

University of Houston
Department of Comparative Cultural Studies

Bylaws

(revised, Nov. 20, 2023)

Section I. Composition of the Department: The Regular Faculty

The terms “Department,” “faculty,” and “membership” refer to the regular faculty of the Department of Comparative Cultural Studies (CCS). The “regular” faculty consist of all full-time, non-visiting faculty, including professors, associate professors, assistant professors, and non-tenure-track instructional faculty who are full-time employees of the University of Houston on renewable contracts, who hold at least a 50% appointment in CCS.

Section II. Voting Provisions

All regular faculty (as described in Section I) have voting rights.

Faculty with a joint appointment in CCS whose tenure home is a different department have full voting rights in CCS on any issues that are unit-specific (e.g. hiring decisions, changes to the departmental bylaws and other policies, tenure and promotion decisions in those instances where they may be eligible, according to these bylaws), but may NOT vote on a) issues that are College- or University-level (e.g. voting for Faculty Senate representation), or b) changes to the departmental bylaws or other policies governing the pre-tenure review or award of promotion and tenure.

Section III. Affiliated Faculty

A. Criteria for Affiliated Faculty Status

A prospective affiliated faculty member should hold a PhD and be a member of a department at the University of Houston.

B. Process for Designating and Rescinding Status as an Affiliated Faculty Member

A tenure-track or tenured member of the CCS department nominates a prospective affiliated faculty member for affiliation with one or more of the programs housed within CCS.

If there is not a consensus to approve the nomination, all regular full-time faculty members affiliated with the relevant program(s) then vote on whether to award Affiliated Faculty status to the nominee.

Affiliated Faculty status may be reevaluated at any time, but not more than once per academic year, whereupon the regular faculty associated with the relevant program vote on whether to maintain or rescind Affiliated Faculty status.

C. Roles or Powers of Affiliated Faculty Members

Affiliated Faculty may cross-list their courses, as appropriate, for the program(s) with which they have an affiliated status, in consultation with the relevant program director (and/or the CCS department Chairperson). Affiliated Faculty are expected to coordinate the scheduling of particular cross-listed courses with the relevant program director (and/or the CCS department Chairperson).

Affiliated Faculty have no voting rights or governance powers or service duties within CCS, but may be included in program-specific discussions, as appropriate, and may on occasion be invited to attend special expanded department faculty meetings, as appropriate.

Affiliated Faculty may serve as MA thesis committee co-chairs or “internal” MA thesis committee members, as appropriate, based on the relevance of their specific academic expertise to the thesis topic.

Section IV. Departmental Meetings

A. Frequency and Notice

Meetings of the Department shall be held at times designated by the Chairperson or at the request of at least two voting members of the Department. Customarily, meetings are held monthly during the academic term, and convened by the department Chairperson. Ordinarily, and whenever possible, written notice of a departmental meeting shall be provided to all members of the regular faculty by one week in advance of the meeting. Ordinarily, and whenever possible, a proposed agenda prepared by the department Chairperson will be circulated to all regular faculty within no less than 48 hours of the scheduled meeting, providing members the opportunity to propose additional items for inclusion on the agenda. In no event shall departmental meetings be held less frequently than once each semester.

B. Quorum

The presence of a quorum shall be required for voting on policy decisions assigned to the faculty by the Department Chairperson, the College, or the University, or as assigned to themselves by the faculty as the constituent decision-making body of the Department.

A quorum shall consist of the presence, either physically or by live telecommunications, of two-thirds of the regular voting members of the Department.

For program-specific decisions, a quorum shall consist of the presence, either physically or by live telecommunications, of two-thirds of the regular voting members affiliated with that program.

C. Majority Vote

All decisions will be made by a simple majority vote, consisting of approval of a motion by more than one-half of the voting members present, either physically or by live telecommunications, in the meeting. The department Chairperson will vote on every item. In case of an even division of the vote (a tie), the opinion favored by the Chairperson's vote will be considered decisive.

D. Summer Session Meetings

Departmental meetings are not held during the Summer session. However, regular voting members may meet during Summer session, either physically or by live telecommunications, either: a) to conduct the emergency business of the Department, as determined by the Chairperson; or b) to conduct specified business that will have been authorized in advance by the final meeting of the Spring semester, in which case any and all other business shall be deferred until the first departmental meeting following the commencement of the Fall term.

Section V. Officers of the Department

A. Chairperson

1. Term of Office and Selection. The department Chairperson is elected for a three year term by the tenured and tenure-track members of the Department. The Chairperson's term of office and means of selection are regulated by procedures specified in the current bylaws of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.
2. General Executive Responsibility. The Chairperson is the chief executive officer of the Department, and shall be responsible for supervising all administrative functions of the Department in accordance with the policies determined by the Department, College, and University.
 - a. The Chairperson holds principal responsibility for managing the finances of the Department, including the preparation of a budget, the coordination of faculty member's salaries, the planning of special expenditures, such as contracting part-time faculty members and summer teaching, accounting for income from special sources, such as donor giving or summer programs abroad, and the distribution of available funds for specific activities such as faculty research travel. In regard to the handling of these financial matters, the Chairperson is accountable to the Dean of the College.
 - b. The Chairperson holds ultimate responsibility, in consultation with program directors, for coordinating the curricular offerings of the Department, including the assignment of courses to individual faculty members, the scheduling of those courses, and reporting of the course offerings to the College and the Registrar of the University.

3. Specific Responsibilities of the Chairperson.

The Chairperson shall:

- a. Be the only member of the Department to represent the Department in its relation to the higher administration of the University of Houston, other units of the University of Houston, and with other academic communities. The Chairperson may designate a member of the faculty to represent the Department at a specific meeting or function, when necessary.
- b. Recruit and direct the administrative staff and all other departmental assistance.
- c. Convene and preside over departmental meetings, including preparation of each meeting's agenda.
- d. In consultation with any ad-hoc departmental Promotion & Tenure Committee, review and recommend faculty for promotion, tenure, or termination.
- e. In consultation with the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC), review and recommend faculty for merit-based salary increases, or any other special awards, or termination. Whereas Annual Performance Review (APR) scores are determined and assigned by the FEC, the outcome and any recommendations from the FEC review are conveyed to the faculty by the Department Chairperson in writing, and in the case of an appeal from an individual faculty member, the final APR score is determined by the Chair (but a final adjusted score may never be lower than the score allocated by the FEC).
- f. Regularly consult with the full regular faculty of the Department on decisions that affect the members.
- g. In consultation with the Department's regular faculty, initiate the search for candidates for appointment to faculty positions and appoint hiring search committees.
- h. Make decisions regarding initial salary offers, renegotiation, and annual salary increments.
- i. Appoint the directors of programs within the Department in consultation with Departmental faculty and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.
- j. In consultation with program directors, appoint instructional faculty who are not full-time or who are hired on an interim, short-term basis. Whenever possible, the Chairperson will consult with relevant faculty affiliated with the program on such program-specific decisions.
- k. Appoint any individual faculty member or an ad-hoc committee to perform any of the specified functions of the office of the Chairperson, as listed above. When appropriate, the Department shall be informed of the extent and duration of such a delegation of responsibilities.
- l. Supervise any elections within the Department, such as the selection of members for service on standing committees.

Section VI. Committees

- A. The Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) shall conduct Annual Performance Reviews (APR) for all regular faculty, determine and allocate APR scores according to the departmental APR policy, and make recommendations of individual faculty members for any special commendation or recognition, or for post-tenure Enhanced Performance Evaluation (EPE), or termination. The FEC is a standing committee that consists of the Department Chairperson and three tenured faculty members, elected by the regular faculty or appointed by the Department Chairperson to serve two-year terms. Those appointed will begin serving their term in the following semester. Faculty serving as members of the committee may succeed themselves. The Department Chairperson designates one of the FEC members to serve as Committee Chair to coordinate and supervise the committee's work. The Department Chairperson participates in the committee's work in an *ex officio* capacity and presides over the deliberations of the Faculty Evaluation Committee in an advisory role.
- B. Promotion & Tenure Committees shall be committees composed of three regular faculty members appointed and convened by the Chairperson on an ad-hoc basis to review individual faculty members for promotion and/or tenure, and oversee the process of the Promotion and Tenure review at the departmental level, adhering to the College and University policies and timelines.

Section VII. Faculty Appointments

- A. Tenure-track appointments are to be made in accordance with established procedures of the University and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Recommendations to the Dean's office are made by the Chairperson based upon a majority vote of the regular faculty.
- B. Full-time non-tenure-track (NTT) instructional appointments are to be made in accordance with established procedures of the University and the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. Recommendations to the Dean's office are made by the Chairperson in consultation with the program director and other faculty of the relevant program.

Section VIII. Third-Year Review, Promotion, and Tenure

- A. Third-year review, promotion, and tenure will follow established procedures of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty Handbook. The purpose of a third-year review for a tenure-track professor is to advise the faculty member under review and the Department as to whether the faculty member under review is making adequate progress toward her/his tenure and promotion review. For promotion-eligible non-tenure-track (NTT) instructional faculty members, a thorough pre-promotion review is similarly required, and

normally is conducted during the third year of the probationary period. Faculty will apply for tenure and/or promotion according to the terms of their appointment.

B. In cases of candidates for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure, the Department Chairperson advises candidates about required documentation (see *CCS Promotion and Tenure Guidelines and Procedures*, posted on the CCS website) and the Department's internal timeline, and the ad-hoc departmental Promotion & Tenure Committee prepares a summary report of the candidate's Promotion and Tenure file to be submitted to the Chairperson and the tenured faculty. Tenured faculty will meet to discuss the recommendation of the Promotion & Tenure Committee, review the materials of candidates for promotion, and vote upon the case in question.

C. In cases of promotion-eligible non-tenure-track (NTT) candidates for promotion to Associate Professor (without tenure), the Department Chairperson advises candidates about required documentation (see *CCS Promotion and Tenure Guidelines and Procedures*, posted on the CCS website) and the Department's internal timeline, and the ad-hoc departmental Promotion & Tenure Committee prepares a summary report of the candidate's Promotion and Tenure file to be submitted to the Chairperson and the full body of regular tenured and tenure-track faculty, who will meet to discuss the recommendation of the Promotion & Tenure Committee, review the materials of candidates for promotion, and vote upon the case in question.

D. In cases of candidates for promotion to Full Professor, the Chairperson will appoint as members of the ad-hoc Promotion & Tenure committee only faculty who themselves hold the rank of Full Professor, and only those members of the faculty who hold the rank of Full Professor shall participate in the deliberations and the vote regarding promotion of such candidates.

E. The Chairperson will report the vote of the faculty on any Promotion and/or Tenure file to the Dean in a letter of evaluation, which will include the Chairperson's individual evaluation and recommendation; this letter will constitute the Chairperson's vote.

Section IX. Third-Year Review, Promotion, and Tenure for Tenure-Track or Tenured Faculty Holding Joint Appointments, Whose Primary Departmental Appointment is in CCS

A. Third-year review, promotion, and tenure will follow established procedures of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and the Faculty Handbook. The purpose of a third-year review is to advise a tenure-track professor and the Department as to whether the faculty member under review is making adequate progress toward her/his tenure review and promotion. Faculty will apply for tenure and promotion according to the terms of their appointment.

B. In cases where CCS is the "Home" department (the department where the tenure line is housed), the CCS Department Chairperson will notify the "Secondary" department, center, institute, or curricular program (hereafter, "unit") that the candidate is to be evaluated for third-year review or tenure and promotion review, soliciting an informational letter providing an evaluation of the candidate's career and performance.

C. The Chair or Director of the “Secondary” unit, or the corresponding faculty evaluation or review committee in that unit, may then provide an evaluation of the candidate, according to the stipulations of that unit’s bylaws, stating their recommendations concerning the candidate to the review committee in CCS as the departmental tenure home. This letter will become a permanent part of the evaluation materials submitted through the tenure and promotion process.

D. The Promotion and Tenure Committee of CCS as the “Home” department will then conduct an evaluation of the candidate, including consideration of the materials provided by the Secondary unit, discuss, vote, and forward its recommendations to the Department Chairperson and regular tenured faculty of CCS.

E. Appropriate faculty will then discuss, vote, and confirm their evaluation to the Chairperson of CCS.

F. The Chairperson of the Department will then report the votes of the faculty to the Dean in a letter of evaluation, which will include the Chairperson’s individual evaluation and recommendation; this letter will constitute the Chairperson’s vote.

Section X. Performance Review of Tenure-Track Faculty with a joint appointment in CCS Whose Tenure Home is a Different Department or Non-Tenure-Track Instructional Faculty with a 50% or Less Affiliation in the Department

Tenure-track faculty with joint appointments in CCS, whose tenure home is a different department, and non-tenure-track instructional faculty with joint appointments, whose contribution to curricular programs in CCS is 50% or less of their teaching and service, when subject to performance reviews, will have their reviews conducted primarily by the relevant program director, with oversight by the Chairperson of CCS. Such performance reviews for faculty with joint appointments whose tenure home or primary appointment is in a different unit do not require convening a Third-Year Review or Promotion & Tenure Committee in CCS.

Section XI. Annual Performance Review

A. In accord with the requirements of the University of Houston, all faculty members are evaluated annually. The Annual Performance Review is conducted by the the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC), with the department Chairperson in an advisory role, in terms of research productivity, teaching quality, institutional service, service to the profession, and service to the community, according to the departmental APR Policy and Scoring Guidelines.

B. Each individual faculty member’s professional activity and service for the preceding calendar year is to be detailed and submitted on the designated electronic system provided by the University of Houston for these purposes, and completed by the College-stipulated deadline

in the Spring semester. Faculty members are welcome and encouraged to submit any additional supporting information to the FEC that they consider relevant.

- C. The Chairperson will inform faculty members of their evaluation with a full discussion of the reasons for that judgment, and will provide a minimum of five working days during which faculty may respond in writing with any grievances or disputes.
- D. If the faculty member disagrees with the evaluation, he or she is encouraged to submit a written statement of disagreement within the grievance period, and can thereby formally appeal the decision, either to the Department Chairperson or to full Faculty Evaluation Committee. The final decision rests with the Department Chairperson. The written appeal will be retained by the Chairperson and may be introduced in any ensuing discussions with the Dean relevant to the faculty member's evaluation.

Section XII. Amendment

These bylaws may be amended at any meeting of the Department by the vote of a majority of all regular faculty members as stipulated in Section II. Decisions shall be made only in the presence of the voting base; or where necessary the absent members will respond by written or electronic ballot. This does not apply to the absent members who are virtually inaccessible, as in the case of extreme illness, or members on leave for research or other purposes for an extended period.

Section XIII. Contravention

No part of these bylaws or of administrative regulations of the Department shall be in contravention of the bylaws of the College or of the administrative regulations and policies of the University. In the event of change in either of the latter, these bylaws will reflect such change immediately through amendment.

Section XIV. Enabling Clause

These bylaws and any subsequent amendments shall go into effect upon approval by relevant University officials.