

**The Communication Arts & Sciences Department
at Metropolitan State University of Denver**

BYLAWS

Version 1.0

Approved March 11, 2019

I. DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE

A. Faculty

1. Governing Faculty

- a. Department decision-making authority shall rest with the department's governing faculty, except where responsibilities are assigned to the Department Chairperson by the MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel.
- b. Full-time tenured and tenure-track (i.e., Category I) faculty members constitute the 'governing faculty.'
- c. The Department Chair is an equal member of the governing faculty.

2. Category II Faculty

- a. The department values and welcomes the contributions of full-time, non-tenure track faculty (i.e., Category II) as integral contributors to the department's mission.
- b. Category II faculty shall be considered 'full members' of the faculty with all deliberative and participation rights accorded to the governing faculty.
- c. The department abides by the Handbook for Professional Personnel, which does not allow Category II faculty voting rights for department referenda or membership on select committees (e.g., for Category I review, promotion, and tenure).
 - i. The above notwithstanding, Category II faculty members shall have standing equivalent to Category I faculty in all deliberations and in all attempts to achieve consensus decisions. (See section 'II. Decision-Making.')
 - ii. Category II faculty members have full rights to meeting participation and shall not be treated as guests requiring permission to attend.
 1. Category II faculty may participate in all aspects of department meetings (including, e.g., 'executive session'), except where proscribed by University policy.
 2. Per the terms of their contract, Category II faculty may not be required to attend or participate in department meetings. Further, meeting participation is not a service for which Category II faculty can be evaluated or rewarded. They are welcomed but not expected to participate in department decision-making and management.
 - iii. Category II faculty welcomed to participate as full members of department committees, except for instances proscribed by University policy. The department recognizes their expertise and values their perspectives. These faculty are not required to perform nor rewarded for committee service.

3. Category III Faculty ('Affiliate Faculty')

- a. The department values and welcomes the contributions of affiliate faculty members, who are integral to the department's mission. The department is committed to their success and professional development.
- b. Affiliate faculty members will communicate primarily with the Affiliate Faculty Coordinator for a variety of purposes.
- c. The department abides by the Handbook for Professional Personnel, which does not allow Category III faculty voting rights for department referenda or membership on select committees.

B. Department Chairperson ('Chair')

1. The Department Chair leads strategic planning and initiatives, facilitates curriculum development and program assessment, conducts faculty review, manages department staff persons, represents the department to the College and University, and coordinates all departmental business and policies.
 - a. The Chair's role is defined in the MSU Denver's Handbook for Professional Personnel ('Handbook') under "Department Chairs: Roles, Responsibilities, and Area of Performance," section V.K.
 - b. The Department Chair serves as the chairperson of the Executive Committee.
 - c. Per the Handbook, the Chair must be a member of Category I faculty ('tenure-line') and preferably will be tenured.
 - d. The department values collaborative leadership styles and appropriate transparency in the execution of the Chair's duties.

C. Associate Department Chair (ADC)

1. The Associate Department Chair assists with department leadership and strategy, and also leads the department's efforts in General Studies.
2. The ADC is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Department Chairperson. It is preferable that the ADC be tenured.
3. The ADC's responsibilities include:
 - a. Serving as 'Acting Chairperson' when necessary and/or designated by the Department Chair.
 - b. Planning and supporting strategic department initiatives in collaboration with the Chair.
 - c. Serving as Chair of the department's General Studies Committee.
 - d. In concert with the Department Chair, representing the department to or liaising with University officials and entities regarding General Studies matters.
 - e. Other duties assigned by the Chair.
4. Duties, reassigned time (a.k.a., 'course releases'), and any other compensation shall be negotiated in advance with the Chair.
 - a. The position's responsibilities extend from the beginning of the Fall semester to the end of the Spring semester.
 - b. Work during the Summer term and Winter break shall not be required but may be negotiated with the Chair.

D. Affiliate Faculty Coordinator (AFC)

1. The Affiliate Faculty Coordinator manages the staffing of, and immediate personnel concerns related to, General Studies and other courses/sections taught by Category III instructors (i.e., 'affiliate faculty').

2. The AFC is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Department Chairperson.
3. The AFC's duties include:
 - a. Assigning courses to affiliate faculty each semester.
 - b. Maintaining regular, proactive communication with affiliate faculty.
 - c. In concert with the Chair, hearing, evaluating, and responding to student-related concerns that involve affiliate faculty members.
 - d. Serving on the department's General Studies Committee.
 - e. In concert with the Executive Committee, supporting professional development opportunities and instructional resources to promote affiliate faculty success.
 - f. Monitoring and recruiting for the department's affiliate faculty applicant pool.
 - g. Assisting the Chair with hiring and retention decisions.
4. Regarding duties, compensation, and summer work, see section I.C.4.

E. Standing Committees

1. The Executive Committee
 - a. The Executive committee is composed of the following members:
 - i. Department Chairperson
 - ii. Associate Department Chair
 - iii. Affiliate Faculty Coordinator
 - b. Individuals in positions that comprise the Executive Committee (excepting the Department Chairperson) are appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Chair. They serve two-year terms in the position(s).
 - i. At the end of each term, other eligible faculty shall be encouraged to announce their interest to the Chair.
 - ii. The Chair should solicit substantive input from both candidates for positions and from the faculty regarding candidates. The Chair may determine the appropriate procedure for gathering substantive comments/feedback.
 - iii. Individuals may be reappointed to the position any number of times, at the Chair's discretion.
 - c. This committee shall be responsible for the following:
 - i. Each semester, reviewing the department budget (prepared by the Chair), and making recommendations for the budget and strategic expenditures.
 - ii. Assisting the Chair with development and fundraising activities as needed.
 - iii. Annually, (1) reviewing the department's strategic plan and (2) monitoring the department's representation and reputation on campus.
 - iv. Reviewing and approving substantial requests for the use of professional development funds as needed.
 - v. Overseeing the department's marketing and outreach efforts.
 - vi. Authorizing and charging ad hoc committees.
 - vii. Counseling the Chair regarding department business.
2. The Review, Promotion, and Tenure + Post-Tenure Review Committee (RPT/PTR)
 - a. The RPT/PTR Committee shall follow all rules, regulations, and guidelines established in the 2015 MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel, section V (or current version).

- b. The standing RPT/PTR Committee shall be composed of all tenured members of the governing faculty, excepting any individuals on leave from the University (e.g., during sabbatical).
 - c. The committee shall review the department's guidelines for RPT/TPR annually and as needed, forwarding any recommendations or proposed amendments to the Department Chair. Final authority for the approval of guidelines rests with the governing faculty.
 - d. The department encourages the RPT/PTR Committee to provide formative or developmental support for all tenure-line faculty, in addition to their evaluative responsibilities.
3. The Curriculum Committee
- a. The Curriculum Committee shall be composed of at least two members of the governing faculty.
 - b. The chairperson of this committee shall be identified to the University as the department's 'curriculum manager' for reviewing and facilitating curriculum proposals (e.g., for authorization in the Curriculog platform). Section V.K.4.d.(3) of the Handbook for Professional Personnel outlines the role of the Department Chair in reviewing and approving curriculum proposals.
 - c. This committee shall be responsible for the following:
 - i. Consulting the Department Chairperson regularly and as needed to conduct committee business.
 - ii. Preparing a summary report of each academic years' curriculum proposals. This report shall be submitted to the Chair for inclusion in departmental program reports and be made available to the governing faculty.
 - iii. Soliciting, reviewing, approving or rejecting, and forwarding to the Department Chair all curriculum proposals requiring formal review. The Department Chair shall determine whether curriculum proposals may be approved by the Curriculum Committee or must be referred to the governing faculty for approval.
 - iv. Facilitating the department's submission and management of curriculum proposals through College and University review.
 - v. Reviewing other programs' curriculum proposals to identify and respond to potential overlap, encroachment, and opportunities for collaboration.
 - vi. Annually reviewing the department's curricula and making recommendations for strategic planning.
 - vii. Meeting or formally coordinating with the Assessment Committee at least once per academic year.
4. The Assessment Committee
- a. The Assessment Committee shall be composed of at least two members of the governing faculty.
 - b. This committee shall be responsible for the following:
 - i. Consulting the Department Chairperson regularly and as needed to address committee business.
 - ii. Designing and composing an annual academic assessment report on student learning outcomes. This report shall be submitted to the Chair for inclusion in departmental program reports and be made available to the governing faculty.

- iii. Proposing and participating in assessment activities such as data collection, analysis, and synthesis. Members should also encourage the participation of others in assessment.
 - iv. Reviewing data and prior assessment reports to make recommendations for curriculum change and innovation.
 - v. Annually reviewing the department's Program Learning Objectives (i.e., degree- and department-level student learning outcomes) for strategic planning.
 - vi. Meeting or formally coordinating with the Curriculum Committee at least once per academic year.
5. The General Studies Committee
- a. The General Studies Committee shall be composed of at least two members of the governing faculty.
 - i. The chairperson of this committee shall be the Associate Department Chair.
 - ii. The Affiliate Faculty Coordinator shall be an ex officio voting member of the General Studies Committee.
 - b. This committee shall be responsible for the following:
 - i. Consulting the Department Chairperson regularly and as needed to address committee business.
 - ii. Developing and maintaining a strategic plan for General Studies (GS) curriculum, to be submitted to the Chair for inclusion in departmental program reports and be made available to the governing faculty.
 - iii. Developing, managing, and referring to the Curriculum Committee proposals related to GS curriculum, as needed.
 - iv. Conducting or facilitating assessment for GS courses.
 - v. Assisting as needed with the scheduling of GS courses each semester.
 - vi. Reviewing and approving textbooks and course materials for GS courses.
 - vii. Other duties related to GS, as assigned by the Chair.
6. The Marketing and Outreach Committee
- a. The Marketing and Outreach shall be composed of at least two faculty members, regardless of rank or status as a member of the governing faculty.
 - b. The committee coordinates and makes recommendations for the department's communication campaigns and events that raise awareness and the profile of the department to various publics.
 - c. This committee shall be responsible for the following:
 - i. Providing a brief report to the department's Executive Committee annually.
 - ii. As needed, auditing and forwarding to the Executive Committee recommendations for the department's image, marketing campaigns, and other 'externally oriented' communications.
 - iii. Crafting and/or assisting with proposals and budgets for department-level events and speakers/guests. Event plans and budgets will be forwarded to the Executive Committee for approval.
 - iv. Members will assist with or coordinate the promotion and execution of department-level events (e.g., guest experts and speakers, 'welcome back' events, alumni events).
7. Faculty Senators

- a. Faculty Senators are elected representatives of and advocates for the department who serve as members of the MSU Denver Faculty Senate. Senators shall inform and solicit input from the faculty about matters before the Senate. While Senators are elected representatives, they are independent decision-makers within the Senate and may vote their conscience and good judgement.
- b. Senators' duties are outlined in that body's bylaws and the Handbook for Professional Personnel.
- c. Senators serve staggered two-year terms that begin each Fall semester.
- d. Faculty Senators are elected or appointed as follows:
 - i. Late in the Spring semester, the Department Chair shall call for nominations of candidates for the following academic year.
 - ii. Nominated candidates should be promptly notified.
 - iii. Candidates must be allowed equal opportunity to make formal statements in behalf of their candidacy in mediums selected by the Chair.
 - iv. The Chair shall call for a vote of the governing faculty at any appropriate time after candidate statements have been made/released.
 - v. Governing faculty shall cast anonymous votes, allowing for one vote per open position and per candidate (e.g., two open positions and three candidates: one vote for Candidate A and a second vote for Candidate B).
 - vi. The Chair may call a 'special election' if a Senator is unable to fulfill their duties through the end of their term.
 - vii. The Chair may appoint a Senator if, after nominations and election, a position remains unfilled for the next academic year.

F. Other Committees and Notes on Service

1. Ad Hoc Committees

- a. Ad hoc committees (i.e., any not outlined in these bylaws) are authorized and charged by the Executive Committee.
- b. Membership may be determined according to the requirements of the committee's charge.

2. Faculty Search and Screening Committees

- a. Search and screening committees are formed for each advertised position and shall be constituted of at least three members of the governing faculty.
- b. The governing faculty may authorize a single committee to search and screen for multiple positions.
- c. Search and screening committees shall abide by all rules, regulations, and guidelines provided by the College and University, both within and beyond the Handbook for Professional Personnel.

3. Notes on Service and Committee Membership

- a. Except when noted otherwise in these bylaws, members shall select a committee chairperson from their team.
- b. The department recognizes the many and varied demands of active faculty members. Service is one of several components of performance review. Faculty service to our department and university are essential to our unit's and institution's success, but individuals should take on service work prudently. The department values faculty members' professional discretion regarding service and encourages fair distribution of service loads.

II. DECISION-MAKING

A. Application and Compliance

1. The guidelines established here apply to department-wide deliberations and decisions.
2. The department values and prioritizes innovation and localized decision-making.
 - a. Whenever possible and appropriate, these guidelines should not preclude the Chair, bona fide groups, or faculty members from seeking opportunities or taking wise action to advance the department, conduct regular business, or solve problems in good faith.
 - b. Faculty members and committees are expected to refer decisions to the Chair for presentation to the governing faculty whenever there may be a reasonable expectation of collective decision-making.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that records are maintained for each meeting of the full governing faculty (i.e., ‘meeting minutes.’).
 - a. Meeting records may take any form and involve any level of detail acceptable to the governing faculty.
 - b. Meeting records shall be preserved and available to the governing faculty for at least three years following the end of the contemporary Department Chairperson’s tenure.
 - c. Any record of decisions made by vote shall accurately record the number of votes ‘in favor,’ ‘against,’ as well as the number of abstentions and governing faculty members who did not participate. Names and identifying information of voting faculty shall not be linked to voting records in any way.
 - d. The Chair may call for or note a potential ‘executive session’ ahead of any pre-announced meeting of the governing faculty. All executive session practices shall conform to The Colorado Open Meetings Law (“COML”), § 24-6-402(4), C.R.S. (2007).
 - i. The meeting shall be considered in executive session only after consensus agreement is reached or with the approval of a voting majority of governing faculty members.
 - ii. We define ‘executive session’ as meetings (or portions thereof) to be attended only by governing and Category II faculty, during which regular records are not kept in order to encourage candid discussion. Staff persons and other guests may participate in executive sessions with the consent of a majority vote of the governing faculty.
 - iii. Executive sessions should be utilized sparingly and should last for the minimum time required.
 - iv. Recorded consensus may not be documented nor formal votes taken during executive sessions. According to Colorado law,

informal votes or consensus may not be reached during such sessions, then 'rubber stamped' during a later meeting.

4. Committees may adopt unique decision-making policies.
 - a. Committees are bound to the bylaws' decision-making policies unless and until committee members adopt alternative decision-making procedures.
 - b. Adoption of unique committee policies must follow the voting guidelines established here.
 - c. Any modified or unique decision-making rules must be formally documented, announced to the Chair, and made available to the governing faculty.
5. The department complies with applicable policies and procedures established by the College and University. Where a clear conflict or divergence exists, the MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel and the University's decision-making policies supersede guidelines established in these bylaws.

B. Governing Faculty and Participation in Decision-Making

1. The 'governing faculty' body is defined in section I.A.1 of these bylaws.
2. Only governing faculty may make cast votes on formal referenda or motions.
3. The Chair shall participate in all decisions as a governing faculty member with one full vote.
4. Governing faculty may participate in department meetings via telephone, teleconferencing platforms, or other real-time communication technologies when necessary and appropriate.
5. Governing faculty will abstain from voting on personnel or financial decisions in which there is clear evidence of a conflict of interest.
 - a. When a voting member stands to privately gain from her/his authority as a voter, s/he should abstain from voting.
 - b. Examples include but are not limited to: hiring decisions involving family members, the acceptance of significant gifts/donations, and the purchase services or products provided by a faculty member.
 - c. Faculty are expected to be familiar with related policies in the Handbook for Professional Personnel.
6. Faculty members on sabbatical or various forms of administrative and medical leave shall not participate in formal decisions, as they are on leave from the University.
 - a. At the Chair's discretion, they may be allowed to comment upon decisions before the governing faculty.
 - b. Faculty on sabbatical have the responsibility of notifying the Chair about their preferences regarding the receipt of formal department communications.

C. Decision-Making and Voting Procedures

1. Governing faculty, guests, and other participants in decision-making processes are expected to treat others with respect, listen actively, allow others to contribute, and behave with professional decorum.
2. The governing faculty shall have binding decision-making authority on all business in the department, with these exceptions:
 - a. Matters in which the Chair or committees have been granted authority by the governing faculty or University policy.
 - b. Matters in which bona fide groups (e.g., full-time faculty responsible for a degree concentration) have been granted authority by the governing faculty or University policy.
3. Our department values and prioritizes consensus decision-making.
 - a. We define consensus as un-coerced, unanimous acceptance of a decision or motion.
 - b. Consensus decisions shall be sought first. Only when consensus is demonstrated not possible – or is precluded by College/University policy – voting procedures may be initiated.
 - c. In all decision-making, the governing faculty shall seek appropriate information, provide ample opportunity for discussion, and collaborate ethically to build consensus.
 - d. As meeting facilitator, the Chair may and should initiate voting procedures if consensus is not reached in a reasonable amount of time.
 - i. The Chair and governing faculty must allow for or invite the expression of dissent prior to voting.
 - ii. Governing faculty may motion to delay voting, should a vote be deemed premature.
 - iii. Governing faculty may motion for a vote if consensus is not reached.
 - iv. Governing faculty motions must be seconded and approved by a simple majority of the governing faculty,
4. The assent of a simple majority ($N > 50\%$) of governing faculty is required to pass a motion.
 - a. Each governing faculty member possesses 1 full vote; voting members shall possess an equivalent number and value of votes (i.e., no person's vote "counts for more" than others' votes).
 - b. Voters will be asked to verbally state or visually indicate their position: agree/yes, disagree/no, abstention from voting.
 - c. When a voting member abstains or is on leave, the total number used to calculate simple majority shall be reduced by 1. (e.g., 10 governing faculty, with 1 electing to abstain. Simple majority is calculated out of 9 votes, and thus would be set at 5 or more [rather than 6 or more].)

- d. Non-participation in a vote (e.g., due to absence from a meeting) shall be registered as “did not participate,” and will not be treated or recorded as abstention. Non-participation does not affect the calculation of simple majorities.
 - e. A designated recorder will ensure an accurate tally of votes. Only vote totals are recorded; votes should not be individually identifiable.
 - f. The result shall be announced and recorded at the time of the decision.
5. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair may continue deliberation.
- a. The Chair may subsequently call for ‘straw votes’ until a simple majority is reached.
 - b. The Chair may then call for a final vote.
6. “Virtual voting” (e.g., by online poll or emailed responses) may be conducted, though in-person deliberation and consensus/voting are preferred. It should be used sparingly, under exceptional circumstances.
- a. Only the Chair may call for “virtual voting” (1) under exceptional circumstances or (2) with the assent of a simple majority of governing faculty during a regular meeting.
 - b. When calling for a virtual vote, the Chair must explain the urgency or need for the voting procedure to the governing faculty. The Chair must also designate a specific medium for official discussion of the matter (e.g., email, a collaboration app).
 - c. The motion on which governing faculty will vote shall be stated explicitly and fully. The proposed deadline for registering votes must be stated, as well. Finally, the mechanism for submitting a vote shall be articulated in the call for a virtual vote (e.g., online survey, email to the Chair).
 - d. The governing faculty shall first have at least 24 hours to ratify the motion for a virtual vote with the assent of a simple majority of governing faculty.
 - e. Voting members must then have at least 24 hours to discuss and vote on the matter at hand.
 - f. The practices regarding abstention and non-participation described elsewhere in this section apply during virtual voting.
 - g. The vote of faculty shall be accurately recorded and announced to all governing faculty at the earliest opportunity, no more than 24 hours following the close of voting.

D. Stakeholder Representation and Inclusion

1. The Department values and shall seek out diverse opinions. The representation and meaningful inclusion of relevant stakeholders in decision-making processes is a priority.

2. To facilitate consensus-oriented decision-making, it is the Chair's responsibility to solicit input on relevant agenda items from key stakeholders, such as non-governing faculty, students, staff, and administrators. It is the Chair's responsibility to represent these stakeholder voices in deliberation processes. The Chair may also, as appropriate, invite stakeholders to governing faculty meetings.
3. At the discretion of the Chair, governing faculty members may invite individuals without the privilege of voting (e.g., administrators and adjunct instructors) to faculty meetings.
4. Non-voting persons may serve as advisors on matters relevant to them (e.g., Search and Screening Committee decisions).
 - a. They may offer advice, but cannot make motions, seconds, or cast votes.
 - b. After their contribution to meetings, non-voting persons shall depart the meeting so that the governing faculty may further discuss and/or vote upon motions.
 - c. The Chair may, at their discretion, allow for the presence of non-voting persons during deliberation and decision-making. Such a decision may be vetoed by a simple majority vote of the governing faculty.

III. AMENDMENTS

A. **Procedures for Amending the Bylaws**

1. Governing faculty shall review the bylaws annually, recommending changes and amendments as needed. These include changes made to bring department bylaws into compliance with the MSU Denver Handbook for Professional Personnel.
2. Any governing faculty member may request that an amendment or change to the bylaws be considered.
 - a. The Executive Committee shall consider the request and, if approved, then form an ad hoc committee to compose or review the amendment.
 - b. The committee may then elect to forward the amendment to the Chair, so that the governing faculty may deliberate.
 - c. Decision-making guidelines outlined in the bylaws apply here.
 - d. For a motion to amend or change the bylaws to succeed, a supermajority of 60% or more of the governing faculty must assent.