

BYLAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Approved by the History Faculty, October 2017

APPROVED BY COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS, JANUARY 2018

Approval February 23, 2018 (DOF)

- A** **Purpose:** These bylaws outline the Texas A&M Department of History's methods of governance. The rules and regulations of the College of Liberal Arts and the University take precedence over these bylaws.

The bylaws reflect a belief that the responsibility for effective department governance rests with both the faculty and the department head. Moreover, the department believes that effective department governance depends on the exercise of responsible leadership by the faculty and the department head alike.

These bylaws shall be implemented with strict adherence to academic freedom, due process, and equal opportunity. Appointments, hiring, promotion, and tenure shall be decided solely on the basis of professional qualifications, without regard to such considerations as sex, race, national origin, religion, political affiliation, or sexual orientation.

- B** **Faculty:** The history department faculty is defined to include the following ranks: professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructional professor, instructional associate professor, instructional assistant professor, senior lecturer, and lecturer.

- C** **Departmental Meetings:** The faculty, meeting as a whole, will review all actions of the head and the standing committees and propose changes of policy.

1. A regular meeting of the faculty will be held in each full month the University is in session during the fall and spring semesters. A quorum of 33% of the full-time faculty in residence is required for any vote to be taken.
2. Special meetings may be called by the department head and will require a quorum of 50% of the full-time faculty in residence for any vote to be taken.
3. The department head, or a faculty member designated by the head, will chair all meetings.

4. The head and the executive committee will prepare the agenda and distribute it to the faculty at least one week prior to meetings. Any faculty member, by written request (including submissions via e-mail) to the head or executive committee, may place an item on the agenda.
5. A secretary will be chosen each semester prior to the first regular meeting. Minutes of all meetings will be distributed to the faculty within a week.
6. In all cases not specifically covered by these bylaws, Roberts Rules of Order will be used to conduct meetings. A copy should be available in the library.

D **Department Head:** The head is the department's executive and is responsible to the faculty, the dean of the college, and the university administration. The department head shall serve no more than two consecutive four-year terms. At the end of the first three years, the tenured and tenure-track faculty of the department will vote to continue or not to continue the Head for a second term. That vote, taken by secret ballot, will be tallied by the executive committee and be sent as a departmental recommendation to the Dean.

1. The head's major responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - 1.1 proposing long-range plans to the faculty and executive committee;
 - 1.2 assigning courses to individual faculty, following the established principle of course rotation;
 - 1.3 supervising and directing the staff;
 - 1.4 preparing the budget and other financial planning;
 - 1.5 providing each faculty member an annual review and determining pay increases in consultation with the Executive Committee and in accordance with University rules and the department's Procedures and Criteria for Annual Merit Performance Evaluation and Review.
 - 1.6 appointing committees and departmental representatives and officers with the advice of the executive committee, except as otherwise provided by these bylaws;
 - 1.7 presiding over department meetings; and,
 - 1.8 serving as a conduit for communications between the faculty and the administration.

2. In addition, the head will make independent recommendations to the dean on candidates for tenure and promotion. In fulfilling this function, the head will meet at least once during the academic year with each assistant professor to discuss their research, teaching, and other professional activities, and whether that person is making satisfactory progress

E **Department Committees:** The following committees will assist the faculty and head in administering the department. As needed, search and ad hoc committees will be appointed by the head with the advice of the executive committee. Chairs of department committees will circulate a written report of the year's activities at the end of each spring semester.

1. **Executive Committee:** The executive committee will represent the faculty in advising the head, who will serve as its chair. It will consist of six members besides the head and include at least one member from each faculty rank. Members will serve two-year terms and no one shall serve more than two consecutive terms.
 - 1.1 **Conduct of elections:** The executive committee will be elected in a secret ballot by the faculty. Election of three members by rank and three members at-large will take place in alternate years. An ad hoc election committee appointed by the head will call for nominations. Voting faculty must secure the permission of those eligible faculty whom they wish to nominate and forward those names to the election committee. At least one week before the election, the election committee will distribute ballots containing the names of all nominees. In elections by rank, faculty will vote for one candidate from each rank; if a candidate fails to receive a majority of votes cast in the first poll, a run-off will be held between the leading candidates. In elections at-large, faculty will vote for their three preferred candidates; the leading vote-getters without majorities will face a runoff until a majority is obtained. All tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to vote. Ballots will be distributed by e-mail and may be cast either by e-mail or the dual-envelope system.
 - 1.2 **Filling Vacancies:** In the event that a vacancy occurs on the Executive Committee a special election will be held at the earliest feasible moment. The election will be conducted according to Section D Paragraph 1.1. The faculty member elected will finish out the time remaining on the vacant seat.
 - 1.3 **Functions:** The Executive Committee will serve as a committee on committees and advise the head on all committee appointments, including search committees, and on the appointment of departmental officers. It will serve as a planning and priority committee and suggest to the faculty the direction the department should take in hiring new faculty, encouraging research, and improving instruction. It will conduct annual evaluations of faculty and advise the head on the allocation of resources, including

proposed salaries. (Annual evaluations for the members of the Executive Committee will be conducted by the department head.) Ultimate authority in these matters will remain with the head, but the head must inform the Executive Committee of actions taken concerning these matters. In addition, the committee will undertake any special tasks which are not within the purview of other standing committees and which may be assigned to it by either the faculty or head. Agenda and minutes of all executive committee meetings will be distributed to the full faculty within a week.

- 1.4 Consultation Between the Executive Committee and the Department Head: In general, discussion of appointments and other types of consultation with the Department Head shall be done in a called meeting of the committee, but when this is not possible or preferable, discussion of appointments and other matters shall be done by emails addressed to the entire committee.
- 1.5 The Executive Committee will meet at least once every full month of the Fall and Spring semesters in advance of the faculty meetings.
2. Graduate Committee: The Graduate Committee will be appointed by the head with the advice of the Executive Committee and will supervise graduate students and graduate instruction. The director of graduate studies will serve as a chair of the committee, which will consist of seven members. The committee will work with the director of graduate studies on the admission of students, the awarding of financial assistance (including assistantships and fellowships), and the distribution of graduate student research and travel funds. The committee will include a graduate student representative. Graduate students elect their own officers to the History Graduate Student Organization, with the shared expectation that the president will serve on the graduate committee. The committee shall meet at least twice a semester.
3. Undergraduate Committee: The Undergraduate Committee will be appointed by the head with the advice of the Executive Committee and will supervise undergraduate history majors and undergraduate instruction in the department. The director of undergraduate studies will chair the committee, which will consist of at least five members including one of the undergraduate advisors and a graduate student.
4. Climate and Inclusion Committee: This committee, appointed by the head with the advice of the Executive Committee, works to foster a welcoming and collegial environment, respectful of diversity, for all students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It will consist of at least three faculty members, one from each rank, a member of staff, and a graduate student. One member, normally the chair of the committee, will represent the department on the College Climate and Inclusion Committee.
5. Social Committee: This committee will be appointed by the head with the advice

of the Executive Committee and will supervise all departmental social affairs and the flower fund. It will consist of at least three members, including a graduate student.

6. Tenure and Promotion Committee: This committee will conduct annual reviews and formal mid-term reviews of tenure-track faculty as well as formal reviews for tenure and/or promotion. It will consist of all faculty above the rank of the individual seeking promotion and/or tenure. In cases of instructional assistant and associate faculty seeking promotion, the committee will also include instructional faculty above the candidate's rank. In cases of those seeking tenure without change in rank, the committee will consist of all tenured members of the candidate's rank and above.
 - 6.1 The committee will act in accordance with the College of Liberal Arts procedures for review, tenure and promotion. The full committee, after discussion, by a secret ballot and simple majority vote, will make recommendations regarding annual reviews of untenured faculty, midterm reviews, and promotion/tenure. Faculty who will be away from the university on the day of committee meetings for pressing professional reasons (e.g., development leave, fellowship leave, or presenting research at a professional conference) may vote *in absentia*. Their requests for ballots must be submitted to the department head one week before the scheduled meeting. In emergencies, the department head may provide a ballot within that week at her or his discretion. Absentee ballots must be received by the staff person normally responsible for receiving electronic ballots by the beginning of the meeting for which they are being cast. The department head shall not vote on matters before the committee. The department head's participation in the deliberations will be limited to providing information requested by other members of the committee.
 - 6.2 The Tenure and Promotion Committee's deliberations and decisions will remain strictly confidential.
 - 6.3 Evaluation subcommittees for each faculty member under consideration at the mid-term review and for promotion and/or tenure will be appointed by the head with the advice of the executive committee. In appointing the heads of subcommittees, the department head will also consider suggestions from individual candidates for promotion.
 - 6.4 The chair of each meeting will be selected by the head of the department in consultation with the faculty under consideration and with the approval of

the executive committee (committee members under review at the meeting in question will recuse themselves). The chair of the meeting will moderate the discussion and, for the midterm review and promotion and tenure, assure that the final version of each evaluation committee report represents the faculty voice.

- 6.5 There will be a secretary for each candidate for the mid-term review and for promotion and tenure who will record the discussion during the meeting and modify the evaluation committee report as needed. The same procedure for selecting the chair will apply to selecting the secretary.
 - 6.6 Modifications of the evaluation committee report will be submitted to the Tenure and Promotion Committee for approval.
 - 6.7 The department head will forward the full dossier to the dean. The head will also forward an independent evaluation based on the candidates' dossier.
 - 6.8 Individuals in the titles of Instructional Assistant, Instructional Associate Professor, or Lecturer may be considered for promotion to the rank above. Instructional Assistant Professors, Instructional Associate Professors, and Lecturers who are candidates for promotion must submit a dossier for consideration by the departmental tenure and promotion committee, following the procedures and criteria in College of Liberal Arts, Academic Professional Track Faculty Guidelines.
7. Faculty Awards Committee: This committee will be appointed by the head with the advice of the executive committee and will supervise the nomination process for faculty awards. It will consist of at least three members.
 8. History Prize Committee: This committee will consist of an undergraduate advisor and faculty member appointed by the head with the advice of the executive committee and will supervise the awarding of departmental prizes to undergraduate majors.
 9. Library Committee: This committee, consisting of three or four members appointed by the head with the advice of the executive committee, coordinates responses from the faculty when the Evans Library calls for new purchases—and interacts more generally with the Library through the department's representative, as needed.
 10. Search Committees: These ad hoc committees conduct searches for new faculty members—tenure-track, tenured, lecturers, and instructional professors.

- 10.1 Search committees for tenure-track and tenured positions will normally consist of five members—a chair and three additional faculty (one from each rank, to the extent possible) and one graduate student—appointed by the department head in consultation with the Executive Committee. Search committees for temporary non-tenure track positions will consist of three faculty members appointed by the department head.
- 10.2 Search Committees are responsible for all stages of the search from advertisement through presenting final recommendations to the faculty. Specific tasks include:
 - 10.2.1 Preparing an announcement of the position and ensuring that it is widely disseminated, and actively recruiting applicants by contacting colleagues and potential candidates at other institutions about the vacancy;
 - 10.2.2 Attending search committee training sessions (e.g., those mandated by the Dean of Faculties and offered by ADVANCE);
 - 10.2.3 Reviewing applications and notifying applicants of their status during the search;
 - 10.2.4 Providing updates of the progress of the search at faculty meetings;
 - 10.2.5 Providing the faculty with summary information on the finalists (normally 10-12) who, for tenure track and tenured positions, normally will be interviewed at the Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association;
 - 10.2.6 Requesting certification of the final applicant pool as required by the College of Liberal Arts
 - 10.2.7 Handling all arrangements and scheduling for on-campus interviews by candidates (normally 3 or 4); and
 - 10.2.8 Finalizing hiring recommendations and communicating them to the faculty for discussion and action.
- 10.3 Partner-Placement: When opportunities for partner-placement present themselves, the department, to the extent possible, should treat the hiring as it would any other one.

F. Department Officers: On both a continuing and an ad hoc basis specific functions of the department will be assigned to appointive officers. Such officers will be responsible to the faculty and the head.

1. Advised by the Executive Committee, the department head will appoint the following officers for four-year terms:
 - 1.1 Director of Graduate Studies
 - 1.2 Associate Department Head
 - 1.3 Director of Undergraduate Studies
2. Advised by the Executive Committee, the department head will appoint a Graduate Placement Director for a two-year term.

As necessary, the Department Head, with the advice of the Executive Committee, will appoint faculty members to other offices.

G Voting Procedures: All elections, except those involving tenure and promotion, shall be conducted by e-mail with all faculty members being eligible to vote. The period for balloting shall be five calendar days with the option to cast a ballot by e-mail or the double-envelope system. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty in residence may vote on hiring decisions.

H Amendment Process: These bylaws may be amended by the full faculty on the recommendation of one-third of the faculty or the executive committee. All proposed amendments will be presented and discussed in a faculty meeting prior to a vote by secret ballot. The process of balloting will take no longer than a week and amendments will take effect if they receive the approval of a simple majority of those voting.

In addition to these bylaws, two other documents, posted on the Department's website, provide specific information and guidelines on the Department's standards and methods of governance:

Procedures and Criteria for Annual Merit Performance Evaluation and Review (annual review guidelines); Department of History Statement on Tenure and Promotion Criteria

See also the pertinent College of Liberal Arts documents, available on the CLLA website:

Guidelines for Review, Tenure, and Promotion of Tenure-Track and Tenured Faculty; CLLA Faculty Academic Track Guidelines

The Department will review these documents regularly

