

July 11, 2004

BYLAWS
DEPARTMENT OF PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCES
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
(December 5, 2018)
Final Approval

Revised 12/5/2018

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Department of Plant and Soil Sciences
College of Agriculture and Natural Resources
University of Delaware

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BYLAWS

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The Bylaws of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences provide for the administrative organization and procedures of the Department. These Bylaws shall be subordinate to and not in conflict with the Bylaws of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources or the University of Delaware. Operating within the context of these Bylaws, the governance of the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences shall be shared between the administration and faculty.

I. Organization and Procedures

A. Faculty Meetings

During the academic year, faculty meetings will be held monthly.

Faculty meetings are intended for the voting faculty membership of the Department. Depending on the agenda for the meeting, other personnel from the Department including staff and professionals may also be invited to participate in the meeting. A representative from the professional staff and the graduate student organization will be invited to join the “announcements” section of the meeting to provide activity updates; these two representatives will not be allowed to attend the rest of the meeting.

B. Agenda

Proposed agenda items must be submitted to the Chairperson's office. The agenda for the department meeting shall be prepared by the Chairperson or designee and distributed at least 1 business day prior to the meeting.

C. Voting

1. Fifty percent, plus one, of the voting membership, as defined in the College Bylaws, shall constitute a quorum. The faculty shall abide by its own rules of procedure, but in cases where it has adopted no explicit rules, or where applicability or interpretation of the rules is in doubt, Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, shall govern.
2. Adjunct faculty may attend department meetings but do not have voting privileges.
3. Faculty with a minor appointment in the department may attend and vote.
4. Eligible voters may cast a vote in absentia by notifying the meeting secretary of their ballot before the vote is taken.
5. A secret ballot shall be used when requested by two or more voting faculty. This request must be made before the final vote on a motion. Secret ballots shall be tabulated by a non-voting member or Departmental designee (e.g. Departmental Administrator).

D. Chairperson

1. The Chairperson is the chief administrative officer of the Department and is responsible for the overall functioning of the Department, which includes managing the Department's budget and supervising the office staff.

2. The Chairperson of the Department shall have general administrative responsibility over departmental affairs, exercise leadership in the formulation of policies, introduce educational ideas and proposals, and stimulate discussions leading to improvement of the educational, research, and outreach programs of the Department. Responsibilities shall include strengthening the Department and its programs along with representing those programs to the College, University, and beyond.
3. The Chairperson shall have the authority to make budgetary recommendations to the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and shall consult with the Department Faculty concerning budgetary matters that affect the Department as a whole.
4. The Chairperson is expected to operate the Department in the spirit of shared governance and seek faculty input, consider it, and provide feedback or rationale about final decisions.
5. The Chairperson or the Chairperson's representative shall be considered an ex officio member of all committees except the Promotion and Tenure Committee and shall be notified of all committee meetings and shall receive all committee reports.
6. The Department Chairperson shall chair the department faculty meetings. The Chair's appointee, who normally will be the associate chairperson, shall preside in the absence of the Chairperson or when the Chairperson takes the floor.
7. The Chairperson shall be appointed by the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources for a five-year term, in compliance with the policies of the University. There is no limit to the number of times an individual may be reappointed as Chairperson except as limited by University rules on retirement from administrative positions. Members of the voting faculty may petition the Dean for review of the Department Chairperson at intervals less than 5 years provided the majority of the voting faculty has voted in favor of the petition.
8. The advice of the Departmental faculty will be required for the appointment of the Department Chairperson. The process will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner. The department faculty will vote on the position description for the Department Chairperson faculty search. In the Department Chairperson faculty search, all application materials, including curriculum vitae and letters of reference, shall be made available to all faculty who are eligible to vote on the appointment. Faculty members will be provided an opportunity for comments on the selection of candidates. Upon concluding the search, the search committee will make a recommendation to the Department. The Department faculty will independently vote by secret ballot for each search finalist candidate after all candidates have completed their interview process indicating approval or disapproval of the candidate. For all votes on the Department Chairperson faculty search, a simple majority of the eligible voting faculty will be required. The Chair of the Departmental Promotion and Tenure committee will conduct the vote and transmit the recommendation to the Dean of the College and Chairperson of the appropriate search committee.
9. The advice of the Departmental faculty will be required for the reappointment of the Department Chairperson. The Department faculty will independently vote by secret ballot indicating approval or disapproval for the reappointment of the Department Chairperson. The Chair of the Departmental Promotion and Tenure committee will conduct the vote and transmit the recommendation to the Dean of the College. In addition, suggestions for improved performance during the second term will be solicited, anonymized, and provided to the Dean of the College and Department Chairperson.

E. Associate Chairperson

The Associate Chair is appointed by the Department Chair. The duties of the Associate Chair, other than those specifically mentioned within this document, will be negotiated with the Department Chairperson and will be communicated with the Department. The Associate Chairperson assumes the Chairperson's duties in the absence of the Chairperson. The associate chairperson is recognized as providing greater than 5% service to the department and may be eligible for an administrative stipend.

F. PLSC Directors: there are four program directors appointed by the Department Chair on an annual or contractual basis, with no term limits. Program directors are recognized as providing greater than 5% service to the department and may be eligible for an administrative stipend.

1. Director of Undergraduate Programs: serves as the chair of the Courses and Curriculum Committee and works to ensure committee functions are fulfilled.
2. Director of Graduate Programs: serves as the chair of the Graduate Programs Committee and works to ensure committee functions are fulfilled.
3. Director of the Landscape Architecture program: serves as the chief representative of the LA program, with duties to include: development and planning, communication of programmatic goals, and general oversight of the program including compliance with accreditation standards.
4. Director of the University of Delaware Botanic Garden (UDBG): directs all operations of UDBG to include, but not limited to: strategic planning and implementation, budgeting, fundraising, and employee hiring, supervision, and evaluation.

G. Faculty Minutes

Under the direction of the chair, a record of each faculty meeting shall be prepared and distributed to each department faculty member within an appropriate review time prior to the next faculty meeting. A permanent record of corrected faculty meeting minutes shall be filed in a readily accessible file in the department office. Minutes will be distributed to all full-time faculty. An appointee of the chair will be in attendance for the purpose of recording minutes.

H. Conduct of Business

The order of business shall be as follows: Approval of minutes, approval of agenda, announcements, committee reports, old business, and new business.

I. Items Requiring A Vote of Faculty

The following items that must be discussed in a regular or special faculty meeting and brought to a vote by the entire Department faculty include, but are not limited to: creation or elimination of programs; significant curriculum changes; selection of a chairperson; revisions to departmental policies and procedures including Bylaws, Post-Tenure Review, Promotion and Tenure, Workload, and Merit Pay Policies; changes in the names of the Department or any of its degree programs; and resolutions or motions that have an impact upon the University, Colleges or Departments of the University other than the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources or its Departments.

The proposed action will be considered to have been recommended by the faculty if it has the support of a majority of the voting members of the Department present at the

meeting or voting by proxy. The tally should be noted clearly in any related proposals going from the Department to the College.

II. General Provisions of Committees

A. The standing committees will be:

1. Promotion and Tenure
2. Courses and Curriculum
3. Graduate Programs
4. Safety
5. Honorifics
6. Hospitality
7. Administrative Advisory

B. General Functions

The functions of the Department Committees are: 1) to investigate, advise and recommend regarding designated areas; 2) to carry out assigned duties; and 3) to report to the Department faculty.

Service on Department Committees is the primary means whereby faculty can participate directly in the governance of the Department.

C. Membership

1. Eligibility. Each member of the voting faculty shall be eligible for membership on appropriate standing committees with the power to vote. The department chairperson is an ex-officio, non-voting member of all committees except the Committee on Promotion and Tenure. Term limits do not apply to ex officio members of any committee.
2. Designation of committee members will be made by the department chairperson in consultation with the faculty, with the exception of the Promotion and Tenure Committee which is elected annually.

D. Procedures

1. A majority of committee members must be present for major action; with the exception of the Committee on Promotion and Tenure, all meetings will be open, unless a majority of the committee votes to have a closed meeting.
2. All committee members, including the committee Chairperson, shall have voting privileges. Voting may be in person or electronic as necessary.
3. Committee action regarding policy statements should be included in committee minutes which shall be distributed to each committee member and Department Chairperson and filed in an accessible departmental file; committee minutes shall constitute appropriate summaries to be kept in department files.
4. Standing committee meeting times shall be posted in advance.

E. Ad hoc Committees

1. Ad hoc committees may be formed by the department faculty or the chairperson for a specific purpose, such as hiring. The ad hoc committee shall provide timely updates at faculty meetings or within 30 days of termination of the committee. These committees shall be dissolved upon acceptance of a final report or by the initiator. Faculty committee representatives at the college level will chair ad hoc committees dealing with respective responsibilities at the department level.
 - a. The department has a guidance document for search committees: see “Guidelines for PLSC Search Committees”.

III. Department Committees

A. Promotion and Tenure

1. Composition and functions: see separate “Department of Plant and Soil Sciences Promotion & Tenure Committee and Policy” which specifies membership, committee procedures, dossier expectations, and related functions.

B. Courses and Curriculum

1. Composition

- a. The Committee will consist of four faculty, an undergraduate student, and a graduate student. The four faculty will consist of the undergraduate programs director, who serves as the chair, and one representative from each of the following disciplinary areas: landscape architecture and horticulture; plant science; and soil/water science.
- b. Committee members will be appointed by the department chairperson to two-year renewable terms. Committee members may serve up to two consecutive terms and committee terms will be staggered to provide continuity. Faculty members who have served consecutive terms must have a minimum of one term off the committee before being eligible for reappointment to the committee.
- c. One member of the Departmental Courses and Curriculum committee will be elected by the committee to serve as the representative to the College committee. The Associate Chairperson is eligible to serve in this role as appropriate.

2. Functions

- a. To initiate, review and make recommendations regarding undergraduate and graduate instructional program improvements as deemed appropriate.
- b. To initiate action on policy issues related to undergraduate and graduate instruction.
- c. To respond to curriculum issues generated exterior to the department.
- d. To review and evaluate curriculum and course proposals and revisions for both permanent and experimental courses.

Major curricular changes (e.g., addition, deletion or substantive alterations of majors and minors): The committee shall receive, review, and approve for submission to the department faculty all proposals before these items are sent to the CANR Courses and Curriculum Committee. Department faculty approval may be done via a “consent agenda” item at a regular meeting of the faculty or via an electronic ballot or other

appropriate means, conducted by the Courses and Curriculum Committee, if necessary.

Minor curricular changes (e.g., minor revisions of majors and minors, proposals for new or revised courses): the committee shall receive, review, and approve and shall have authority to act for the department faculty and submit these items to the CANR Courses and Curriculum Committee for approval.

- e. All actions recommended by the committee, other than minor curricular changes, are voted on by the faculty at the next regularly scheduled faculty meeting. Meeting minutes from the committee are recorded and maintained in a faculty-accessible electronic file.

C. Graduate Programs

1. Composition

- a. The committee will consist of four full time faculty and one graduate student. The four faculty shall be chosen to represent the following disciplinary areas: horticulture, plant biology, and soil/water science. The Graduate Programs Director will chair this committee. All faculty members are eligible to serve on the committee.
- b. Committee members will be appointed by the department chairperson to two-year renewable terms. Committee members may serve up to two consecutive terms and committee terms may be staggered to provide continuity. Faculty members who have served consecutive terms must have a minimum of one year off the committee before being eligible for reappointment to the committee.

2. Functions

- a. To review applications of prospective graduate students and make recommendations regarding admission to the department chairperson.
- b. To review and revise the curricula of the various disciplinary concentrations of the graduate program.
- c. To review and revise, if necessary, existing departmental policies and procedures regarding the administration of graduate programs.

D. Safety

1. Composition

- a. The committee will consist of faculty, professionals, administrative staff and graduate students who are active in laboratory research. Members will serve two-year terms; the chair will serve a one-year term and be appointed from those members who served the preceding year.

2. Functions

- a. The Departmental Safety Officer has the responsibility as defined in the OSHA Laboratory Standard and the University Chemical Hygiene Plan, to implement the Chemical Hygiene Plan thus ensuring compliance with the regulatory requirements and maintaining a safe work environment.
- b. The committee will recommend changes in Departmental policies and practices which will enhance and promote laboratory safety.

- c. Committee members will also provide training under the State of Delaware Right-To-Know law and the OSHA-mandated Chemical Hygiene Plan.
- d. Implementing applicable regulations and monitoring of compliance with these regulations.
- e. Carrying out safety inspections of all laboratory spaces occupied or utilized by members of the Department unless an inspection is carried out by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety.
- f. Monitoring remediation of any safety violations found during inspections or at any other occasion.
- g. Conducting general building inspections annually.
- h. Meeting as needed with a member of the Department of Environmental Health and Safety to discuss safety issues and to receive relevant safety information.
- i. Conducting investigations of accidents that occurred in a laboratory or teaching space of the Department and completing applicable forms required by University policy.

E. Honorifics

1. Composition

- a. The committee will consist of faculty (to include emeriti), professionals, and administrative staff who have an interest in promoting professional recognition of colleagues, students, or stakeholders; the committee will elect a chair who serves a two-year term.

2. Function

- a. To nominate faculty, staff, students, and alumni for departmental, college, university, and professional society honors and awards in recognition of their exemplary contributions.

F. Hospitality

1. Composition

- a. The committee will consist of volunteers from interested faculty, professionals, administrative staff, and students.

2. Functions

- a. To plan and assist with social events in the department.
- b. To convey congratulations, concern, or sympathy to department members experiencing significant life events.

G. Administrative Advisory

1. Composition

- a. The committee will consist of faculty to include: associate chairperson, undergraduate programs director, graduate programs director, landscape architecture program director, and ad-hoc two-year maximum-term representatives of DBI-located faculty, a representative with a cooperative extension appointment, and a representative of soil/water science faculty.

2. Function

- a. To meet with the departmental chairperson, as requested, and provide advice on essential departmental functions and strategic priorities.

IV. Amendments

- A. The Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the department faculty by a two-thirds vote of the total voting faculty members (not on leave), provided the change has been submitted in writing to all members of the department faculty one week prior to the meeting.