

BYLAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF Geography, Sustainability, Community and Urban Studies (GSCU)

This document contains the bylaws, policies and procedures of the Department of Geography, Sustainability, Community and Urban Studies at the University of Connecticut as approved by its faculty on February 7, 2024. In addition:

- **Appendix 1** contains the Department's PTR procedures for tenure-track faculty.
- **Appendix 2** contains the Department's PR guidelines for promotion of in-residence faculty.
- **Appendix 3** contains the Department's merit review procedures and standards for tenure-track faculty.
- **Appendix 4** contains the Department's merit review procedures and standards for non-tenure-track CIRE faculty.
- **Appendix 5** contains the Department's workload policy
- **Appendix 6** contains the Department's mentoring guidelines.

Any University of Connecticut or College of Liberal Arts and Sciences bylaw, policy, or procedure supersedes that listed here if it is contradictory or otherwise in conflict.

According to the Bylaws of the University of Connecticut (<http://policy.uconn.edu/?p=122>):

Departments are organized in terms of subject matter areas. They bear definite cross-relationships, but their organization into distinct administrative units is intended to assure that the attention of small groups of faculty members will be centered on teaching, research, clinical activities, and/or service in these areas.

The functions of each department are to:

- 1. Develop an educational program designed to meet the needs of the students in the various schools/colleges and of other individuals and groups served by the teaching, research, clinical, and/or service programs.*
- 2. Evaluate and improve its educational programs.*
- 3. Recommend to the faculty of its school/college changes intended to improve the work of the department.*
- 4. Secure the safety and proper inventory of all University property assigned to it.*

5. *Integrate its program with the general program of the University and to foster effective coordination of effort.*

These actions support our goal of planning and executing research, teaching, and service that advance knowledge in the disciplines represented in our department, and support the needs of the broader communities of which we are part.

I. Organization

A. Officers – The chief executive officer of the department is the Head. The Head is appointed by the Dean of CLAS in conformance with the procedure described in the AAUP contract with the university.

B. A Deputy Head may be appointed to assist the Head as needed, and with particular focus on advancing interdisciplinary programs in connection with other departments.

C. Standing Committees – The standing committees of the department include the Graduate Program Committee, Undergraduate Program Committee, Curricula and Courses Committee, Student and Alumni Relations and Outreach Committee, Promotion, Tenure, and Reappointment (PTR) Committee, the GIS Certificate Program Committee, the Merit Advisory Committee, and the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee. Generally, committees meet at least one time per month during the academic year, with additional meetings on an “as necessary” basis. Typically, the PTR Committee completes its work in the fall and the Merit Advisory Committee completes its work in the spring. Committee membership incurs an obligation to be actively involved in meeting the committee’s charges.

D. Ad hoc committees may be formed and charged at any time at the discretion of the Head.

II. Operation

A. Membership

The members of the GSCU Department are tenured/tenure-track and in-Residence faculty members, staff, and adjunct faculty whose primary affiliation is in the Department.

Core members of the Department are those whose tenure and/or promotion home is within GSCU.

Affiliated faculty members hold primary appointments with another UConn department and offer GSCU courses as well as serve on GSCU committees. Affiliated faculty are nominated or apply for membership, reviewed and approved by voting members of the department.

Joint appointments and MOU terms will specify teaching, research, and/or service responsibilities that may be split between departments. MOUs are negotiated between the departments and CLAS leadership.

Voting members of the department include faculty and staff titles listed under Article 1 (Tenure track faculty) and 13 (CIRE faculty) of the AAUP contract who have their tenure and/or merit home in GSCU, irrespective of the campus where they may be based. These members of the faculty are eligible to vote on all departmental initiatives including faculty hiring, PTR, merit, and to serve on the departments standing committees.

Temporary employees covered under Article 26 (Temporary) of the AAUP contract may participate in faculty meetings, serve on ad hoc department committees, and vote on all issues except hiring, PTR, merit, changes of the bylaws.

Similarly, Article 1 or Article 13 faculty with tenure and merit home in other departments, but with a courtesy, joint appointment, or MOU with GSCU may participate in faculty meetings, serve on ad hoc department committees, and vote on all issues except hiring, PTR, bylaw changes, and merit. For decisions about curricular changes affecting particular courses, instructors who teach those courses should be consulted irrespective of their appointment status and department home.

The graduate student representative may participate in faculty meetings and vote on issues related to graduate education.

A quorum for voting requires a number equal to half or greater of core faculty members, and for committee votes half or greater of the number of committee members is required.

- B. **Faculty meetings** – are called by the Department Head as required. All members of the department are expected to attend the meetings unless on sabbatical or leave. In-person attendance is encouraged, but faculty may attend remotely by telephone or video-conferencing systems. Any voting or non-voting member of the faculty may submit items for the agenda or for announcement at faculty meetings.

During meetings, the head will call upon any member that wishes to speak in the order of their request. Any voting member of the faculty can

make or second a motion during a meeting.

To transact department business, a quorum (simple majority) of voting members must be present online or in person.

The Head will always designate someone to take minutes of faculty meetings.

C. Committee compositions, charges, and activities

1. **The Graduate Program Committee** has three members. It is chaired by the Graduate Program Coordinator, who is also normally GSCU's Field of Study representative to the Graduate School. The other members of the committee are appointed by the Head. Members must be part of the graduate faculty. Members should serve on a rotating three-year basis with one member changing each year. The graduate student elected by the graduate students is also a non-voting member of this committee, but may participate in all discussions except those relating to the status of other students.

Charges to the committee include initial screening of applications to the graduate program; providing programs of professional development for the department's graduate students; evaluation, in concert with advisors and advisory committee members, of the degree progress of the graduate students in the department; and annual evaluation of the department's graduate program with respect to its integration with the department's strategic plan and college and university initiatives. The committee will also administer and analyze annual surveys of incoming, continuing and graduating students and maintain current records on each student in the program. Additional charges may be made at the discretion of the Head.

The committee will report to the members of the department at least once each semester. Additional reports will be made as requested by the committee or members of the department.

2. **The GIS Certificate Committee** has three members. It is chaired by the GIS Certificate Coordinator. The other members of the committee are appointed by the Head. Members should serve on a rotating three-year basis with one member changing each year.

Charges to the committee include recruitment of students to the

online certificate program; supervision of graduate student assistants affiliated with the program; supervision of curriculum and course improvements, and annual evaluation of the status of the online GIS certificate initiative. Additional charges may be made at the discretion of the Head.

The committee will report to the members of the department at least once each semester. Additional reports will be made as requested by the committee or members of the department.

- 3. The Undergraduate Program Committee** has three members. It is chaired by the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. The other members of the committee are appointed by the Head. One member of the committee should also be the department's Honors Advisor. Members should serve on a rotating three-year basis with one member changing each year. The Head may also appoint or re-appoint an undergraduate student to the committee for a one-year term.

Charges to the committee include recruitment of undergraduate majors; reception and initial advisement of new majors; annual evaluation of the department's undergraduate program with respect to its integration with the department's strategic plan and college and university initiatives; and nominating current students for various awards and scholarships and membership in GTU. The committee will also administer and analyze annual surveys of incoming, continuing and graduating students. Additional charges may be made at the discretion of the Head.

The committee will report to the members of the department at least once each semester. Additional reports will be made as requested by the committee or members of the department.

- 1. The Curricula and Courses Committee** has three members. The chair is appointed by the Head, who also serves as the department's representative to the CLAS Curricula and Courses Committee. The other members of the committee are also appointed by the Head, with at least one member representing the Graduate Program Committee, at least one member representing the Undergraduate Program Committee, and at least one member representing the GIS Certificate Committee. One member of this committee should also be a member

of the University Senate Curricula and Courses Committee. Members should serve on a rotating three-year basis with one member changing each year.

Charges to the committee include the evaluation of solicited and unsolicited proposals from any member of the department for a new course or a significant change (by the standards of the registrar) in an existing course. Its reported evaluations are used by the members of the department in approving course proposals. Additional charges may be made at the discretion of the Head. The committee will report to the members of the department at least once each semester. Additional reports will be made as requested by the committee or members of the department.

2. The Alumni Relations, Outreach, Development, and Honors

Committee has three members. The chair is appointed by the Head. The other members of the committee are also appointed by the Head. Members should serve on a rotating three-year basis with one member changing each year.

Charges to the committee include assisting the Head in planning the department's colloquia and related events, assisting the Head in interacting with alumni and the public in representing and providing information about the activities of the department; assisting the Head in seeking external financial support of departmental activities, and nominating members of the faculty for various awards and honors both within and beyond the university. Additional charges may be made at the discretion of the Head.

The committee will report to the members of the department at least once each semester. Additional reports will be made as requested by the committee or members of the department.

3. The Promotion, Tenure and Reappointment (PTR/PR) Committee

varies in size. It includes all members of the faculty who have achieved the rank or tenure status (or higher) for which a candidate is being considered. The PTR/PR Committee's chair is appointed by the Head.

The charge to the committee is to evaluate each PTR/PR dossier and advise the Head as to the candidate's qualifications for

promotion and/or tenure.

4. The Merit Advisory Committee's chair is the Head (non-voting). The composition and work of the committee is detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.

5. The Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee has three members. The chair is appointed by the Head. The other members of the committee are also appointed by the Head and include one graduate student. Members should serve on a rotating three-year basis with one member changing each year. Charges to the committee include working to recognize JEDI principles in all facets of the work we do (e.g., teaching, mentoring, research, and service).

Each year, the Head asks for volunteers or nominations for open committee memberships and chairs. The Head then selects new members from the available pool, trying to make sure that positions are rotated among all faculty through time.

III. Mentorship

During the first month of employment, new faculty members at the assistant or associate rank (both tenure track and non-tenure track) will meet with both the chair of the PTR/PR committee and the head to discuss the department's expectations with respect to professional responsibilities in general and PTR/PR in particular. At that time, the new faculty members are encouraged to indicate any anticipated problems in fulfilling their professional responsibilities at the level of excellence necessary for reappointment and eventual tenure and promotion.

At that meeting the head will, with input from the faculty member, appoint a specific, higher-ranking faculty member in the department as a mentor. The purpose of the appointment is to establish a close professional relationship between the two colleagues. The senior colleague will be a special source of advice in general and guide work toward the candidate's improvement in areas that may require special attention. The tasks of the mentor could include, for example, suggesting timetables for specific research projects, the reading of drafts of papers, help in the creation of syllabi, and other agreed upon activities.

Mid-career faculty members will also be appointed mentors from more senior colleagues in consultation with and by the Head, as they prepare for

promotion from Associate Professor to Professor. Such mentorship may also be valuable in preparing for other professional advancement, in either the institution or the discipline.

Mentoring in the department also occurs through the PTR/PR process. The chair of the PTR/PR committee shall meet with each PTR/PR candidate prior to the submission of the PTR/PR application. At that meeting, the chair and the candidate will discuss the PTR/PR process and the rights and responsibilities of the candidate. When the PTR/PR committee has completed its deliberations, the chair of the committee will meet with each candidate, provide them with a copy of the committee's letter to the Head, discuss the committee's recommendation, and provide advice. The head will meet with the candidate in a similar manner when the head's review has been completed.

The Department's mentoring guidelines are listed in **Appendix 6. Promotion Procedures**

See **Appendix 1** for bylaws and guidelines relating to PTR for tenure-track faculty.

See **Appendix 2** for bylaws and guidelines relating to PR for in-residence faculty.

IV. Annual Merit and Performance Reviews

See **Appendices 3 and 4** for policies and procedures relating to merit review for tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty.

Faculty with merit or promotion homes in Geography, Urban, and Community Studies will be reviewed annually as specified in the UConn-AAUP contract. The review will be based on the Annual Merit and Performance Review Form submitted at the end of the academic year each spring.

- 1) The requests for merit will be reviewed by the Merit Advisory Committee for recommendations.
- 1) In addition, the Head will conduct a performance review and meet with each person to discuss their report in September and October of the next academic year. Following the meeting, the Head will prepare a brief written summary for the faculty member to include 1) the faculty member's anticipated workload for the next academic year; 2) formative feedback in each area of assigned duties; and 3) a statement of

satisfactory or unsatisfactory performance.

V. Faculty Responsibilities

The Department follows the university's Policy on Faculty Professional Responsibilities (<http://policy.uconn.edu/2011/05/26/faculty-professional-responsibilities-policy-on>) noting, in particular, that:

As a member of a scholarly community, every faculty member is expected to contribute to the shared responsibilities that support the varied educational mission at the department, college/school, and university level. These responsibilities are clearly set forth in Article XV.L.1, of the University Bylaws, which states, "While members of the professional staff of this University are employed for a variety of duties, as a general rule the University will expect to assign to each full-time member of the professional staff duties which are reasonable and consistent with good and effective teaching practices at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. In conjunction with this, staff members will be expected to carry a reasonable amount of ordinary departmental duties and routine committee responsibilities and to undertake those activities of self-improvement and professional development that are part of every faculty member's investment in his or her own future. Such assigned responsibilities as unusually heavy loads of student counseling, the chairmanship of committees that are unusually time-consuming, research projects which have been designated as a part of the staff member's assigned load, unusually heavy enrollments in courses, and assigned administrative duties will be considered in determining the number of contact hours assigned to any individual." In furtherance of these Bylaws' professional staff loads provisions, individual faculty member's responsibilities are determined in consultation with the department head, or dean in a non- departmental structure, and are based on the academic unit's workload guidelines. These guidelines recognize discipline-specific standards that ensure that individuals fulfill all facets of the responsibilities of a faculty member in a research university.

On occasion, some specific faculty responsibilities may be defined in an individual letter of appointment (e.g., appointment of a faculty member to be a director of a center), or the individual faculty member may be given a joint appointment. These special circumstances will govern the activity of that faculty member within the context of relevant general guidelines. . . .

Department heads, with appropriate input from the faculty and the advice of regional campus associate vice chancellors, are charged with setting an appropriate distribution of responsibilities for individual faculty that reflects that member's particular strengths, the nature of his/her obligation to the University, and the needs of the academic unit. . .

Annual meetings will be held between the department head and individual faculty. . . These meetings should serve to enhance the overall activities of the department as well as interdisciplinary research/scholarship, where appropriate. The department head will review and discuss the faculty member's productivity and present and future professional activities. The department head and faculty member should also discuss any problems encountered by the faculty member in the performance of his/her duties. For regional campus faculty, similar meetings should occur with the appropriate regional Associate Vice Chancellor, as well as with the department head. Any adjustments in a regional campus faculty member's activities must be made in concert with the faculty member's department head.

These meetings may also be used, where appropriate, to accomplish, in consultation with the faculty member, proportional adjustments to the faculty member's responsibilities. These annual assessments of a faculty member's activity can include consideration of various measures commensurate with the unique constraints of creative endeavors or original research/scholarship. Such adjustments may be appropriate during a faculty member's career and are an essential component in maintaining a department's and the University's overall effectiveness.

See **Appendix 5** for the department Workload guidelines.

VI. Amendments to the Bylaws

Any of the bylaws, policy, and procedures may be amended or otherwise revised by approval of the majority of the voting members of the department.