

# Bylaws of the Faculty of The College of Science

## George Mason University

### **Article I—Membership and Organization**

#### **Section 1. Definition of Faculty and Voting Rights**

The Faculty of the College of Science (hereafter referred to as the Faculty) comprises all persons in the College of Science (hereafter referred to as the College) holding a faculty appointment. Subject to the three restrictions enumerated below, the right to vote at the College level shall be held by all members of the faculty who: have a full time tenured, tenure-track, or term faculty appointment in the College; or have a long-term (in excess of 5 years) part-time term appointment in the College; with their voting rights granted by the tenured and tenure-track faculty in their Academic units (departments, schools and independent programs) based on the individual's involvement with the College and Academic unit, as evidenced by their time spent on campus, the level of their teaching responsibility, and other factors.

#### **Restrictions:**

1. Faculty who hold only a courtesy appointment or external membership on graduate thesis committees are not eligible to vote.
2. Faculty on term appointments are eligible to vote only after one year of service at the University.
3. The right to vote on issues concerning promotion and tenure shall be restricted to tenured faculty with the appropriate rank.

#### **Section 2. Officers of the Faculty**

The Faculty shall annually elect a Chair of the Faculty, a Chair Pro Tempore, and a Secretary of the Faculty. In the event of an Officer vacancy, the Chair will appoint a member of the Faculty to fill the vacancy. If that vacancy is the Chair position, the Chair Pro Tempore shall serve as Chair and appoint a new Chair Pro Tempore.

An Officer may serve no more than three consecutive one-year elected terms in a given Officer position; a partial year due to a vacancy shall not count against this three year limit. The previous Chair of the Faculty shall preside over meetings until the new Chair is chosen. The Chair of the Faculty shall appoint a Parliamentarian each year. Nominations for the three elected positions shall be made from the floor. In the event that no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast, a run-off election will be held between the top two candidates. Except when a motion to cast a unanimous ballot is passed, voting for officers shall be by secret ballot.

#### **Section 3. Certification of Voting Rights**

A representative from the Deans, prior to the first meeting of the Faculty of each year, shall certify to the Secretary of the Faculty in a written form the names of all persons holding faculty rank and whether they have voting rights. It shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Faculty to maintain a current record of faculty with voting rights, and to resolve challenges raised by a voting member regarding the voting eligibility of another person. Hereafter, Deans refers to Dean's personnel in the Administration of the College, which includes but is not limited to the Dean, Senior Associate Deans, Associate Deans, and Assistant Deans.

#### **Section 4. Membership and Governance in Academic units**

The College of Science is composed of academic units and Centers. Academic units (AU) are departments, schools, or independent programs, each consisting of faculty having common areas of interests in education and research. Faculty may have an affiliation with more than one academic unit, but will normally have their primary affiliation in one academic unit. (Faculty whose position is split equally between two academic units will be asked to choose one as their primary affiliation.) Faculty who are affiliated with more than one academic unit will be evaluated by both academic units for purposes of salary adjustment and promotion and/or tenure. Faculty with joint affiliations will have voting rights in the academic unit of their primary affiliation; but they may also be extended voting rights in another academic unit on a courtesy basis at that academic unit's discretion. Academic unit policies on voting rights within an academic unit are to be specified in the Academic unit Bylaws or its Standing Rules. The governance of the academic units must adhere to these Bylaws or Standing Rules. As noted in the University Faculty Handbook, voting rights, hiring practices, and membership within an academic unit are the decision of that unit. Academic units are expected to have representation on various committees of the College, as prescribed in Article IV. Academic units will conduct the first-level review of faculty within the Academic unit for promotion and/or tenure.

### **Article II—Responsibilities of the Faculty**

Faculty will be expected to perform any number of the general duties listed in section 1 and 2 as specified by the nature of their title and appointment in the local academic units or in the college.

#### **Section 1. General Duties**

The Faculty are expected to conduct research leading to the advancement of the state of knowledge in their fields and to disseminate the results of their research through scholarly publications, by participation in conferences, and through other means. The Faculty are expected to participate in activities of learned societies and other professional associations within their academic fields. The Faculty are expected to serve their academic units, the College, and the broader University in the development and administration of courses or programs of study, in the governance of academic programs, in the governance of the College and of the University, and in other activities relating to university life. The Faculty are expected to play an important role in the hiring of any new faculty in their academic units.

## **Section 2. Academic Responsibilities**

Teaching responsibilities of faculty include teaching regular classroom courses and laboratories, teaching individualized section courses, teaching distance-learning courses, advising students, directing graduate and undergraduate research, master's theses, and doctoral dissertations, participating on master's and doctoral committees, and/or leading seminars and study groups.

It shall be within the province of the Faculty, or its empowered committees, or the academic units:

- To propose, review, and approve matters affecting the development of courses and curricula in the College;
- To propose, review, and approve academic requirements for degrees, minors, and Certificates;
- To authorize conferral of those degrees, certificates, and minors upon students who have been certified by the Registrar to have fulfilled the requirements set for them;
- To propose, review, and approve regulations governing evaluation and acceptance of credits transferred from other institutions;
- To propose, review, and approve policies pertaining to standards of undergraduate and graduate student admission to the College;
- To review and make recommendations to the Dean regarding the creation, organization and discontinuance of academic units or academic programs within the College;
- To review and make recommendations regarding general governance issues;
- To review and provide advice regarding selection of the President of the University, Deans, other administrative officers, and academic unit chairs;
- To review and make recommendations regarding matters of Faculty welfare such as professional conduct, hiring, tenure, promotion, and grievance;
- To consider and act on or make recommendations on such other subjects not mentioned above that may fall within the scope of its concern.

## **Article III—Meetings of the Faculty**

### **Section 1. Presiding Officer**

Meetings of the Faculty shall be conducted according to the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order except as the rules and procedures described therein have been or shall be modified by adoption of these or of future Bylaws or the Standing Rules. The presiding officer of all meetings of the Faculty shall be the Chair of the Faculty, or the Chair Pro Tempore. In their absence, an acting chair shall be elected from among the voting members of the Faculty present.

### **Section 2. Quorum**

Meetings shall be open to all members of the Faculty as defined in Article I, Section 1, with attendance allowed both in person and online remotely. The quorum for the meetings of the Faculty shall consist of not fewer than 15% of the voting members of the Faculty as defined in Article I, Section 1, including both those attending in person and/or online. If a quorum is not established at a scheduled meeting, agenda items such as announcements, committee reports, Deans reports and other general business can still be informally heard and distributed in minutes to the Faculty. However, no motions can be formally introduced, debated, nor voted upon, including the approval of past minutes. Any motions on the agenda should be carried over to the next meeting agenda in which a quorum is established.

### **Section 3. Meeting Participants**

Any person invited by the Chair of the Faculty may participate in the discussion of any item of business brought forth upon the floor. All members of standing and ad hoc committees may be present at the meeting(s) of the Faculty during consideration of a report from their respective committee(s) and may participate in such consideration. In addition, meetings shall be open to the general public who may attend as observers. Freedom of discussion shall be the rule.

### **Section 4. Closed Session**

The Faculty may go into closed session by majority vote. Only members of the Faculty may be present during a closed session.

### **Section 5. Agenda for Meetings**

The Secretary and Chair of the Faculty shall prepare the agenda and shall distribute it a week prior to the meeting to all members of the Faculty via email. Any member of the Faculty may submit items of business for inclusion on the agenda. All items submitted at least 10 working days prior to the meeting shall be placed on the agenda of the upcoming or a future COS faculty meeting. Explanatory or background information on all agenda items shall be prepared by the sponsor of the item and shall be attached to the minutes. Agenda items submitted for Faculty action shall be in writing and accompanied by the text of all principal motions to be put on substantive matters and shall be circulated with the agenda.

### **Section 6. Frequency of Meetings**

Meetings of the Faculty will be convened at least once every fall and spring semester. When the agenda of a scheduled meeting is not completed on the scheduled date, the meeting shall be recessed or adjourned and shall be reconvened as agreed upon and the remaining agenda items should be considered for inclusion in the agenda for the next meeting.

### **Section 7. Special Meetings**

The Faculty Chair shall call a meeting of the Faculty in response to a petition signed by at least 10% of the voting members of the Faculty and should normally call such a meeting within eight working days of receiving the petition. The written call to the meeting shall include a statement of the purpose of the meeting and shall be distributed to all members of the Faculty between five and ten working days before the meeting. Only business stipulated in the call to the meeting may be transacted at a special meeting.

### **Section 8. Voting Procedures**

Voting may be conducted at a meeting of the Faculty when a quorum is present. In a meeting of the Faculty, upon the affirmative vote of a majority of members present in person and online and voting, any matter may instead be submitted to an asynchronous online vote after the meeting unless the Standing Rules prohibit it.

**Meeting ballots:** A ballot at a meeting of the Faculty shall be by voice vote or by standing vote upon a call from the floor. For those attending online, voting can be conducted via online software. Any voting member may instead request consideration of a motion to hold a secret ballot to be taken. An absentee vote may be counted only in cases when a motion has been stated prior to the meeting and the motion comes to a vote unchanged. Proxy ballots are not allowed for meeting ballots. Except for motions to amend the Bylaws, a motion at a meeting of the Faculty shall be approved upon an affirmative vote of a majority of votes.

**Asynchronous online ballots:** If an asynchronous online vote is authorized at a meeting of the Faculty, the ballot must be submitted to the Faculty within seven working days of the meeting. Faculty shall be notified of the ballot by email. For an online asynchronous ballot, votes shall be submitted with online software. There shall be a mechanism that allows individuals to vote in secret. A deadline for voting must be imposed, but faculty must be given a period of at least one week to submit their votes. Votes not received by the deadline will be ignored. A motion will be approved by the affirmative vote of the majority of valid ballots received by the deadline. The Chair of the Faculty shall report the results of the balloting within one week of the deadline for voting; this report may be distributed orally at a meeting of the Faculty, or in writing by email. An online asynchronous ballot on a motion may also be initiated outside of a meeting of the Faculty by submitting a petition to the Faculty Chair signed by at least 10% of the voting members of the Faculty. The ballot shall be submitted to the Faculty within seven working days of the petition being submitted, according to the rules and procedures described above.

### **Section 9. New Business**

Items of new business not appearing on the agenda may be introduced from the floor by any member of the Faculty after consideration of all agenda items has been completed.

### **Section 10. Minutes of Meetings**

Minutes of all meetings of the Faculty shall be prepared in a style that will convey the essence of discussion on each item of business considered. The minutes shall be prepared and distributed to the Faculty by the Secretary of the Faculty. The minutes shall be distributed to Faculty via email and posted to the College website and archived.

## **Article IV—Committees**

### **Section 1. Categories and Membership Terms of College Faculty Governance**

**Standing committees** shall be those permanent committees whose Faculty members, except for designated ex-officio members, are elected by the Faculty, or appointed by the Academic units, as specified below. The term of the memberships on all standing committees is three years and members may succeed themselves, unless otherwise specified.

**Ad hoc committees** shall be those established by the Faculty for consideration of special or transient issues. If no term is specified, the committee is deemed to serve until it issues a final report or until the committee is dissolved in the same manner in which it was appointed.

**Dean's Committees** shall be those established by the Deans. Their membership may be elected or appointed as stipulated by the Deans.

A Deans representative shall be appointed by the Deans to be an ex-officio member of each standing and ad hoc committees of the College.

In the reciprocity of shared governance, the Deans shall include a faculty governance representative as an ex-officio member on Dean's Committees.

Excluding the Dean's committees, one of the Officers will also be appointed by the Chair serve as an ex-officio member of each of the standing and ad hoc faculty committees and subcommittees

### **Section 2. Committee Chairs and Establishment of Procedures**

This section does not apply to Deans committees.

Each committee shall establish and maintain its own committee procedures as per the University Faculty Handbook, and in compliance with these Bylaws, Standing Rules and the University Faculty Handbook. The procedures shall include but are not limited to:

- Electing its chair from among its own membership;
- Establishing a quorum for its own function;
- Maintaining appropriate records of its activities;
- Setting and annually communicating to Faculty means by which the Faculty can bring matters to the the committee;

- Determining as needed any confidentiality considerations and scope thereof;
- Establishing standing or ad hoc subcommittees, with membership comprised of a subset of committee members;
- Reviewing its procedures, charges, and the relevant Bylaws and Standing Rules on a triennial basis for revision and updating.
- Committee chairs must report vacancies occurring due to resignations or faculty being on leave to the Secretary and Chair of the Faculty, so that an appointment may be made for the unexpired term of the individual member.

Committees shall normally serve during the academic year; however, all committees are authorized to function as necessary during the entire calendar year.

### **Section 3. Student and Staff Representation**

The Faculty may authorize student and Staff representation on any Standing or Ad Hoc committee as an ex-officio member. The Dean may authorize this in the case of Dean's committees.

### **Section 4. Committee Reports**

Committees are expected to report at least annually to the Faculty. The report may be distributed via email or at a Meeting of the Faculty. Any Faculty committee may be required by majority vote of the Faculty to report to it at a specified later meeting any matter referred by action of the Faculty to that committee. Upon receipt of its report, the committee may be discharged of further responsibility for the matter by majority vote of the Faculty.

### **Section 5. Standing Committee Composition and Charges**

The Faculty of COS may create additional standing committees to those described below. Standing committees shall include the following:

**Promotion and Tenure Committee** — This is an advisory committee that receives the results of the first-level evaluation concerning promotion and tenure that is conducted by the Academic unit(s). Based on an independent evaluation that includes review of the first-level evaluation, the Committee develops a recommendation, which is submitted to the Dean and Provost. Copies of the recommendation are also sent to the candidate and his/her academic unit(s). Each School and Department will have a representative on the Promotion and Tenure Committee. In addition, four at large members will be elected. These at large members must be Full Professors. No academic unit will be represented by more than two faculty members. No faculty member being considered for promotion in that academic year shall be a member of the Promotion and Tenure committee. In addition, a member of the committee should disqualify him/herself from cases where close personal friends are being considered as well as in those cases of members from within her/his home academic unit. Committee members serve for three years. The proceedings and deliberations of the committee shall be confidential with the

scope of the confidentially determined in the committee procedures in a fashion consistent with legal and established precedent in academia.

**Curriculum Committee** — The principal tasks of this committee are to review and make recommendations on the approval, change, or discontinuation of academic degrees, certificate programs, and courses. This committee will have representation from each - Academic unit. Academic units cannot be represented by an individual who is a member of another academic unit. Committee members serve for three years. The COS Undergrad Council and Grad Council reps shall be ex-officio members.

**Nominations and Membership Committee** – This four (4) member committee will solicit nominations for all other committees, the Executive Council, and for the Faculty Senate. The slate of nominees that it compiles shall be presented to the Faculty (with the nominee's consent) during a meeting of the Faculty, at which time additional nominations may be made from the floor, with election carried out by a mail ballot. Nominations for the Nominations Committee itself can only come from the floor of a meeting of the Faculty. The term on this committee is for two years, and members of this committee cannot be nominated by the committee to serve on other committees, although they may be so nominated from the floor of a meeting.

**Faculty Matters Committee** — This committee is initially charged with:

- Developing its long-term charge and proposed procedures, with a report and proposed set of Bylaw and Standing Rules amendments to amend this charge. This report and set of proposed amendments shall be due and presented at the first Faculty meeting of the spring semester to allow for sufficient time for two meetings of Faculty to debate and vote prior to the solicitation of nominations for the following academic year;
- Reviewing compliance of our Current Bylaws and Standing Rules with the University Faculty Handbook;
- Including in its charge a grievance process as required by the University Faculty Handbook;
- In the spring semester, carry out the term and tenure leave application review;
- Consideration in its charge the consolidation of the following 2023-2024 standing and ad hoc committees and their charges: Executive Council, Grievance, Nominations, Faculty Annual Evaluations Advisory, Term and Tenure Leave Application Review;
- Consideration of other charges that may be relevant to Faculty Matters;
- Proposing a long-term membership Composition.

Initial committee Composition: Each Academic Unit will have one elected representative on this committee, elected by the Faculty at large. The committee membership shall consist of no more than 2/3<sup>rd</sup> tenure-track nor 2/3<sup>rd</sup> term faculty membership to ensure a balance of representation in Faculty track. The committee membership shall include a minimum of two assistant professors, one term and one tenure, to ensure representation in Faculty rank. The Deans shall have up to two representatives appointed as an ex-officio member or members, to enable shared governance collaboration on the development of this committees charge. If an



election fails to result in committee membership that meets all these criteria, the Officers can appoint additional members as needed. All elected positions will have an initial term of one year.

In the event a two-thirds vote of affirmation on the Bylaws and a majority affirmation vote on the Standing Rules is not successful in amending this initial charge of this committee, this charge will automatically roll-over and be extended an additional academic year with new elected committee membership.

**Graduate Council** – A representative to the Graduate Council shall be appointed by the Deans. Additional representatives, when permitted under Graduate Council bylaws, will be elected by the College of Science faculty for a three-year term. If any elected representative is unable to complete a term, a new representative will be elected to a three-year term. Any representative to the Graduate Council must meet the requirements for membership specified in the bylaws of the Graduate Council.

**Undergraduate Council** – A representative to the Undergraduate Council shall be appointed by the Deans. A second representative to the Undergraduate Council will be elected by the College of Science faculty. The term of service is two years. If any elected representative is unable to complete a term, a new representative will be elected to a two-year term. Any representative to the Undergraduate Council must meet the requirements for membership specified in the bylaws of the Undergraduate Council.

## **Article V — Faculty Senate**

### **Section 1. Election of Senators**

The Faculty shall elect members to serve on the Faculty Senate. Eligibility of faculty to serve as senators shall be determined by the policies of the Faculty Senate. Election for Senators shall be conducted according to the same eligibility rules as described in Article I, Section 1.

## **Article VI — Effective Date and Amendment**

### **Section 1. Ratification**

These Bylaws became effective May 1, 2006 with a majority of faculty voting.

### **Section 2. Amendments**

All motions to amend these Bylaws shall be read and debated at two consecutive meetings of the College Faculty. The second meeting must occur at least one week after the first meeting. Following the debate at the second meeting, a vote on the motion to amend shall be taken. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the Faculty present and voting shall be required for passage of

such an amendment.

Adopted 5/1/2006

Amended 4/28/2011

Amended 10/20/2015

Amended 4/24/2017

Amended 5/3/2018

Amended 3/19/2024