

**Bylaws of the University of Pittsburgh's  
Department of Political Science**  
(Ratified on January 24, 2025)

**1. Preamble**

- 1.1. The Department of Political Science pursues excellence in scholarship, teaching and mentoring, and service to the University and the wider communities of which we are a part. Our faculty conducts significant and impactful research and offers a rigorous curriculum that prepares students for future opportunities and new challenges. We strive to create a diverse and inclusive department by working, jointly and individually, to cultivate an environment of mutual respect and appreciation, and of constructive disagreement. As colleagues, we commit to uphold and defend academic freedom and integrity; to show respect and appreciation for the opinions of others as we exchange and criticize ideas; to acknowledge academic debates; to be professional in our evaluations of one another's work and of the work of students and staff; to share work equitably; to avoid discrimination, harassment, and demeaning behavior; to refuse to tolerate such behavior; and, to respect the privacy of all members of our community. To realize these common purposes, we adopt the following bylaws.
- 1.2. The Department of Political Science operates in accordance with the regulations of the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences and the University. Any provision in these bylaws incompatible with provisions of the official policies and regulations of the Dietrich School or the University shall be resolved in accordance with the relevant Dietrich School or University regulation.

**2. Voting Membership of the Department**

- 2.1 All powers and responsibilities delegated by the University of Pittsburgh to the Department reside in the body of its voting members. The powers and responsibilities of the officers and committees (see [Article 4](#) and [Article 5](#)) vis-à-vis the Department are delegated to them by the Department, on whose behalf they act, and their decisions and actions are therefore subject to review by the full Department.
- 2.2. Voting Membership
  - 2.2.1. Except when prohibited by University regulations and these bylaws, only tenured, tenure-stream, and appointment stream faculty with primary appointments in the Department, including faculty on temporary leave but not including emeriti, may attend

and vote on all issues at faculty meetings. Visiting faculty and Part Time Instructors are not voting members of the Department.

2.2.2. Only tenured and tenure stream faculty shall vote on the hiring of tenured and tenure stream faculty. All voting members of the faculty shall vote on the hiring of appointment stream faculty members.

2.2.3. Only tenured faculty shall vote on the promotion of tenure-stream faculty from Assistant to Associate Professor, and on the award of rank and tenure to an outside hire at the level of Associate Professor. Only tenured faculty at the rank of Professor or above shall vote on the promotion of Associates to Full Professor, and on the award of rank and tenure to an outside hire at the level of Full Professor.

2.2.4. All tenure stream, tenured, Teaching Associate Professors, and Teaching Professors shall vote on the promotion of Teaching Assistant Professors. All tenure stream, tenured and Teaching Professors shall vote on the promotion of Teaching Associate Professors.

2.2.5. Faculty members may not participate in discussions or vote on any personnel matters (hiring, retention, promotion) that involve immediate family members (e.g. present or past partners, parents, siblings, or children). Colleagues who are excluded from voting are also excluded from accessing minutes where such matters were discussed, to ensure that the faculty may deliberate freely.

2.3. Matters of general departmental policy, and any administrative, procedural, or substantive questions brought before the Department will be determined by the voting membership.

### **3. Faculty Meetings**

3.1. Faculty meetings will be scheduled and held as needed. The Chair will distribute an agenda of items likely to be discussed at the meeting at least two days in advance. Typically, meetings will include: a call to order, approval of minutes, reports of departmental officers, unfinished business, new business and/or announcements, and adjournment. Any faculty member can propose items for new business.

3.2. Faculty members will rotate taking minutes. The Department Coordinator will be in-charge of keeping a list of faculty, and informing the faculty member who is up in the rotation. The minutes shall be

circulated within 12 hours of the end of the meeting. Faculty may make corrections to those minutes up until the start of the next meeting. Minutes of the meeting shall be kept by the Department Coordinator and made available to all voting members of the Department.

- 3.3. Although meetings are run by whatever process serves the ends of inclusive discussion, careful deliberation, and informed voting, disputes about procedure shall be resolved using *Robert's Rules of Order* unless the relevant protocol in *Robert's Rules of Order* conflicts with the Department of Political Science Bylaws.

- 3.3.1. In particular, motions to call the previous question or to lay an issue on the table may be particularly useful. When discussion on an issue has been exhausted, a *motion to call the previous question* ends debate on a topic and makes voting on the question in order. A motion to call the previous question must be seconded, is not debatable, and must pass by a two thirds vote of those present. A *motion to lay an issue on the table*, or "tabling", temporarily sets an issue aside. A motions to lay an issue on the table must be seconded, is not debatable, and must pass by a simple majority of those present.

- 3.4. All departmental matters on which the faculty vote (aside from amendments to these bylaws, see [Article 8](#)) are determined by a majority of those present and casting votes. A quorum shall consist of 60% of those faculty members not on leave in a given term. Proxy votes are not permitted.

- 3.5. Ballot language will be constructed by the relevant committee regarding hiring issues and circulated to faculty with the committee report. Ballots are amendable through normal procedures in department meetings. Ballots will be distributed electronically to all eligible faculty members following the meeting, including those not in attendance. Voting must be completed within 24 hours after the faculty receive the ballots, after which time the votes of the faculty shall be tallied and announced.

- 3.6. For promotion, tenure, and personnel decisions, ballots will be distributed electronically to all eligible faculty members following the meeting, including those not in attendance. Voting must be completed within 48 hours after the faculty receive the ballots, after which time, the votes of the faculty shall be tallied and announced.

## 4. Departmental Leadership

- 4.1. Chair of the Department

- 4.1.1. The voting members described in [Article 2](#) elect the Chair,

which is subject to approval by the Dean. All voting members of the Department are eligible to vote in the election of a Chair, but only tenured faculty members are eligible to serve as Chair. Procedures for selection of the Chair are detailed in [Article 7](#).

- 4.1.2. The Chair has overall fiduciary responsibility for the Department. The Chair's authority derives from the faculty, but the Chair is also the representative of the Board of Trustees. The Chair is thus the chief executive officer of the Department. They will be responsible for the administration of the Department and will represent the Department to the administration and the University at large in hiring, in other negotiations, and with student complaints.
- 4.1.3. The Chair will exercise jurisdiction over the expenditure of Department funds, subject to advice from the Advisory, Planning and Budget Committee, as described below. The Chair may, at their discretion, designate another faculty member to assist in these tasks.
- 4.1.4. The Chair has final responsibility, in consultation with the Directors of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, for ensuring that the Department's teaching, staffing, and other curricular obligations are met. The Chair is responsible for determining faculty, graduate, and ancillary teaching assignments, and will consult with other members of the Department—and in particular the Directors of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies-- as needed to ensure that Departmental needs are met in the areas of graduate teaching, undergraduate teaching, and graduate student training.
- 4.1.5. All Department officers are to be appointed by the Chair. Department officers are the Director of Graduate Studies (see [Article 4.2](#).), the Director of Graduate Admissions and Career Placement (see [Article 4.3](#).), the Director of Undergraduate Studies (see [Article 4.4](#).), and the Diversity Director (see [Article 4.5](#).).
- 4.1.6. The Chair is the primary point of contact for the administrative staff and will coordinate with them on departmental activities.
- 4.1.7. Typically, the term of appointment for the Chair is four years. At the conclusion of the four-year term, the voting members of the Department may elect either a different person or the same person for the next four-year term following the procedure in [Article 7.1](#).

#### 4.2. Director of Graduate Studies (DGS)

4.2.1. The DGS has overall responsibility for the graduate program, including advising first year graduate students, informing first and second year students annually in writing about their performance and progress in the program, overseeing all issues that arise concerning graduate students, assigning students to allocated positions, writing annual program assessments and annual allocation reports to be submitted to the Dean's office, assigning students to allocated positions, and working with the Graduate Education Committee (GEC) (see [Article 5.3.](#)) to revise and update policies and procedures regarding the graduate program.

4.2.2. The Chair in consultation with the DGS, shall appoint a GEC (see [Article 5.3.](#)) to consider general matters of curriculum and policies affecting graduate students.

#### 4.3. Director of Graduate Admissions and Career Planning (DGACP)

4.3.1. The DGACP is responsible for the admission of Ph.D. students in the graduate program, and for providing support toward their planning for the professional job market.

4.3.2. The DGACP leads the admission process to the graduate program with the Admissions Committee (see [Article 5.5.](#)).

4.3.3. The DGACP's career planning duties include organizing professionalization workshops for students in the early stages of their studies, preparing students for the academic job market, inviting external speakers to address challenges of the job market, and scheduling practice job talks. Career planning support is provided in coordination with students' advisor(s), and is not a substitute for it.

#### 4.4. Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS)

4.4.1. The DUS is responsible for overseeing the undergraduate program of the Department. These duties include, but are not limited to: evaluation and revision of the undergraduate curriculum as needed in consultation with the Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC) (see [Article 5.4.](#)); coordination with the chair and staff in creating course schedules; nominating undergraduate students for awards and fellowships; handling questions regarding curriculum policy and undergraduate complaints; and participating in the hiring and evaluation of the Department's appointment stream faculty members.

4.4.2. The Chair in consultation with the DUS shall appoint an UEC (see [Article 5.4.](#)) and Undergraduate Programming Committee (UPC) (see [Article 5.8.](#)), which will advise the Department on all matters relating to the undergraduate program.

4.5. Diversity Director

4.5.1. The Diversity Director serves as the Chair of the Inclusion Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee (see [Article 5.7.](#)). Along with the committee, the Director will provide leadership and oversight on IDEA-related matters for the Department and when appropriate, refer any issues to the Department Chair.

4.5.2. The Diversity Director will meet with the Graduate Student Executive Committee (GSEC) and the Political Science Students Association (PSSA) at least once per year to discuss any IDEA-related matters.

4.5.3. The Diversity Director will work with the UPC (see [Article 5.8.](#)) and students to organize 1-2 IDEA events per academic year.

**5. Standing Committees**

5.1. Chair's Advisory Committee (CAC)

5.1.1. The CAC consists of one representative of each tenured or tenure stream rank of faculty (Assistant, Associate, and Full Professor) and one appointment stream faculty member, regardless of rank. The committee convenes annually to review the faculty's self-evaluation reports. Tenure stream representatives evaluate all faculty, while the appointment stream representative is responsible for evaluating only appointment stream faculty. These evaluations are advisory to the Chair. The committee may also meet to provide counsel on other matters at the request of the Chair or any of its members.

5.1.2. The selection process for the CAC will follow a rotation system, with faculty members at each rank serving a two-year term. This process will take effect as incumbent committee members' terms at the time of ratification of the revised bylaws are completed. To maintain continuity, terms will be staggered. The person who has spent the most time not serving will be the next person from that rank on the committee. In the event of a tie, the Chair will select the committee member by random draw.. If a faculty member is unable to serve due to circumstances such as a leave or appointment outside of the department, the next

eligible faculty member in the rotation will take their place and serve for a full term. The faculty member who was unable to serve during their designated term will begin their two-year term in their current rank upon their return or when they are next available. The Chair is responsible for maintaining records of previous committee memberships and passing this information to the next chair for continuity.

5.2. Planning and Budget Committee

5.2.1. The CAC, with the addition of an appointed staff member, functions as the department's Planning and Budget Committee.

5.2.2. The Chair oversees daily and routine planning decisions and consults with the Planning and Budget Committee at the Chair's discretion.

5.3. Graduate Education Committee (GEC)

5.3.1. The GEC consists of the DGS as Chair and three members of the tenure stream/tenured faculty and one graduate student representative. If possible, each subfield should be represented.

5.3.2. The GEC proposes changes to the graduate curriculum and program. Any proposed changes will be voted on by the voting members of the Department.

5.4. Undergraduate Education Committee (UEC)

5.4.1. The UEC consists of the DUS (see [Article 4.4.](#)) as the Chair and three members of the faculty. At least half of the committee will be appointment stream faculty. If possible, each subfield should be represented.

5.4.2. The UEC advises the Department on all matters related to the undergraduate program, including selection of winners for departmental awards, curricular issues, assessment, and the approval of new courses.

5.4.3. The UEC shall constitute the Departmental subcommittee that evaluates appointment stream faculty for purposes of contract renewal. Only appointment stream faculty at the rank of the proposed promotion or higher may take part in this process.

5.4.4. Once per semester, the UEC shall meet for the purpose of reviewing new undergraduate course proposals. The UEC will discuss and vote on all proposals; a proposal must win three votes to be approved. Any course that is not approved will be

returned to the sponsoring faculty member with a memo explaining the reasons for the decision and suggesting revisions where appropriate.

#### 5.5. Admissions Committee

5.5.1. The Admissions Committee, chaired by the DGACP (see [Article 4.3.](#)), reviews applications for admission to graduate study and, in consultation with the Chair, makes recommendations about admission and financial aid for incoming graduate students.

5.5.2. The Admissions Committee will include three faculty members appointed by the Chair. If possible, each sub-field should be represented.

#### 5.6. Graduate Awards Committee (GAC)

5.6.1. The GAC, chaired by the DGS (see [Article 4.2.](#)), determines the allocation of financial awards to students beyond their first year of graduate study.

5.6.2. If there are opportunities for non-financial awards, the GAC will select the recipients of these.

5.6.3. The GAC will include three faculty members appointed by the Chair.

#### 5.7. Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access Committee (IDEA)

5.7.1. The IDEA Committee consists of the Diversity Director (see [Article 4.5.](#)), the Department Chair (ex officio), and three faculty members. At least one committee member should be on the Appointment Stream.

5.7.2 The IDEA Committee will provide leadership and oversight on IDEA-related matters in the Department, including on Department procedures, faculty workload, recruitment and retention, graduate admissions, and departmental climate. The committee may also plan IDEA-related workshops and programming for faculty and students. If needed, the IDEA Director may establish sub-committees, which will report to the full committee. The committee's role is to advise, educate, and encourage best practices. In working with other committees and departmental officers the Committee ensures compliance with diversity practices, but otherwise does not authorize or vet any departmental or committee actions. The Committee will prepare an annual report of its work and circulate to faculty.



## 5.8. Undergraduate Programming Committee (UPC)

5.8.1. On an annual basis, the Chair shall appoint four members of the faculty to serve on the UPC, of whom at least two shall be appointment stream faculty and one faculty member shall serve as committee chair.

5.8.2 In coordination with the UEC and departmental advisors, the UPC shall advance the academic objectives of the undergraduate program by organizing professional development events, enhancing the undergraduate program's visibility across the university, conducting outreach and maintaining relations with Political Science alumni, regularly suggesting improvements to the undergraduate portion of the website.

## 6. Ad-Hoc Committees

6.1. When deemed necessary, the Chair will appoint an-hoc committee to address a given issue not specified in the responsibilities of one of the standing committees. The committee will consist of a chair and at least 2 committee members.

## 7. Procedures

### 7.1. Chair Selection

7.1.1. Around November 15<sup>th</sup> of the incumbent chair's last year in office, the Department Chair shall appoint a tenured professor as Elections Manager. The Chair will individually ask all eligible faculty members if they would volunteer to serve as Elections Manager. The Chair will then select an Elections Manager from among those who volunteered.

7.1.2. The Elections Manager should be someone not interested in running for Chair. The job of the Elections Manager is to facilitate the selection of a Chair by promoting collegiality throughout the process and providing a thorough reporting of the views of the faculty at large, as described below.

7.1.2. A first meeting of the entire faculty will be convened by the Elections Manager at which all Full Professors will be asked to express whether they are interested in running for chair and whether they would be willing to serve as Chair. The incumbent Chair may also express interest in running for re-election. In general, it is preferable to have a Full Professor as Chair, but Associate Professors may also express their interest if they so

choose.

- 7.1.3. After this meeting, the Elections Manager will solicit feedback from faculty on each of the individuals who have expressed an interest in running for the position. Feedback will be provided through an online poll. The feedback from Assistant Professors and appointment stream faculty will be anonymous. Any faculty member wishing to discuss the candidates in person with the Elections Manager may do so during this period.
- 7.1.4. If there is at least one candidate interested in running who has majority support among the faculty, the process continues as outlined in 7.1.5. If no one expresses an interest in running or if the candidate(s) who express an interest do[es] not enjoy majority support, the Elections Manager will convene a meeting of all Full Professors who are willing to serve as Chair and work to find one or more (additional) candidates for the office. The Elections Manager then solicits feedback on the new slate of candidates as described above.
- 7.1.5. Once there is a slate that includes at least one faculty member who has majority support, a second meeting of the entire faculty will be convened by the Elections Manager. Active candidates for Chair will be excluded from this meeting except as described below. The Elections Manager characterizes the feedback on each active candidate and answers any questions the faculty may have. At this point, active candidates will be invited individually to present their vision for the future of the Department and to take questions. Any faculty member may pose questions. All candidates will be allotted an equal amount of time for their presentation and question session. Following the sessions with each candidate, the voting faculty will discuss the candidates.
- 7.1.6. Following the meeting, all voting members of the Department will vote for their preferred candidate using instant run-off rank choice voting via an anonymous electronic ballot within 24 hours facilitated by the Department Coordinator. The Elections Manager is responsible for breaking ties via a public lottery. The Department should complete this process by the end of the fall semester.
- 7.1.7. At the earliest convenience of the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Elections Manager shall send an email to the Dean to report and elaborate upon the results of the process, including the ballot results and aggregate opinions about the selected candidate. The Dean will be given any other information about the process or the outcome that they believe to be salient.

## 7.2. Hiring of New Faculty Members

- 7.2.1. There shall be a yearly meeting of the entire faculty toward the end of the Spring semester to discuss recruitment plans for the coming academic year. Should the Chair deem that it would be beneficial to gather more information from faculty, a non-binding anonymous survey will be held where faculty self-identify as tenure or appointment stream. These results will be shared with the entire faculty. These advisory discussions and results of any non-binding votes will form the basis of the Chair's recruitment requests to the Dean.
- 7.2.2. The Chair shall appoint ad-hoc hiring committees to draft job ads, review applications, and make hiring recommendations. Ad-hoc hiring committees shall be comprised of a committee chair and at least two other faculty members representing multiple ranks. Only tenure stream and tenured faculty may serve on hiring committees for tenure stream and tenured faculty. One graduate student representative will serve on each tenure stream hiring committee. All faculty may serve on appointment stream hiring committees, of which at least half of the members shall be appointment stream faculty.
- 7.2.3. Voting within search committees for tenure stream faculty shall be limited to tenured and tenure stream faculty. Voting within search committees for appointment stream faculty shall be limited to tenured, tenure stream, and appointment stream faculty. Voting for faculty positions shall take place at a meeting following the visits of all candidates for the position and surveys conducted of the entire faculty and graduate students by the search committee and a graduate student representative, respectively. The responses of untenured and appointment stream faculty and graduate students will be anonymous. The graduate student representative shall present the views of the graduate students at the faculty meeting.
- 7.2.4. Tenure stream and tenured faculty are eligible to vote on tenure stream hires. All members of the faculty are eligible to vote on appointment stream hires.
- 7.2.5. Assessments of job candidates by any faculty and graduate students who interacted with a candidate and/or their application materials shall be represented in all final hiring committee recommendation reports circulated to the faculty and transmitted to the Dean.

## **8. Amendments**

- 8.1. Amendments to these bylaws may be submitted to the Chair in writing by any member of the faculty, a standing departmental committee, or an ad-hoc bylaws amendments committee appointed by the Chair and comprised of faculty from each rank and stream.
- 8.2. No later than one month after an amendment is proposed it shall be debated in a faculty meeting. No later than one month after it is debated, an anonymous vote of the entire faculty vote must be held.
- 8.3. Amendments that propose changes to the Chair selection process shall not be voted on in the three months immediately preceding a scheduled Chair election.
- 8.4. Amendments shall be ratified if two-thirds of all members of the faculty vote in favor and shall go into immediate effect unless otherwise specified by the amendment proposal.