Department of Philosophy and Religion Departmental Bylaws

University of North Texas

*Proposed by the Executive Committee*

*2020*

**I. General**

The Department of Philosophy and Religion Bylaws complement the procedures set forth in the UNT *Policy Manual*, from which authority these Bylaws are derived.

In accordance with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the purpose of the Department of Philosophy and Religion is to educate students pursuing (1) the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, (2) the Bachelor of Arts in Religion, (3) the Master of Arts in Philosophy and (4) the *Philosophiae Doctor* (Ph.D.) in Philosophy. In support of, but also in addition to, undergraduate and graduate education, this mission also includes and emphasizes the production, as well as the educational transmission, of knowledge in the form of scholarly publication and/or other means of disseminating knowledge. Undergirding the creation, dissemination, and transmission of discipline-specific knowledge is professional service to the Department, College, University, discipline, and profession, and public service to the state, nation, and international communities. In addition, the department is committed to the creation, dissemination, and transmission of interdisciplinary knowledge and supporting the educational needs of other departments and interdisciplinary programs both at the undergraduate and graduate levels throughout the University to the extent that resources permit. Finally, the department is also committed to seeking external funds to support research by its faculty and graduate students.

The *Policy Manual* generally sets forth the organization, policies, procedures, and traditions of the University of North Texas. Each member of the Department of Philosophy and Religion is expected to be familiar with that document. The Departmental Bylaws are not intended to amend, contradict, or supersede the general spirit and intent of the *Policy-Manual* policies and guidelines, but to interpret and to supplement those policies and guidelines as appropriate for the unique needs and circumstances of the Department.

**II. The Faculty**

A. ***The Full-time Faculty***: The Full-time Faculty consists of the tenured and tenure-track faculty holding the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor and continuing full-time lecturers with 50% or more of their time in the Department. Full-time Faculty, irrespective of rank report only to the Chair.

B. ***Part-time and Visiting Faculty***: The Part-time and Visiting Faculty may include Lecturers on one-year contracts; Adjuncts; Post-doctoral Visiting Fellows; and Visiting Scholars in residence for a semester or more.

C. ***Faculty Meetings***: Regular meetings of the Faculty must be held at least once per semester (exclusive of the two summer semesters.) A meeting may be called by the Chair, or upon request of one-third of the Full-time Faculty. Minutes of the meeting shall be kept; corrected minutes, including minority reports and exceptions, shall also be kept.

Full-time Faculty are expected to attend Departmental faculty meetings; Part-time Faculty are welcome to do so. Only Full-time Faculty shall be eligible to vote in meetings of the faculty. Any vote may be by secret ballot at the request of a faculty member or Chair.

Elected representatives from among the graduate students may also attend Departmental faculty meetings, but are not eligible to vote.

The Full-time Faculty may vote to declare an Executive Session and exclude all who are not Full-time Faculty from the meeting.

The Departmental Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the Full-time Faculty in Executive Session.

(Unless otherwise specified throughout this document, “Faculty” shall refer inclusively to both the Full-time and Part-time Faculty.)

**III. The Chair**

A. The Chair is the executive officer of the Department responsible for the general well-being of the Department and for specific duties assigned by the University Administration. The Chair exercises administrative authority in matters including office management, budgeting, faculty workload, class assignments, and class schedules. The Chair may delegate this authority to other departmental offices or committees, but he or she retains final authority in all administrative matters.

B. The Chair with the advice of the Executive Committee is responsible for all personnel matters other than Promotion and Tenure. The Chair, together with the Executive Committee, conducts the annual evaluations of Full-Time Faculty.

C. The Chair reviews all promotion and tenure materials including the decisions of the Personnel Affairs Committee (V.B) and makes independent recommendations on promotion and tenure cases.

D. The Chair shall function as an ex officio member of all Committees (V) except the Executive Committee (V.A) the Personnel Affairs Committee (V.B), and any Ad Hoc Grievance Committee (VI.B).

E. If the Chair is absent from campus and unable to attend to daily responsibilities, he or she must appoint a temporary substitute from the Full-time faculty in consultation with the dean.

F. The Chair may not also serve as the Director of a Center affiliated with UNT in order to avoid conflicts of interest.

G. ***Selection and Appointment of the Chair:*** The Chair or interim chair of the Department will be appointed by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, subject to endorsement by the Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President of the University. The Department may recommend nominees or a nominee selected by a two-thirds majority of the full-time faculty.

H. ***Termination of the Chair:*** It is recognized that the Dean of the College may terminate the appointment of the department Chair following whatever type of review or investigation he or she deems appropriate, including periodic administrative review of the Department. The faculty, of its own volition by a two-thirds majority vote of the full-time faculty, may review the Chair and convey the results of this review (e.g., a vote of confidence) to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences.

**IV. Other Departmental Offices:** Appointed by the Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee.

A. ***Director of Undergraduate Studies* (DUGS)**: It is the task of the DUGS to advise the undergraduate philosophy and religion majors and minors pursuant to completing their required courses of study; to cooperate with College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) academic advisors; to attend CLASS Advisors meetings; to participate in recruitment events; to contribute to the Undergraduate Ambassadors activities; to advise during Summer Orientation; to sponsor the undergraduate philosophy organization; to participate in UNT Undergraduate Curriculum Committee meetings as needed; to belong to the department Curriculum Committee (V.C); to advise students of career options and applications for graduate program; and to advise and assist the Chair in course scheduling.

B. ***Director of* *Graduate Studies*** (DGS): It is the task of the DGS to advise the graduate students pursuant to completing their required courses of study; to manage the graduate curriculum; to attend Graduate Advisors meetings; to participate in UNT Graduate Curriculum Committee meetings as needed; to belong to the department Curriculum Committee (V.C); to chair the Graduate Admissions Committee (V.D); to negotiate funding for graduate Teaching Assistants/Teaching Fellows and graduate Research Assistants; to communicate with potential graduate students; to advise students on career options and job applications; and to advise and assist the Chair in course scheduling.

C. ***Graduate Mentor***: It is the task of the Graduate Mentor to counsel graduate students; to help arrange class visits to advise instructors about both the substance and style of their teaching; to lead professional development seminars, organize writing workshops, and assist in mock interviews.

D. ***Faculty******Mentor***: Each new tenure-track Assistant Professor shall choose a tenured Associate Professor or Professor to serve as his or her Mentor. The Mentor is expected to guide the new Full-time Faculty successfully through his or her six-year probationary period of service.

**V. Departmental Committees**

A. ***Executive Committee***: The Executive Committee shall consist of three elected members. Only tenured Full-time Faculty are eligible for membership. Nominations are to be made at the final faculty meeting of the academic year (April or May); each Full-time Faculty member may vote for or against the nominees, severally, election to the committee to be determined by a simple majority in the case of each nominee. Term of office will be for one academic year (August 15-August 14).

The Executive Committee provides advice and counsel to the Chair on matters of Departmental policy and administration; it advises the Chair in renewing or terminating the contracts of Part-time Faculty; and it hears and attempts to resolve complaints and grievances on the part of Faculty against the Chair.

B. ***Personnel Affairs Committee*** (PAC): The Personnel Affairs Committee shall consist of three elected members. Only tenured Full-time Faculty are eligible for membership. Term of office will be for one academic year. This Committee will evaluate the progress toward tenure made by probationary Full-time Faculty members, in accordance with College and University guidelines, schedules, and timelines; assemble tenure and promotion dossiers; evaluate Departmental candidates for tenure and promotion; oversee annual Faculty evaluations; conduct an annual evaluation of Lecturers, and provide the Chair with advice and council regarding all other personnel matters. The Department Chair will also make an independent recommendation on each case.

1. Only tenured Full Time Faculty holding the rank of Full Professor will evaluate progress toward promotion to full professor made by faculty members at the rank of associate professor in accordance with College and University guidelines, schedules, and timelines, assemble promotion dossiers, and evaluate and make recommendations on all candidates for promotion to full professor. The Department Chair will also make an independent recommendation on each case (III.B).

C. ***Curriculum Committee***: The Curriculum Committee shall consist of three elected members in addition to the DUGS and DGS. All Full-time Faculty, irrespective of tenure-status or rank, are eligible for membership. Term of office shall be for one academic year. Election shall follow the procedure and policy set forth in V.A. This Committee will initiate and supervise Departmental initiatives that affect the Departmental undergraduate and graduate programs of study, courses, and policy matters.

D. ***Graduate Admissions Committee***:The Graduate Admissions Committee shall consist of two elected members, the Graduate Mentor, and shall be chaired by the DGS. All Full-time Faculty, irrespective of tenure-status or rank, are eligible for membership. Election shall follow the procedure and policy set forth in V.A. Term of office shall be for one academic year. This committee will serve as the admissions committee for incoming graduate students, award open teaching assistantships and fellowships, award any special scholarships and fellowships that may be available, award and distribute internally funded research assistantships to incoming graduate students.

E. ***Speakers Committee***: The Speakers Committee shall consist of three Departmental faculty, each serving staggered three-year terms. All Full-time Faculty, irrespective of tenure-status or rank, are eligible for membership. Election shall follow the procedure and policy set forth in V.A. By custom, but not bylaw, first-year faculty, regardless of rank, shall be nominated to serve on the speakers committee and elected to serve in their beginning year at UNT. Among the duties of the Speakers Committee are to identify potential speakers, invite potential speakers to campus, schedule events around speaker visits, make any logistical arrangements for speakers.

F. ***Scholarship Committee***: The Scholarship Committee shall consist of the three elected members. The duty of the Scholarship Committee is to award departmental scholarships to outstanding undergraduate and graduate students.

G. **MA Exam Committee**: The MA Exam Committees shall consist of three members who select exam questions, administer and grade MA Comprehensive Exams.

H. ***Ad Hoc Search Committees***: An Ad Hoc Search Committee shall be formed upon the Chair’s securing authorization from the Dean to recruit Full-time Faculty or Part-time Faculty guided by the short and long-term goals of the Department. By University policy, it must include a faculty member from another department and a (non-voting) graduate student. All Full-time Faculty, irrespective of tenure-status or rank, are eligible for membership. However, no more than one lecturer will serve on an ad hoc search committee for a tenure-track position. Election shall follow the procedure and policy set forth in V.A. This Committee shall carefully prepare a job description, and complete all administrative paperwork pursuant to the recruitment process. The committee shall review applications, conduct telephone interviews, and select from two to four candidates either for face-to-face campus interviews or Skype (or other computer mediated) interviews. For tenure track positions, after all interviews are completed, the Ad Hoc Search Committee shall rank the candidates in order of preference and forward its recommendations to the Full-time Faculty, functioning as a committee of the whole. For lecturer positions, the Ad Hoc Search Committee shall rank the candidates in order of preference and forward its recommendation to the Chair.

**VI. Grievance Procedures**

1. Definition of Faculty Grievances:
   1. Grievances are understood to be complaints against decisions of the Department Chair, the Executive Committee, or other committees of the department. Administrative decisions (e.g. workload, class assignments, and teaching schedules and the allocation of space) do not constitute grievances.
   2. Per university policy, grievances regarding matters of promotion or tenure are heard only at the university level and shall be handled according to current College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences and university procedures.
   3. In the instance of a grievance against a decision of the Department Chair, the Executive Committee or other committees of the department, the complainant shall have ten calendar days after notification of the decision to initiate his/her case.
2. ***Grievances against the Executive Committee:***
   1. Whenever a faculty grievance arisesagainst a decision of the Executive Committee or other committee of the department, an ad hoc grievance committee will be created. This committee will include one person selected by the complainant, a second by the Executive Committee, and one agreed to by the first two; this last member will be chair. The Department Chair and members of the committee that is the object of the complaint will be ineligible to serve on such committees.
   2. Initiation of the case shall be by written statement of the charges to the Department Chair. This statement shall include the name of the department member chosen for grievance committee membership by the complainant.
   3. At the Departmental level, the complainant shall show sufficient cause to the Grievance Committee for review of the case. The Grievance Committee and the complainant shall have access to all documents relevant to the case. If the case is decided at the departmental level, either party may appeal to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. In all cases, the chair of the ad hoc committee shall be responsible for the conveyance of records along with the committee’s recommendation to the Department Chair, a copy of which shall be placed in the permanent file of the Department and another given to the complainant.
   4. If the Departmental Executive Committee or other committee against which a grievance has been filed fails to appoint their representative within one week of the initiation of a complaint they forfeit the case at the departmental level; notice of such failure will be a part of the record of the case.
3. ***Grievances against the Department Chair:***
   1. Grievances against the Department Chair shall be heard by the Executive Committee.
   2. Initiation of the case shall be by written statement of the charges to the Executive Committee.
   3. At the Departmental level, the complainant shall show sufficient cause to the Executive Committee for review of the case. The Executive Committee and the complainant shall have access to all documents relevant to the case. If the case cannot be resolved at the departmental level, then either party may appeal to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences. In all cases, the chair of the Executive Committee shall be responsible for the conveyance of records along with the committee’s recommendation to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, a copy of which shall be placed in the permanent file of the Department and another given to the complainant.
4. ***Other Grievances:*** Grievances or complaints that do not fall under the definition in VII.A above shall be heard by the Executive Committee.
   1. The committee shall develop its own rules of procedure appropriate to the individual case; these shall include written statements setting forth the charges and a written reply to those charges.
   2. The Executive Committee will make every attempt to resolve the problem. If this cannot be done, then the Committee will make a final recommendation to the department chair. The final decision rests with the department chair. In the event that the decision is unsatisfactory to the complainant, the decision may be appealed to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.