

Department of Philosophy and Religion Departmental Bylaws University of North Texas

Proposed by the Executive Committee 2021

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* (PhD) 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 also supports public and engaged philosophy and religion geared toward reaching broader, non-academic audiences.

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 Personnel Affairs 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 and inform the CLASS Dean’s office.

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: Department offices are appointed by the Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee.

A. *Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS):* It is the task of the DUGS to chair the Undergraduate Affairs Committee; to call meetings and oversee the activities of the committee; to spearhead initiatives, delegate responsibilities, and coordinate with the Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the Undergraduate Advisor.

B. *Director of Graduate Studies (DGS):* It is the task of the DGS to chair the Graduate Affairs Committee; 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 oversee graduate admissions; 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 in course scheduling.

C. *Undergraduate Advisor:* It is the task of the Undergraduate Advisor 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 meet with students during Summer Orientation session; to belong to the department Undergraduate Affairs Committee (V.C); to advise students of career options and applications for graduate program; and to advise and assist in course scheduling.

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: Committee membership is decided collectively by faculty vote before each academic year.

A. *Executive Committee (EC):* 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.

C. *Undergraduate Affairs Committee (UGAC)*: The Undergraduate Affairs Committee (UGAC) shall consist of four members in addition to the DUGS and the Undergraduate Advisor. All Full-time Faculty, irrespective of tenure-status or rank, are eligible for membership. Term of office shall be for two academic years. This Committee will initiate and supervise Departmental initiatives that affect the undergraduate programs of study, courses, and policy matters including: manage curriculum; award departmental scholarships; advise and assist in course scheduling; assist in marketing, alumni relations, and social media; communicate with the Philosophy Club; nominate undergraduate Ambassadors and members of Phi Sigma Tau honor society.

D. *Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC)*: The Graduate Affairs Committee (GAC) shall consist of four members in addition to the DGS. All Full-time Faculty, irrespective of tenure-status or rank, are eligible for membership. Term of office shall be for two academic years. This committee will serve as the admissions committee for incoming graduate students; award 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; advise and assist in course scheduling; manage graduate curriculum; organize professionalization and teaching seminars; arrange classroom observation visits.

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. By custom, but not by law, 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, assist in logistical arrangements for speakers.

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, search committees for Full-time tenure-track faculty 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.

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

A. Definition of Faculty Grievances:

- a.* 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.
- b.* 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.
- c.* 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.

B. *Grievances against a committee:*

- a.* Whenever a faculty grievance arises against a decision of the Executive Committee, PAC, 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.

- b.* 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.
- c.* 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.
- d.* 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.

C. *Grievances against the Department Chair:*

- a.* Grievances against the Department Chair shall be heard by the Executive Committee.
- b.* Initiation of the case shall be by written statement of the charges to the Executive Committee.
- c.* 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.

D. *Other Grievances:* Grievances or complaints that do not fall under the definition in VII.A above shall be heard by the Executive Committee.

- a.* 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.
- b.* 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.