

Bylaws of the Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences (GSS)

University of Delaware

Revised June 2024

This document describes the policies and procedures by which the Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences (GSS) of the University of Delaware operates to achieve its mission. The Geography and Spatial Sciences Department (hereafter “GSS”) has a valued history of operating and achieving its mission in a collegial atmosphere. This atmosphere is based on respect for each individual and efforts to maintain an environment where issues and differences can be discussed and resolved in a constructive manner. The policies and procedures set forth herein are intended to preserve and protect this operating style.

1 Department Mission Statement

GSS at the University of Delaware seeks to improve our understanding of human-environment interactions. A hallmark of geographic scholarship is the spatial patterning of those interactions that operate at varied temporal and spatial scales. Geographic teaching and scholarship are of great importance and relevance to society, as they address many aspects of global, long-term sustainability. Topics studied such as climate change / meteorology, energy supply, water availability, land change and degradation, urban design, place identity, and geographies of economics, peace, and democracy, using quantitative, qualitative and GIS methods all of which reflect the teaching, research and service activities conducted by UD geographers.

2 Membership in the Department

The faculty membership of the Department consists of 1) all persons who hold tenure-track, research, continuing-track, affiliated, adjunct, and visiting appointments in GSS, and 2) all persons who hold joint or secondary appointments in Geography. The voting faculty consists of all tenure-track, continuing-track and research faculty members whose primary appointment is in GSS (including the Chair and Associate Chair). Policies and procedures on voting for promotion and tenure are stipulated in the Promotion and Tenure Document that is a supplement to the bylaws as per university document protocols.

3 Responsibilities and Privileges of the Faculty

The mission of the Department encompasses all aspects of research, teaching and education in geographical studies, including graduate research and education, undergraduate education, and service to the professional and University community. The Department voting faculty are responsible for determining how the Department achieves its mission, including responsibility for the academic programs of the Department. All new degree programs, changes in existing programs, and new regular GSS courses require the approval of a majority of the voting faculty

in the Department. New experimental and topical courses require the approval of the Chair. Faculty with primary or secondary appointments in the department may serve as chair or co-chair of graduate student thesis and dissertation committees. The other rights and responsibilities of the faculty are outlined in the following sections.

All faculty, both voting and non-voting, are encouraged to participate fully in the discussion related to faculty governance of the department.

4 Department Organization and Operation

4.1 Officers of the Department

The Chair is the chief administrative officer of the Department. Responsibilities of the Chair include providing leadership to the Department in achieving its mission, administering the policies and procedures of the University and the Department, and acting as the primary representative of the Department within the institution and the profession. An Associate Chair may be appointed by the Chair to provide leadership in the administration of programs in the Department. The Associate Chair can be appointed from the tenure-track or continuing track faculty and the programs supported would be determined at the time of appointment in consultation with the faculty and the Dean for a negotiated term of service.

A Graduate Program Director position is filled by a tenure-track faculty member, and an Undergraduate Program Director who is either tenure-track or continuing track faculty member, will be appointed by the Chair for negotiated terms of service. The Graduate Program Director serves as the Chair of the Department Academic Council. Specific majors in the Department may also have individual directors based on need. Remuneration for these roles is negotiated based on specific workload specifications for that individual.

4.2 Department Committees

4.2.1 The Academic Council

The Academic Council is composed of two voting faculty members and a chair. The two faculty members serve two-year terms and are elected in the spring semester (by consensus or vote) to those terms by the faculty—only one council member should rotate out in any given year. The Academic Council advises the Chair concerning the general administration of the Department and assists the Chair in providing leadership to the Department. In addition, the Academic Council is responsible for soliciting annual reports and feedback from graduate students and their faculty advisors and reporting to the faculty and graduate students concerning graduate student progress. The Academic Council is also responsible for making recommendations to the faculty concerning annual awards for graduate students. Once the faculty have chosen award recipients, the Academic Council is responsible for compiling the appropriate materials for the submission of nominations and completion of awards.

4.2.2 Promotion and Tenure Committee

See Section 6.2

4.2.3 Peer Review Committee

See Section 6.3

4.2.4 Other Committees

Other standing or ad hoc committees may be formed as deemed necessary by the Chair and the faculty. The faculty will appoint the members of the committees, with one member designated as the committee Chair.

4.3 Department Meetings

In accordance with the bylaws of the College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment, the Department generally holds at least four faculty meetings every semester to consider matters relevant to the department. These faculty meetings are scheduled at a time when the fewest number of voting faculty members has scheduled class responsibilities, and therefore all faculty are expected to attend these meetings unless excused by the Chair in advance of the meeting. Faculty meetings may be called by the Chair, by the Academic Council, or by written petition of a majority of the faculty. Each faculty meeting will have an agenda, usually prepared by the Chair or the Academic Council. Normally, agenda items will be solicited from the faculty at least one week in advance, and the agenda will be distributed to the faculty at least one business day in advance of the meeting. The agenda will identify those issues that may be subject to a vote restricted to the voting faculty only. Approval of the agenda and its voting designations shall precede any discussion of agenda items. Although other business may be discussed at the faculty meeting, official action may be taken only on items on the agenda.

All full-time faculty, including those on sabbatical, and emeritus, may attend and participate in all faculty meetings. Affiliated, adjunct and joint faculty are also welcome to attend the meetings as observers and may be invited to contribute to discussions by the Chair. Instructors for courses, professional staff, as well as external guests may be invited by the Chair to meetings where their presence would be useful to the discussions. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting faculty who are not on sabbatical or leave of absence; faculty on sabbatical or leave of absence do not count in determining a quorum. Attendance is defined as those physically present at the meeting or in direct communication via a video or phone conference call. Voting faculty unable to attend a meeting may submit proxy votes in advance of the formal vote on a given issue. Faculty on sabbatical and those on leave retain their voting rights. All votes will be open votes, unless decided otherwise by a majority open vote of the faculty.

The faculty of GSS will endeavor to come to decisions on all matters through consensus. For

those matters on which a consensus cannot be obtained, Robert's Rules of Order will be followed and a vote will be taken. For official actions, except those specified in this document, a majority of the voting faculty will be needed for approval. The determination that a consensus has been reached, that a vote must be taken, or that a decision should be deferred to a later meeting, will normally be left to the discretion of the Chair. Any faculty member may challenge the Chair's decision that a consensus has been reached, and if the challenge is seconded by one additional faculty member, then a vote must be taken.

In cases where time is of the essence, the Chair may call for a vote by e-mail, however, in such a case, any one member of the faculty may object, in which case, the matter requiring a vote must be brought to a physical/video meeting of the Department faculty.

Minutes of faculty meetings will be taken, and motions requiring a formal vote should include the wording of the motion, the proposer and seconder, and the result of the vote. The minutes will be distributed to the faculty in a reasonable period of time and the first order of business at the subsequent meeting will be the approval of the minutes as distributed.

5 Appointments

5.1 Tenure-Track Appointments

The Chair, in consultation with the voting faculty, is responsible for administering the recruitment of new tenure-track faculty. The Chair actively solicits the views of the faculty regarding the desired qualifications of candidates for open positions. A search committee, appointed by the voting faculty, formulates an advertisement to attract such candidates and submits the announcement to the voting faculty for approval. The search committee reviews applications for the positions and identifies a set of finalists who are invited to campus for interviews. For a tenure-track offer to be made to a candidate, a majority of the voting faculty, defined for this specific purpose as consisting of all voting faculty in the department, whether present or on sabbatical or leave of absence, must approve of the Department's recommendation to the Dean.

5.1.1 Continuing-Track Faculty

Continuing-track faculty are appointed in accordance with university policies for such appointments and their recruitment, search, and selection/recommendation follows the same process as outlined in section 5.1 for tenure-track faculty appointments.

5.2 Other Appointments

Appointment of research, affiliated and adjunct faculty would be voted on by the faculty. Professional staff, temporary/ hourly hiring is made upon recommendation of the Chair. Instructors (who are not faculty) for individual courses can be recruited directly by the chair on a per-semester basis to meet teaching needs. Staff appointments are done by the Chair in

consultation with the Dean's office.

5.2.1 Research Faculty

Research faculty primarily uphold the research mission of the Department and are appointed by the Chair and the Dean of the College after a positive recommendation from the faculty, based on a review of funding availability for those positions. The term of these appointments is linked to the funding availability and terms as specified in their appointment letters.

5.2.2 Visiting and Adjunct Faculty

Visiting and Adjunct faculty uphold the teaching mission of the department and are appointed by the Chair and the Dean after a positive recommendation from the faculty, based on a review of funding availability and teaching needs. The terms of these appointments are linked to the funding availability, teaching need and terms as specified in their appointment letters. Visiting and Adjunct faculty are welcome to attend general faculty meetings but are not voting members as per clause 2 of the Bylaws.

Any remuneration for such faculty is decided on an ad hoc basis through supplementary contracts depending on their roles and funding availability. Adjunct faculty are appointed for specific tasks such as teaching a course or carrying out a particular research mission and their appointment does not require a search nor vote. Visiting faculty are subject to review by voting members prior to their appointment.

5.2.3 Joint Faculty

Joint faculty are those members who have a secondary appointment with the department. These could include faculty who have a percentage appointment approved by the Provost (referred to as "split appointments"). Dean and Chair; They could also be faculty or who teach cross-listed courses in GSS and have been approved as a joint faculty member (and hence may also considered Affiliate faculty - see section 5.2.4) by a majority of the voting faculty. Joint faculty with a split appointment in the department are welcome to attend general faculty meetings but are not voting members per clause 2 of the Bylaws.

5.2.4 Affiliated Faculty

The definition and status of affiliated faculty in their various forms (Joint/Secondary/Affiliated/Adjunct) will follow the definitions provided in Section 4.1.2 of the Faculty Handbook.

6 Promotion, Tenure, and Reviews

6.1 Promotion and Tenure Policy

Policies and procedures on the promotion and tenure of tenure-track faculty are contained in the “Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences Policy on Promotion and Tenure” document. This document may be amended at any time with the affirmation of at least two-thirds of the voting faculty, and subsequent approval by the College and University. Separate policies exist that address the employment conditions of research and non-tenured faculty.

6.2 Committee on Promotion and Tenure

The composition and function of the Department's promotion and tenure committee is specified in the “Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences Policy on Promotion and Tenure” document.

6.3 Peer Review Committee

Peer reviews will be conducted in accordance with University policy. For assistant professors and instructors, a peer review committee consisting of three voting faculty members will be appointed by the voting faculty and will consist of associate professors and full professors from GSS. For associate and full professors, the peer review committee normally consists of three full professors who are members of the voting faculty; if three full professors who are members of the voting faculty from GSS are unavailable, then the Chair may appoint additional voting faculty to the peer review committee. The peer review committee solicits written information from the faculty members being reviewed documenting their contributions in each of the areas of research, teaching, and service. The committee evaluates the faculty member and submits a written report to the Department Chair, a copy of which is given to the faculty member.

7 Amendment

These Policies and Procedures may be amended at a duly constituted Department meeting by a two-thirds majority of the voting faculty.

Legislative History

- Discussed and revised by Geography faculty – March and April 2011
- Approved by Geography Faculty – May 2011
- Approved by CEOE Academic Council – December 2013
- Amended Geography Faculty – November 2014
- Amended CEOE Academic Council – February 2015
- Approved by Dean – March 2015

- Amended and Approved by Provost – April 2015
- Discussed, reviewed, and approved by Geography Faculty – September 2018
- Final Approval by Provost – September 2018
- Discussed and initial revisions to section 4.1 conducted Spring 2021. Not submitted to Academic Council
- Discussed and revised by Department faculty in consultation with CEOE Academic Council – May-December 2023
- Submitted to Dean and Provost’s office for final approval December 2023