

Departmental Bylaws and Department Faculty Council (DFCs)

Approved by the Faculty Senate on April 16, 2007, with editorial changes approved by the Senate Executive Committee operating on behalf of the Faculty Senate during the summer 2007 in consultation with the Provost and the University President.

I. Departmental Bylaws

- A. Each department shall, by February 15, 2008, have written bylaws which shall describe the roles, procedures, and membership of all college standing committees. The bylaws shall provide a procedure for the approval and amendment of such bylaws by a majority vote of the permanent, full-time faculty of the department taken by a secret ballot.
- B. An up-to-date version of the bylaws shall be posted on the department website and linked to the department homepage, in a conspicuous way, by the end of the Spring Semester 2008.
- C. The bylaws shall provide for a Department Faculty Council (or like body**) to be operational by October 1, 2007, and constituted in a way consistent with the parameters outlined below. The bylaws shall provide a procedure for the approval and amendment of such bylaws by a majority vote of the permanent, fulltime faculty of the department taken by a secret ballot. The Department Faculty Council will operate as an *ad hoc* body until the bylaws have been developed and approved.

II. The Department Faculty Council

A. The Role and Purpose of the DFC

1. The DFC is advisory to the Chair, who holds decision-making authority at the department level.
2. The purpose of the DFC is to promote collegiality and effective shared governance of the department by increasing the transparency and two-way communication between the faculty and the Chair with regard to the development of policy and to increase communication about the implementation of policy.

B. Implementation and Membership of the DFC

1. Each department that does not have a DFC shall establish an Implementation Committee to coordinate and oversee the establishment of its DFC. That same committee shall also initiate the establishment of written bylaws in cases where such bylaws do not already exist. Membership of the Implementation Committee shall be the department's Faculty Senator plus the chairs of the department's Curriculum Committee and its Tenure and Promotion Committee.
2. The Implementation Committee should work with the Faculty Senate Executive Committee to address problems arising in its work that may require external assistance.
3. A DFC shall consist of at least three members, all selected by vote of the department faculty.
4. A majority of the DFC should be tenured or tenure-track faculty if possible.
5. The exact method by which the department selects its representatives to the DFC shall be determined by vote of permanent full-time faculty of the department (*i.e.* instructors, lecturers, tenure-track, and tenured faculty). A department may recall any DFC member by a 2/3 vote.
6. The Chair is an *ex officio*, non-voting member of the DFC. Chairs will respect their DFC's desire, on occasion, to meet without the Chair present.
7. Department Chairs are not eligible to vote for or to serve as representatives to the DFC.

C. Alternatives to the DFC

1. The body performing the functions here outlined for the DFC may be constituted differently if the faculty so desire, but any such alternative body must:
 - a) Be composed of a majority of voting members who are elected by the permanent full-time faculty of the departments they represent.
 - b) Be chaired by a tenured, elected faculty member who is selected by vote of the elected members of the body.
 - c) Clearly acknowledge in its bylaws the prerogative of the elected members, when those members wish, to meet without the Chair.
 - d) Be clearly identified in the department's bylaws as performing the functions of the DFC.

- e) Be initially approved and then reaffirmed annually by a majority vote of the permanent full-time faculty members of the department by secret ballot as their preferred alternative to a DFC as outlined elsewhere in this document.
2. Similarly departments may substitute a Committee of the Whole for a DFC, but such a Committee of the Whole must:
 - a) Be composed of a two-thirds majority of fulltime permanent faculty members.
 - b) Be chaired by a tenured, elected faculty member who is selected by vote of the body.
 - c) Clearly acknowledge in its bylaws the prerogative of the Committee of the Whole and its sub-committees to meet without the Chair.
 - d) Be clearly identified in the department's bylaws as performing the purpose of the DFC.
 - e) Be initially approved and then reaffirmed annually by a majority vote of the permanent full-time faculty members of the department by secret ballot as their preferred alternative to a DFC as outlined elsewhere in this document.

D. DFC Leadership

The chair must be elected by the elected members of the DFC from among their number.

E. Operation

1. Consistent with its purpose of providing greater transparency and two-way communication between the faculty and the Chair, the DFC shall have the right to prompt access to department information relating to the planning and implementation of departmental policies.
2. Once the DFC is established in a particular department, the DFC should work with the Dean and/or the Ombuds office to address problems arising in its work that may require external assistance, and should notify the Faculty Senate Executive Committee for information purposes.

F. Frequency of Meeting and Summer DFCs

1. The DFC should meet as often as deemed appropriate by the council membership with a minimum of two meetings per semester. Each meeting shall be called by the chair of the DFC. The Chair or any other member of the DFC can request a meeting by contacting the chair of the DFC.

2. Each DFC shall take necessary measures to assure continuing functioning of the DFC during the summer months. These may include, but are not limited to, establishing a reduced quorum requirement, allowing members to name, or elect, proxies from among the faculty of their department, and electing an acting DFC chair. Determining the best mix of such necessary measures shall be the decision of the DFC itself, based on immediate circumstances and without outside intervention. Such a “Summer DFC” shall be recognized by the administration as the legitimate representative of faculty interests in the shared governance of the department during the summer months, and consulted accordingly.