the department.

B. The Chair

1. The department chair will represent the department faculty to the College of Liberal Arts, the School of Social Research and Justice Studies, and implement College and University policies within the department.
2. The position of chair shall be limited to tenure-holding, full-time members within the department faculty.
3. The term of office of the chair shall be three years, and may be renewed once following a review by the faculty and at the recommendation of the dean, for a maximum of six years.
4. The department chair is appointed by the Provost of the University upon the recommendation of the Dean of the College. It is the responsibility of the department's faculty to nominate an individual to serve as chair and to transmit its recommendation to the Dean of the College.
5. The chair will be considered nominated by election upon receiving at least a simple majority vote (51%) of all full-time department faculty. Such balloting will continue until a majority vote is achieved.
6. The chair will be nominated by election at the beginning of the last semester of the final year of service of the incumbent chair and will serve as chair-elect until the expiration of the current chair's service. The department will meet under the direction of a senior member of the faculty to decide whether the present chair shall be recommended to the Dean for continuance for a second three-year term, or a new chair is elected. This review and subsequent ballot shall occur during the last scheduled department meeting of the final year of the incumbent chair's term. The annual evaluation of the department chair shall be done by a senior member of the faculty in consultation with the faculty.
7. In the event that circumstances require the replacement of the chair or chair-designate, a special meeting of all department faculty members shall be convened for this purpose.

8. Associate Chair

The Chair may appoint an Associate Chair to assist the Chair in conducting department business. The term and responsibilities of the Associate Chair shall be determined by the Chair in consultation with the Associate Chair and shall be presented in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by both the Chair and the Associate Chair, which shall be shared with all regular faculty in the department. The MOU will be represented in the role statement of the Associate Chair and the Associate Chair shall be evaluated according to department bylaws, with input from the Chair on performance of duties as Associate Chair.

C. Department Committees

1. The department chair will appoint standing and ad hoc committees to assist him or her in supervising certain areas of the department's responsibilities.

2. The department chair will be an ex-officio, non-voting member of all committees, excepting the committee which conducts his or her evaluation.

3. Standing committees shall consist of the following and of such other committees as may be later deemed necessary:

(a) The Curriculum Committee will be responsible for reviewing the department curriculum and course offerings, and making recommendations relevant thereto to the faculty. Members of this committee will be appointed by the chair from the faculty. The chair of this committee will be appointed by the department chair.

(b) Personnel Committee

A Personnel Committee shall be established at the beginning of each fall semester using the following process:

1. The committee will consist of three tenured faculty members. Two

will be selected by the continuing faculty, one to serve a three-year term and the other a two-year term. These terms will be staggered to produce continuity of membership. A third member of the committee will be appointed annually by the department chair. A faculty member may decline to serve without prejudice.

2. In order to produce staggered terms, the initial and subsequent terms of the elected members will be two and three years, respectively. The length of term of those elected will be decided by the number of votes received, with the person receiving the highest number of votes getting the longest available term. In the event of a tie vote, the length of the term shall be decided by a coin toss.

3. When an elected faculty member goes off the committee, that member will be replaced by a vote of the department faculty. If an elected member resigns from the committee, he or she will be replaced by a vote of the department.

4. The Personnel Committee shall:

a. Advise the chair in matters concerning promotion to associate professor, tenure and termination of faculty members as specified in the department bylaws. For consideration of applications for promotion to the rank of professor, a new Committee (the Rank IV Committee) shall be constituted by an election following procedures outlined above to include a minimum of three senior members of the department faculty who hold this rank. In the absence of the required number of senior faculty members in the department, the department will, in consultation with other senior faculty members, recommend to the dean several senior faculty members at the university who have teaching and research experience in a related discipline, from which the dean shall select one or more senior faculty member(s) to achieve the required minimum number of senior faculty members to serve on the Committee.

b. Advise and assist the chair in conducting annual reviews of progress toward promotion and tenure for probationary faculty, and progress toward promotion for associate professors with time in rank.

c. Assist the chair in the annual evaluations and merit rankings of the department faculty members by making recommendations to the chair concerning the evaluation and merit ranking of the faculty members according to relevant provisions of the CLA and UNR Bylaws and of the Code. When members of the personnel committee are being considered for merit evaluation, they shall recuse themselves from discussion of their case. In the event of requests by faculty members for reconsideration of an evaluation, the chair and the individual faculty member shall discuss the matter and handle the reconsideration of the evaluation according to relevant bylaw provisions for the CLA and Code.

d. Assist the chair in reviewing and making recommendations concerning faculty sabbatical application requests, as required by the Code and UNR bylaws, and advising the chair on other personnel matters as needed.

5. Department Faculty Vote on Tenure or Promotion to Full Professor
If the Personnel Committee or the Rank IV Committee recommends a person for tenure or for promotion to full professor, that recommendation shall be put to a vote, by secret ballot, of all department faculty members holding that status or rank. That vote is to be taken after a review of the submitted application materials and discussion of the recommendation in a meeting of those eligible to vote. The vote shall be taken into account by the chair in making a recommendation to the dean, and it shall be reported to the relevant committee and to the dean.

(c) The Student-Faculty Advisory Committee will be responsible for establishing and maintaining productive dialogue among the undergraduate, graduate student and faculty community. This committee is designed to function as a mechanism through which all students in the department may participate in department activities, which involve their own academic and professional interests. The membership of this committee shall consist of one undergraduate major, one graduate student and

two members of the faculty. Appointments to this committee shall be made by the department chair for terms of one year and faculty members will serve on a rotating basis. The chair of this committee will be appointed by the department chair.

- (d) The Graduate Program Committee will be responsible for the administration of the graduate program within the department. The members of this committee will be appointed by the chair. The committee will be chaired by the Director of Graduate Studies. Graduate students will be requested to elect a representative to establish a liaison with this committee.
- 4. Other committees will be established by the chair when the need arises and their composition will be determined by the chair.

IV. Department Procedures and Policies

A. Department Meetings

1. Attendance at department meetings shall be restricted to members of the department faculty.
2. Members of the department faculty shall have full voting rights as defined in the College of Liberal Arts Bylaws. The chair has the voting privileges of a regular faculty member.
3. Teaching Assistants, Research Assistants and other persons may, upon invitation by the chair, attend meetings of the regular faculty but shall have no voting rights.
4. Regular department meetings shall be held twice a semester. Other department meetings may be called at the discretion of the chair or upon the request of one-third of the department faculty. An agenda will be prepared and distributed to faculty members prior to each meeting. All recommendations and decisions made in department meetings shall be made a matter of record.
5. The chair will provide information in a timely manner to all regular faculty on the operating budget, instructional funding request, and

other major departmental expenditures. The authority for routine administration of the department budget will be delegated to the chair.

6. All policy matters proposed in department meetings shall require a simple majority vote (51%) for passage, with a quorum consisting of a majority of the members eligible to vote. Any faculty member may request a faculty vote. Voting may be done by e-mail on non-personnel matters.

B. Faculty Search and Recruitment

1. Department procedures will conform to University Affirmative Action and Human Resources rules and guidelines concerning the hiring of all new professional staff.
2. Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Letters of Appointment (LOAs). The department chair shall appoint TAs and LOAs following consultations as appropriate with the department faculty.
3. Faculty members. Recommendations to the Dean concerning the hiring of new tenure-track or continuing faculty members will be made by the department chair following one or more search committee meetings at which applicants have been discussed and ranked. The search committee will consist of all tenure-track faculty of the department. To be recommended for a position in the department, a candidate will be selected by at least two-thirds vote of the search committee members.

C. Promotion, Tenure and Annual Evaluations

1. Personnel Evaluation Criteria and Procedures. In accordance with Chapter 5 of the University Bylaws and Chapter 5 of the CLA Bylaws, personnel evaluations will be guided by the mission and priorities established in the department Bylaws. The University Bylaws and CLA Bylaws stipulate that professional responsibilities be listed under the following categories: (1) instruction, (2) research, scholarly, and creative work, and (3) public and university service, and other

professional activities. Personnel evaluations and recommendations will be made with regard to these criteria. Unless otherwise specified, all personnel recommendations will be based upon decisions reached by the personnel committee, with a simple majority required to pass a motion, and transmitted by the department chair to the Dean, who shall consult with the director of the School of Social research and Justice Studies concerning such recommendations. Such recommendations shall be made with reference to the following general criteria:

- (a) Research and Scholarship. The following evidence will be used as a basis for evaluating the faculty member's research accomplishments: publications, preparation of grant proposals and grant awards, presentation of papers at professional meetings, and work in progress. Emphasis will be placed upon the quality of scholarly work and not merely on the quantity of work. Quality will be gauged by both peer judgment and by evaluations from representatives of the discipline at large. Because of the diverse orientation in our discipline, it will be necessary in some instances to use consultants from the discipline at large to insure informed, competent judgments.
- (b) Instruction. The following evidence will be used as a guide for faculty evaluation:
 - (i) organization of material (e.g., syllabi)
 - (ii) presentation of material
 - (iii) course content
 - (iv) basis for evaluation of students
 - (v) student evaluations
 - (vi) student mentoring activities

In the case of tenure and promotion decisions, evaluation of effective teaching of probationary faculty will be gauged by course visitations by senior faculty members. These evaluators will provide independent assessments of each probationary faculty member they are assigned to evaluate. Each faculty

evaluator will prepare a written evaluation to be submitted to the Personnel Committee. This evaluation will be done annually throughout the probationary period and used by the committee as one source of information in its deliberations.

In addition to the above, the Personnel Committee will consider each individual's record in regard to the following: advising and counseling students, supervising directed reading and research, direction of theses and curriculum development.

- (c) Public, University, and Professional Service. Contribution in these areas include: college and university committee work, and providing professionally related service to various governmental, civic, and professional groups. In addition, we recognize the importance of individual contribution to interdisciplinary programs associated with the department and other programs that are not directly related to the department.

Other activities will include participation in professional meetings, serving on editorial and review boards, serving as external reviewers, official duties in professional organizations, and consulting activities.

These above criteria are presented in a general order of priority with emphasis on the first two. In the view of the department, research and teaching competence are mutually dependent, particularly where a graduate program is also involved.

2. Objectives and Policies Concerning Promotion and Tenure. The department views a rating of “excellent” in teaching or research and at least “satisfactory” in the other two areas as the minimum criteria for consideration for promotion and the granting of tenure. The department desires to promote personnel with substantial scholarly achievements in a timely manner; the department does not consider time-in-rank per se as a precondition or determinant of eligibility for promotion.

(a) Criteria for tenure:

A candidate for tenure shall have the doctoral degree; shall have demonstrated effectiveness as a classroom teacher; shall have performed substantial creative or research activity resulting in publication or comparable productivity; shall have performed service to the college, university and professionally related service to the community or the discipline; and shall have demonstrated capacity for further significant intellectual and professional achievement.

(b) Criteria for promotion:

(1) To Assistant Professor: (Rank II)

A candidate for promotion to Assistant Professor shall have the doctoral degree; shall have demonstrated teaching ability; and shall have given evidence of continued professional growth through study, professional activities, and creative work.

(2) To Associate Professor: (Rank III)

A candidate for promotion to Associate Professor shall have a record of substantial accomplishments in the previous rank; shall have given evidence of effectiveness in university teaching activities and advisement of students; shall have performed substantial research or creative activity resulting in publication and presentations; shall have performed service to the college, the university and professionally related service to the community or the discipline; shall have demonstrated capacity for further significant intellectual and professional achievement, and shall have demonstrated that they are in the process of establishing a national reputation.

(3) To Professor: (Rank IV)

A candidate for promotion to Professor shall have a record of substantial accomplishments in the previous ranks; shall have established a sustained record of excellence and attained national or international recognition in the special professional field; shall have a sustained record of substantial publications judged significant by peers in the field; shall have achieved distinction in teaching and related activities; and shall have provided distinguished professional service to the university, to the college, and to the community or the profession.

(c) Criteria for annual merit recognition:

A candidate for annual merit recognition shall have demonstrated effectiveness as a classroom teacher as evidenced by student or peer evaluations; shall have performed creative or research activity resulting in publication and presentations; shall have prepared grant proposals and received grant awards, shall have performed service to the college, the university, and professionally related service to the community or the discipline. It shall be the duty of the department chair, in consultation with the Annual Review Committee, to prepare the faculty evaluations and to transmit the merit recommendations to the Dean of the College. Each member of the faculty will be shown his or her evaluation and he or she will have the opportunity to discuss its content with the Chair. Should any member of the faculty disagree with the recommendation or the content of the evaluation, the member has the right for reconsideration of the merit recommendation or the content of the evaluation by the Annual Review Committee or the Chair.

D. Student and Clerical Assistance

The department chair shall be responsible for the hiring of the department administrative assistant, student workers and the appointment of graduate

assistants in consultation with the members of the faculty. The duties of the immediate supervisors of student workers and graduate assistants shall be clearly defined to the student and circulated in writing to all members of the department faculty. Student use of department facilities (equipment or space) shall also be assigned by the department chair in consultation with the supervising member. The administrative assistant is to be evaluated by the department chair in consultation with the department faculty.

E. Revision of the Department Bylaws

Bylaws of the department shall be in force upon approval by a two-thirds majority vote of the department faculty in a written secret ballot, and after approval by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and the President. Revision of the department bylaws will require the same procedure for approval.