

## **Constitution and Bylaws**

College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Faculty Association  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

*Initially Approved as of May 15, 2004, as proposed by the  
Transitional College Faculty Committee as of April 15, 2004.  
Revised and Amended as of December 15, 2008.  
Revised and Amended by vote of CLAHS faculty, November 2009.  
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Revised and Amended by vote of CLAHS faculty, May 2023.*

### **Article I. Name, Purpose, and Membership**

Section 1.1. The name of this organization shall be the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences Faculty Association (hereafter referred to as the Faculty Association) of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Section 1.2. The purpose of this organization shall be to provide an effective means for shared governance by the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences (hereafter referred to as the College) in the consideration, formulation, and implementation of recommendations and decisions relating to the academic, administrative, and student-life policies of the College and of the University. To achieve this purpose the Faculty Association provides: a forum for discussion of relevant issues; a channel for communication among members of the faculty, between the faculty and the administration, and between the faculty and students; and a mechanism for selection of faculty representatives to University committees, commissions, and governance bodies that require representation from the College.

Section 1.3. Members of the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences with voting rights shall include faculty at all ranks referenced in the Faculty Handbook with at least a half-time appointment in a departmental unit<sup>1</sup> of the College.

### **Article II. College Faculty Governance Structure**

Section 2.1. The College Faculty Council shall be the primary governance body for the Faculty Association.

Section 2.2. The College Faculty Council shall be advisory to the Dean and shall, in cooperation with the Dean, coordinate faculty activities. The College Faculty Council shall determine the time, place, and agenda of regular and special faculty meetings; act on behalf of the faculty between meetings; serve as a liaison with the College and University administration; and perform all other functions assigned by the Faculty Association or necessary to discharge its leadership responsibilities.

Section 2.3. The College Faculty Council membership shall be made up of one member per 30 Teaching and Research faculty members in each department or school (rounded down), with a minimum of one member per department or school for units with at least five

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document “departmental unit” refers to both departments and schools.

faculty members. Council members shall serve three-year staggered terms.

Section 2.4. The College Faculty Council members shall annually elect a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary. The usual order of succession shall be that the Vice-Chair becomes Chair and a new Vice-Chair shall be elected from the Council membership. A new Secretary shall be elected annually, but may hold consecutive terms of office.

Section 2.5. The Chair shall preside at meetings of the College Faculty Council and at meetings of the Faculty Association, and perform other duties appropriate to the office.

Section 2.6. The Vice-Chair shall act in the place of the Chair during the Chair's absence, shall serve as Faculty Association historian, and shall perform other duties appropriate to the office.

Section 2.7. The Secretary shall give notice of all meetings of the College Faculty Council and general meetings of the Faculty Association, publish a meeting agenda, record and publish minutes of the meetings, conduct correspondence, and perform other duties appropriate to the office.

Section 2.8. Each departmental unit representative on the College Faculty Council shall have one vote. Section 2.9. A quorum for the conduct of business by the College Faculty Council shall be at least sixty percent of its members.

### **Article III. Elections**

Section 3.1. The faculty of each departmental unit shall be responsible for choosing its representative to the College Faculty Council at least three weeks before the last day of classes of any spring semester in which it is necessary to fill a position becoming vacant in August of that year.

Section 3.2. The method by which candidates are chosen is at the discretion of the departmental units' faculty.

Section 3.3. Terms of office shall ordinarily expire and begin on August 15 and are not renewable in succession.

Section 3.4. Vacancies occurring during an academic year may be filled by whatever means the departmental unit's faculty chooses.

Section 3.5. The College Faculty Council shall be responsible for choosing or designating procedures for the selection of persons to fill governance positions at the University level.

### **Article IV. Committees**

Section 4.1. The standing committees of the College shall include Promotion and Tenure, Undergraduate Curriculum, Graduate Curriculum, Awards and Honors, Diversity, International Initiatives, and Grants Advisory Committees.

Section 4.2. Committees shall be constituted at least three weeks before the last day of classes of the spring semester by the means stipulated below for each Committee.

Section 4.3. Members of the Promotion and Tenure Committee shall serve two-year staggered terms. All other Committee members shall serve three-year staggered terms, ordinarily beginning and ending on August 15. Terms are not renewable in succession, with the exception of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, which shall have terms renewable once in succession, and the Diversity Committee, which shall have terms renewable indefinitely.

Section 4.4. Vacancies occurring during an academic year may be filled by whatever means the departmental unit of the vacating representative chooses.

Section 4.5. With the exception of the Diversity Committee, each Committee shall annually elect one of its currently serving members as Chair. Election of the Chair for the coming year shall be the responsibility of the current Committee prior to the selection of new members that occurs at least three weeks before the last day of classes of spring semester. The Chair shall be eligible for reelection as Chair within the duration of his or her term on the Committee.

Section 4.6. A quorum for the conduct of business by Committees shall be half of the members plus one.

Section 4.7. Committees may use electronic voting, as well as other methods of voting.

Section 4.8. The Promotion and Tenure Committee shall include one tenured faculty member chosen from each departmental unit and two tenured faculty members from the School of Education, one of whom will be a representative from the teacher education faculty and one of whom will be a representative from the social sciences and professional studies faculty. The member elected as Chair shall coordinate discussion, oversee the writing of letters, and handle other details. The Dean shall convene the Committee. The Dean may appoint one to three additional voting members to give balance and ensure that there is an odd number of voting members. The Dean and/or the Committee may also appoint non-voting observers.

Section 4.9. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee shall include one faculty member from each departmental unit that offers undergraduate degree programs and/or participates in undergraduate programs. Each departmental unit shall be responsible for choosing its representative. Other members of the Committee, neither of whom shall have voting rights, shall include the Dean or the Dean's designated representative and a staff member chosen by the Dean for an indefinite term who will serve as secretary. The Committee shall solicit representation from any department having business pending before the Committee. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee shall be concerned with curriculum development such as approval of courses, degree requirements, academic standards, undergraduate academic counseling, and other matters appropriate to the improvement of the College's undergraduate curriculum.

Section 4.10. The Graduate Curriculum Committee shall include faculty members from each departmental unit that offers graduate programs. Each departmental unit shall be responsible for choosing its representative. Other members of the Committee, neither of whom shall have voting rights, shall include the Dean or the Dean's designated representative and a staff member chosen by the Dean for an indefinite term who will serve as secretary. The Committee shall solicit representation from any department having business pending before the Committee. The Graduate Curriculum Committee shall be concerned with curriculum development such as approval of courses, degree requirements, academic standards, graduate academic counseling, and other matters appropriate to the improvement of the College's graduate curriculum.

Section 4.11. The Awards and Honors Committee shall include faculty members from no less than one half of the total number of departmental units, according to a rotation system developed by the Faculty Council. In its turn in the rotation, each departmental unit shall be responsible for choosing its representative. Other members of the Committee, neither of whom shall have voting rights, shall include the Dean or the Dean's designated

representative, and a staff secretary chosen by the Dean for an indefinite term. The Committee shall be responsible for all awards in the College.

Section 4.12. The Diversity Committee shall include teaching faculty, administrators, staff, and graduate students of the College. Representation from all units of the College shall be encouraged and invited. Membership shall be for a three-year renewable term. The Associate Dean for diversity matters shall be an ex officio member of the Committee without vote. Undergraduate students shall be welcome to attend meetings and to voice opinions and concerns within the regular discussions of the meeting agendas. The College Diversity Fellow shall serve as the Chair of the Committee; the Chair shall be a member of the teaching faculty or staff. The Committee membership shall annually elect a Secretary. The Diversity Committee shall be concerned with program, practice, and policy matters related to a broad span of concerns regarding cultural and institutional improvements for a rich diversity of people, effective multi-cultural learning communities, and a positive campus and community climate.

Section 4.13. The International Initiatives Committee shall include faculty, administrators, and staff in the College, as well as ex officio members from the Global Education Office. Representation from all units of the College shall be encouraged and invited. Membership shall be for a three-year renewable term. The Associate Dean for international initiatives shall be an ex officio member of the Committee without vote. The International Initiatives Committee shall be concerned with the College's mission regarding study and research abroad as well as global engagement and collaboration.

Section 4.14. The Grants Advisory Committee advises the Dean on issues related to college grants, including the design and development of funding priorities, eligibility, equity of access, and review criteria. The committee shall include at least three faculty members who are nominated by the College Faculty Council to the Dean for selection as Committee members. In both nomination and selection, attention shall be given to representation of the broad research interests and expertise of the faculty of the College. The Associate Dean for Research and the Director of the Institute for Society, Culture, and Environment (ISCE) shall be ex officio members of the Committee without vote. Committee members who are applying for funding may not serve during the cycle in which they are applying and may be replaced for that cycle by the above nomination and selection process. The Grants Advisory Committee shall be concerned with evaluating applications for competitive grants awarded by the College, according to the schedule established by the Associate Dean for Research.

Section 4.15. The College Faculty Council, the Faculty Association, or the Dean may appoint other committees, either standing or *ad hoc*, as deemed necessary. The method of selection and the function of the committee shall be determined by the body appointing the committee.

## **Article V. Meetings of the Faculty Association**

Section 5.1. Regular meetings of the Faculty Association shall be held at least once each academic year. The Dean of the College and the College Faculty Council each shall have power to call meetings of the Faculty Association whenever deemed necessary.

Section 5.2. Upon written petition of at least ten percent of the voting faculty of the Faculty Association from at least three departmental units, the College Faculty Council shall

convene a special meeting of the Faculty Association. Specially called meetings of the Faculty Association must take place within three weeks of receipt of the petition.

Section 5.3. At least two weeks prior to each meeting, the Secretary shall notify all members of the Faculty Association of the meeting and furnish an agenda for the meeting. A shorter notification period may be used in case of emergency, as determined by the College Faculty Council.

Section 5.4. A quorum for matters requiring a vote of the Faculty Association shall consist of not fewer than fifty members.

Section 5.5. Voting shall be by show of hands unless faculty members present at the meeting request an alternate method of voting. The right to vote shall be limited to members present except when a majority present and voting shall call for a vote of the entire Faculty Association and specify the means for such a vote.

Section 5.6. The procedure of business at meetings shall be in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws. On matters not covered in the Constitution and Bylaws, procedure shall be governed in accordance with the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Section 5.7. The Chair of the College Faculty Council shall appoint a Parliamentarian as needed.

#### **Article VI. Ratification, Amendments, and Revisions**

Section 6.1. Amendments to or revisions of this Constitution and Bylaws may be made via electronic ballot by an affirmative two-thirds vote of no fewer than fifty voting Faculty Association members. Notice and text of proposed changes shall have been sent to all members of the Faculty Association at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the electronic vote on the proposed changes.

Section 6.2. Amendments to or revisions of this Constitution and Bylaws shall become effective as soon as adopted.

Section 6.3. The College Faculty Council shall initiate a review of this Constitution and Bylaws whenever deemed necessary.