

Bylaws
Department of Communication
August 26, 2024

I. Department Mission

The Department of Communication is committed to the study and practice of human communication in a wide variety of contexts. Our faculty members have achieved national and international distinction in research and scholarship, teaching, service, and community engagement.

Research and Scholarship: Our faculty is dedicated to generating new knowledge and disseminating that knowledge widely and publicly. The Department follows a social and behavioral science orientation toward the study of communication, supporting multi-methodological approaches. Our research and scholarship aim to increase knowledge about communication processes and their impact on society and to increase knowledge about how to improve communication skills and competencies. Given the significance of communication processes and practices across a variety of fields and knowledge domains, the Department is also committed to innovative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary research that pushes the boundaries of the Communication discipline.

Teaching: We are dedicated to providing rigorous and comprehensive instruction to undergraduate and graduate students to prepare them as competent communicators in their personal, civic, and professional roles. Bringing innovative, excellent, and learner-centered pedagogy into the classroom, our faculty encourages students to develop their critical thinking skills, to express and advocate ideas effectively, and to understand and appreciate the diversity of human communication practices. We prepare students for a wide range of opportunities, including research-oriented graduate programs and careers, by providing them with a translatable knowledge and skill set based on independent and team research experiences with faculty members, internship and assistantship opportunities, and course content that is theory-driven, evidence-based, relevant, relatable, and rigorous.

Service and Community Engagement: Our department recognizes the value and importance of service and community engagement. To this end, our faculty and students use their research, teaching, writing, and production skills to help professional, community, and other public groups develop and improve their communication practices. Our department is committed to supporting practices of communication that promote justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.

II. Faculty

The faculty of the Department of Communication is comprised of tenured and tenure-track faculty, continuing non-tenure-track faculty, and adjunct faculty. Terms of appointments, duties, and privileges are listed in the University Faculty Handbook.

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Joint appointments establish connections with persons whose scholarly interests and background enrich those of the department. A joint appointment is conferred by a two-thirds vote of the regular voting faculty. Joint appointments are for a three-year term and are renewable by a two-thirds vote by the regular voting faculty. Responsibilities of jointly appointed faculty include reasonable participation in teaching, research, and guidance of student research. Persons holding joint appointments are not granted voting rights and are not eligible for tenure, travel funds, or normal Departmental committee service.

III. Officers

A. Chair

The Chair, as the chief administrative officer of the department, is responsible for communicating and administering policies and procedures of the University, College, and Department, for maintaining and organizing courses of study, and for representing the department within the institution, community, and profession. The Chair leads fundraising and alumni engagement efforts, serves as an advocate for the Department, and seeks opportunities to further the mission of the Department.

The Department Chair is appointed according to the applicable regulations of the University. The Department faculty should participate in the search and appointment process and make appropriate recommendations.

B. Associate Chair

The Associate Chair is appointed by the Chair for a term of up to five years, with the potential for renewal at the discretion of the Chair. The Associate Chair assumes the Chair's duties in the absence of the Chair. The Associate Chair performs those functions assigned by the chair. These functions may include, but are not limited to, the following: coordinating and scheduling undergraduate and graduate curriculum, assisting in faculty mentoring and development, serving *ex officio* as the chair of the Executive and Undergraduate Committees, implementing changes in undergraduate curriculum and course offerings, assigning Departmental credits for courses transferred from other Universities, organizing faculty coverage for undergraduate admissions events (e.g., Decision Days, Blue and Gold Saturdays), and conducting studies of issues relevant to undergraduate education such as trajectories in course enrollments over time and methods for conducting student ratings of instruction. Additionally, the Associate Chair works directly with the Undergraduate and Graduate Academic Program Coordinators to organize and implement effective course scheduling and to support student needs.

C. Director of Graduate Studies

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The Director of Graduate Studies is appointed by the Chair for a term of up to five years, with the potential for renewal at the discretion of the Chair. The Director of Graduate studies serves as the Chair of the department's Graduate Committee and is the departmental liaison with all potential and actual applicants to the department's graduate programs as well as the departmental liaison with the UD Graduate College. The Director's duties include, but are not limited to, leading student recruitment activities, organizing candidate application materials for admission and financial aid decisions, serving as point person for all graduate education related issues, advocating when necessary for graduate students, updating all documents related to the graduate programs, and leading efforts to evaluate student performance as well as the needs of the program itself.

D. Director of the Master of Arts Program in Strategic Communication

The Director of the Master of Arts Program in Strategic Communication is appointed by the Chair for a term of up to five years, with the potential for renewal at the discretion of the Chair. The Director of the Master of Arts in Strategic Communication is a member of the department's Graduate Committee and performs a wide range of functions specific to the Strategic Communication Program. The Director is responsible for marketing and recruitment activities, admissions processes, the inside the industry speaker series, and evaluation of students and the program itself. This director coordinates with, and is supported by, the Associate Chair and Chair of the Department to organize course offerings, teaching assignments, and any hiring of adjuncts for the program. The director is the point person for the program with Wiley Education Services, UD's Division of Professional & Continuing Studies, and the UD Graduate College.

E. Director of Undergraduate Academic Support

The Director of Undergraduate Academic Support is appointed by the Chair for a term of up to five years, with the potential for renewal at the discretion of the Chair. The Director of Undergraduate Academic Support is responsible for tasks including, but not limited to, the following: serving as a member of the Undergraduate Committee, training of new faculty in how to do academic advising for undergraduate students (e.g., degree requirements, the use of tools and online platforms which assist with advising), performing regular refresher training of existing faculty undergraduate academic advisers, being the point of contact to assist faculty advisers with advising questions or concerns, being the direct liaison between the Department of Communication and other offices on campus that work in undergraduate advising (e.g., College of Arts and Sciences' Student Success Center), being the assigned academic adviser of at least 30 undergraduate students and no more than 60 undergraduate students which may

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include complex advising cases (e.g., students with GPA issues, transfer students, honors students with complex academic plans), and attending all campus advising events if they require department involvement (e.g., New Student Orientation).

If necessary, the Director of Undergraduate Academic Support will be a supportive role to the Associate Chair in matters of Undergraduate Advising/Education/Recruitment. In addition, the Director of Undergraduate Academic Support is a role based on departmental need as determined by the Department Chair when the department lacks the necessary professional advising support required by the undergraduate student population.

F. Director of Internship Program

The Internship Director is appointed by the Chair for a term of up to five years, with the potential for renewal at the discretion of the Chair. The Internship Director coordinates all aspects of the department's internship program: (a) fielding student requests to receive credit for internship experiences (including winter and summer, when we do not directly offer internship credit), (b) supervising students during their internships, (c) serving as the departmental liaison for on-site internship supervisors, (d) handling new requests for student interns from interested organizations, and (e) maintaining a record of current internship opportunities.

G. Basic Course Director

The Basic Course Director is appointed by the Chair. The Basic Course Director trains, mentors, and evaluates graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) who teach the basic COMM212 courses, including face-to-face, hybrid, and online versions of the course, during the Fall and Spring semesters. The Basic Course Director creates, organizes, and oversees the delivery of course content by GTAs. Course content includes LMS material, presentations/PowerPoint slides, a unified syllabus, a teaching "packet" for GTAs, course assignments, and exams. The Director is the primary liaison with the Oral Communication Center, and will coordinate with that unit to provide support services to students and to promote campus opportunities that enhance and promote public speaking across the curriculum. Finally, the Basic Course Director will work directly with the Associate Chair and Chairperson to develop, maintain, and update a department level resource for students; and to resolve any GTA-related teaching challenges.

H. PRSSA Advisor

The PRSSA Advisor is appointed by the Chair. The responsibilities of the PRSSA advisor are detailed in the PRSSA Chapter Handbook. Major responsibilities include: attending chapter meetings; facilitating cooperative events and serving as a liaison with local, regional, and

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national PRSA organizations; directing competitions; advising and mentoring members; and promotion and membership recruitment.

I. Lambda Pi Eta Advisor

The Lambda Pi Eta (LPE) Advisor is appointed by the Chair. The responsibilities of the Lambda Pi Eta advisor are detailed in the LPE /ΛΠΗ Chapter Handbook provided by the affiliating body, the National Communication Association. Advisor responsibilities include serving as a liaison to national, regional and other LPE organizations, directing membership qualification and invitation procedures, facilitating initiation ceremonies, and ensuring chapter compliance with University regulations for Registered Student Organization recognition.

IV. Meetings

The department shall hold meetings on a regular basis with a minimum of at least one meeting every semester. The Department Chair will set the schedule of meetings at the beginning of each semester. Special meetings can be called by the Chair and at the request of 50% of the faculty.

The Department Chair or a designee shall serve as the chair of the meeting.

The Assistant to the Chair, or any other person designated by the Chair, shall serve as secretary and keep meeting minutes.

All full-time faculty are entitled to attend meetings and vote on departmental business. Part time and adjunct professors, faculty with joint appointments, and professional staff are welcome to attend meetings and participate in discussion, but do not vote.

An undergraduate and a graduate student, elected by their fellow students (undergraduate representative by undergraduate students, graduate representative by graduate students), are entitled to attend meetings. Student representatives are elected to one-year terms and are re-electable. Student representatives may participate in discussion but do not vote. When committee business is evaluative of other students, confidential to faculty, or necessarily private due to policy, procedures, or University rules, student committee members will be excused from those meetings or portions, thereof

A quorum will be achieved when 70% of the voting members are present.

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Departmental decisions are made by a simple majority of those present, assuming a quorum. Written, secret ballots will be used if requested by any single faculty member. Secret ballots may also be done electronically, either via e-mail or a on platform such as Qualtrics or Zoom polling.

The agenda shall be prepared by the Departmental Chair or a designee from items of general interest and those submitted by any member of the faculty. The agenda should be circulated to the faculty at least one day before the scheduled meetings.

V. Standing Committees

The Department has an Executive committee and three standing program committees: Undergraduate Committee, Graduate Committee, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee.

A. Executive Committee

The Executive Committee advises the Chairperson on general matters of departmental policy and administration. The Associate Chair serves *ex officio* as chair of the committee. Members include four faculty and two students, one undergraduate and one graduate. Faculty members represent different ranks (professor, associate professor, and untenured faculty), as well as one member elected at large. One member of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee should also be included as a member of the Executive Committee, filling one of the four faculty positions as outlined previously. If any rank is underrepresented in the department (i.e., two or fewer members), then that slot will also become an at large one until the next election. Faculty on sabbatical will be replaced with acting members until their return by vote of the faculty. Duties of the Executive Committee include maintaining and updating departmental governance documents and departmental committees; conferring with the chair on annual evaluation criteria; recommending faculty for secondary appoints; coordinating departmental retreats and long-term planning; bringing forward faculty concerns for discussion, and other related matters.

Faculty may nominate colleagues or themselves for the Executive Committee and the entire faculty will vote, by secret ballot if necessary, to select Executive Committee members. Faculty will serve for two-year staggered terms; two of whom begin their term during even-numbered years and one of whom begins their term during odd-numbered years. At the end of a two-year term, a faculty member would be ineligible for committee membership for the subsequent two-year period.

Student committee members are elected by their fellow students (undergraduate representative by undergraduate students, graduate representative by graduate students) to one-year terms and are able to be re-elected to serve multiple terms. When committee

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business is evaluative of other students, confidential to faculty, or necessarily private due to policy, procedures, or University rules, student committee members will be excused from those meetings or portions, thereof.

The Executive Committee will meet as needed. Any member of the committee can bring items to the agenda. When the committee members agree, the committee can meet without the Chairperson to discuss faculty concerns.

B. Program Committees

The membership of each program committee includes *ex officio* members (the Department Chair or Associate chair and respective Program Directors) and other members so that the committee as a whole is representative of the Department in terms of rank and curricular areas. These other faculty members will serve staggered two-year terms beginning and ending at the start of the relevant fall semester. All full-time faculty members are eligible for committee membership, through self-nomination or nomination by another full-time faculty member to the Chair of the respective committee, during the spring semester before the beginning of their term. In the event of more nominations than open seats for a given committee, membership will be determined through secret ballot by all voting members of the Department with the exception of the Chair. The Chair will vote only when necessary to break a tie. To the extent possible given faculty availability, individual faculty will be limited to serving on a maximum of two standing committees at a given time, with the exception of *ex officio* members designated for multiple committees.

Each committee will have student representation from the student population they represent. Student representatives will be elected by their peers: undergraduate representatives by undergraduate students and graduate representatives by graduate students. All student representatives are elected to one year terms, and are re-electable. Student representatives will be limited to serving on a maximum of one standing committees at a given time. When committee business is evaluative of other students, confidential to faculty, or necessarily private due to policy, procedures, or University rules, student committee members will be excused from those meetings or portions, thereof.

The Program Director will serve as Chair of their respective committee. Committee decisions will be made through majority vote. These decisions are advisory and subject to vote by the faculty as a whole, with the exception of admissions and funding decisions made by the Graduate Committee. The standing committees may solicit input from other faculty members, and may invite such faculty members to meetings as non-voting participants.

1. Undergraduate Committee

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The Undergraduate Committee includes the Associate Chair as committee Chair, the Director of Undergraduate Academic Support, three other full-time faculty members, two of whom begin their term during even-numbered years and one of whom begins their term during odd-numbered years, and one undergraduate student representative. The Undergraduate Committee is responsible for undergraduate curricular and advising issues, including but not limited to maintaining the quality of instruction, evaluating and proposing revisions to programs of study, proposing and evaluating interdepartmental programs such as cross-disciplinary majors and minors in which the Department is involved, overseeing the Departmental Honors program, choosing the winners of Department awards at graduation, and other issues relevant to undergraduate education in the Department.

2. Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee includes the Director of Graduate Studies as Chair, the Department Chair, the Director of Master of Arts Program in Strategic Communication, three other full-time faculty members, two of whom begin their term during even-numbered years and one of whom begins their terms during odd-numbered years, and one graduate student representative. The Director of Master of Arts Program in Strategic Communication will serve on this committee for all matters related to the Strategic Communication Program specifically as well as matters that impact all graduate level degree programs. All other members of the Graduate Committee are responsible for graduate curricular issues, including but not limited to maintaining the quality of instruction, evaluating and proposing revisions to programs of study, graduate student recruitment, admission and funding decisions for the M.A. and Ph.D. programs in Communication, conducting annual formative and summative assessments of the graduate programs, evaluating graduate student program performance, and other issues relevant to graduate education in the department.

C. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee includes the Department Chair, a minimum of four faculty members, one undergraduate student representative, and one graduate student representative. Three of the four minimum number of faculty member representatives must be full-time faculty in the Department of Communication. The fourth faculty member, whenever possible, should be a contingent faculty member within the Department of Communication. Each year a full-time faculty committee member elected to a new two-year term will also be elected to the role of Vice-Chair, which will succeed to the role of Chair during their second year of service. Contingent faculty members are elected to one-year terms and are re-electable, based upon faculty availability. Student committee members are elected by their fellow students (undergraduate representative by undergraduate students, graduate representative

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by graduate students) to one-year terms and are re-electable.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is charged with focusing and facilitating actionable department efforts assuring justice, equity, diversity and inclusion for all department faculty, students, and staff. The Equity and Inclusion Committee is responsible for leading strategic planning and supporting action advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion within the department for all department programs. The major responsibility of the committee is to identify specific actions to be taken by the department and its members, grounded in appropriate assessment, praxis, and accountability. The committee members will lead the department's diversity and inclusion initiatives, ensuring that specific, goal-directed action is taken to implement actions supporting justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion, and prepare documents and reports providing accountability for JEDI initiatives and actions.

VI. Special Committees

A. Promotion and Tenure Committee

The membership, duties, and procedures of this committee are discussed in the Department's Promotion and Tenure Document.

B. Search Committee

Search Committees for both faculty and staff positions shall be appointed by the Chair in accordance with University policy.

Search Committees are responsible for conducting the search in accordance with University policy and, upon completion of the search process, make recommendations to the Chair and the Faculty for hiring.

The Chair determines adjunct appointments.

C. Review Committees for Tenure-Track, Tenured, and Continuing Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

In accordance with University policies, the Department conducts pre-tenure reviews of assistant professors, post-tenure reviews of tenured faculty, and regular reviews of continuing (non-tenure) track faculty. A separate committee is formed for each review. In accordance with the procedures set out in the Faculty Handbooks, the committee chair and members are appointed by the Department Chair. A committee shall consist of three faculty who are at or above the rank of the faculty member being evaluated.

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D. Ad Hoc Committees

The Department, by a standing committee, or the Chair, may form an ad hoc committee for a specific purpose. These committees shall be dissolved upon acceptance of a final report to the Department, the Chair, or to the standing committee that directed the ad hoc committee's formation.

VII. Amendment of Bylaws

These Department bylaws may be revised after a vote of a two-thirds majority of the faculty. These bylaws are guidelines for the internal operation of the Department. All Department decisions shall be consistent with University policy.