

BYLAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

As Approved by the Faculty, May 6, 2021

As Amended at Faculty Meeting Dec. 1, 2021

Included in this document are the bylaws adopted by the Department of Political Science at the University of Alabama. In addition to these policies, the faculty and department are governed by departmental policies, the University Faculty Handbook, and other policies developed and interpreted by the university administration. Through the implementation of these bylaws, the faculty reaffirms its commitment to full participation in the governance of the Department of Political Science. All powers and responsibilities delegated by the University of Alabama to the Department reside in the body of its voting members. The powers and responsibilities of the officers and committees vis-à-vis the Department are delegated to them by the Department, on whose behalf they act, and their policies and procedures are therefore subject to review by the full Department.

I. Meetings

- A. Faculty meetings shall be held at least once each month (excluding December and May) during the 9-month academic year at a regular time determined by the Chair prior to the start of each semester. The Chair may call additional meetings as necessary provided that notice of the meeting is provided at least one week in advance if possible.
- B. A meeting may be called by petition of at least 25 percent of the voting members of the Department. Petitions shall be presented to the Chair and distributed to the faculty at least four working days prior to the proposed meeting. In the case of a meeting called by petition, the petitioning faculty shall provide the agenda.
- C. For all faculty meetings, an agenda shall be submitted by the Chair to all faculty with voting membership in the Department at least two business days in advance of the meeting. Agenda items that require a vote at the faculty meeting must be submitted to the faculty at least one week prior to the meeting. Items may not be added to the agenda at the meeting.
- D. The following actions require votes of the Department; this list does not exclude the possibility of matters arising not listed here that necessitate votes.

- Bylaw amendments (as described below);
 - Adoption of academic regulations, including curricular changes, degree requirements, and general rules for evaluating, retaining, assisting, and rewarding students;
 - New tenure track or Non-Tenure Recurring Contract faculty appointments;
 - General policies and procedures governing graduate admissions;
 - Approval of new courses.
- E. The faculty meeting agenda consists of (i) proposals originating from the department's standing committees and/or (ii) other items, including items suggested by any faculty member that are deemed consistent with the mission of the Political Science Department, as determined by the Chair.
- F. A majority of the voting membership shall constitute a quorum for faculty meetings. Motions will be decided on by a majority vote unless otherwise stated in these bylaws. Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order*, newly revised. A Department Parliamentarian shall be designated from among the tenured faculty to advise on the application of *Robert's Rules* at faculty meetings.
- G. A secret ballot shall be used in all personnel cases and whenever requested by any member. When a secret ballot is used, votes shall not be tallied until absentee voting is compiled.
- H. Meeting minutes will be recorded at each faculty meeting. Responsibility for recording minutes shall rotate among the faculty members of the Department. Meeting minutes will be submitted to the Chair for approval promptly after the faculty meeting. The Chair will promptly distribute the approved minutes to the faculty and deposit the minutes in an online location that is accessible to all faculty. Meeting minutes should include a list of announcements and a *brief summary* of agenda items discussed, rather than an attempt at transcribing everything spoken. Minutes should include the full text of all motions voted upon and a list of those present. Policies voted upon should include the stated rationale for the policy and a summary of any arguments for or against. Any member may request by unanimous consent that their remarks be included in minutes. Each meeting's minutes shall be formally approved or amended at the start of the next meeting held.
- I. A graduate student shall be elected annually by the Political Science Graduate Association to attend and participate in faculty meetings as a non-voting

member. Graduate students shall not be present for discussions of faculty hiring decisions or any other matter discussed during a period of executive session.

II. Department Voting Privileges and Committee Participation

- A. Voting membership in the Department of Political Science shall include
 - (i) all faculty members in tenured or tenure-track positions whose tenure home is Political Science,
 - (ii) persons holding joint appointments in other units at the University of Alabama if voting privileges are affirmed by a majority vote of the Department and are explicitly specified in their letter of appointment to the Department of Political Science, and
 - (iii) faculty holding Non-Tenured Renewable Contract (NTRC) appointments.
- B. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty may vote or serve on the Planning Committee, the Graduate Studies Committee, and faculty search committees for tenure-track positions.
- C. NTRC faculty may vote or serve on the Undergraduate Studies Committee, search committees for non-tenure track positions and on certain ad hoc committees as determined by the Department Chair.
- D. Only tenured and tenure-track faculty whose tenure home is Political Science may vote on hiring decisions for tenure-track faculty.
- E. In accordance with the Faculty Handbook, only tenured faculty may serve on the Department's Tenure and Promotion Committee.
- F. Faculty members should inform the Chair as soon as they definitively know they will be leaving the Department. Faculty members shall be barred from voting on hiring decisions and other matters of substance after they have notified the Chair that they are leaving the Department.
- G. Absentee ballots will be permitted on hiring votes so long as the faculty member who is not present becomes familiar with the search materials. Absentee ballots will be permitted on other motions considered at faculty meetings so long as the faculty member who is not present becomes familiar with the motion and reviews the minutes of the relevant faculty meeting. Absentee balloting shall be completed within 48 hours after the conclusion of the given faculty meeting,

after which time the votes of the faculty shall be tallied and announced. Proxy voting shall not be permitted in Department or Committee meetings.

III. Department Chair

A. **Duties of the Department Chair** (see <https://echairs.as.ua.edu/duties-of-a-department-chair/> and the UA Faculty Handbook: <https://facultyhandbook.ua.edu/>)

(i) The Department Chair (hereafter, the Chair) has ultimate responsibility for all department decisions, actions, and obligations and for ensuring that the department pursues its mission. The Chair shall carry out these responsibilities in accordance with department bylaws and policies, and with College and University policies, rules, and bylaws.

(ii) The Chair shall make teaching assignments and course schedules; appoint members and chairs of all committees; supervise Graduate Teaching Assistants; supervise department clerical staff; approve all use of funds controlled by the department; schedule and preside over departmental meetings; write the chair's letter for evaluation of all faculty candidates for retention, tenure, and promotion; oversee the process of hiring new faculty and staff; perform annual evaluations of faculty and staff; receive and process all complaints regarding department personnel (other than the Department Chair); decide on adjustment and waiver of departmental degree requirements when required by special circumstances; communicate College and University initiatives, policies, and requests to Department members; submit required reports to the College and University; ensure, as far as possible, that the Department follows all College and University policies, and advocate for departmental interests with the College and the University.

(iii) In consultation with the Directors of Undergraduate Studies and/or the Director of the International Studies undergraduate major, the Chair shall approve all department-authorized changes to the undergraduate curriculum, coordinate the academic advising of undergraduate majors, and process awards for undergraduate students.

(iv) In consultation with the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Director of the MPA program, the Chair shall appoint Graduate Teaching Assistantships to graduate students, approve all department-authorized changes to the graduate

curriculum (except that changes to the MPA program shall be governed by the MPA Governance Document), and process awards to graduate students.

(v) The Chair shall delegate responsibilities to department committees and personnel consistent with department bylaws.

(vi) The Chair may delegate administrative tasks to individual faculty members. In delegating administrative duties and responsibilities, the Chair shall aim to balance the service burdens across faculty members and shall consider each faculty members' rank, scholarly activity, and overall service burdens to the Department, College, University and discipline of Political Science. Faculty members asked to assume administrative duties shall have the right to decline but shall be expected to provide compelling reasons. Declining such duties may, in the discretion of the Chair, be reflected in service section of the faculty member's annual review.

B. Appointment of Chair

(i) The Chair is appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

(ii) The length of the Chair's term has historically been five years. However, candidates for appointment or re-appointment may choose a shorter term with the approval of the Dean of the College Arts and Sciences.

(iii) The process of appointing Department Chairs is administered by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. It must include ample opportunities for members of the Department to apply for the Chair position, to communicate their evaluations of the candidates for the position, and to vote on the acceptability of all candidates for the position.

IV. Other Department Offices

A. Director of Undergraduate Studies (see [https://echairs.as.ua.edu/academic-department/#Undergraduate Director](https://echairs.as.ua.edu/academic-department/#Undergraduate_Director))

Under the supervision of the Department Chair, the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) manages the Department's undergraduate degree programs. Among the duties of the DUS are:

(i) Serving as primary contact for the Arts and Sciences Student Services Center, and attending meetings and training sessions that the College conducts for Directors of Undergraduate Studies.

- (ii) Managing the department's undergraduate registration advising system.
- (iii) Updating (annually, if necessary) the information regarding the Political Science major, Political Science minor, and the Public Policy Studies minor in the University undergraduate course catalog.
- (iv) Managing the process of distributing awards, fellowships, and scholarships administered by the Department for undergraduate students.
- (v) Once approved by the Department, supervising the submission of course proposals or revisions and curriculum changes to the Course Inventory system and monitoring their progress.
- (vi) Managing the Department's internship-for-credit programs for students working in Washington and Montgomery.
- (vii) Generating data necessary for assessment of Undergraduate programs' performance, as requested by the Chair, the Assessment Director, or College or University administrators.
- (viii) Convening and chairing meetings of the Department's Undergraduate Studies Committee.

The Department Chair and/or DUS may seek the assistance of other faculty members in accomplishing these tasks. The DUS shall have the assistance of the Department's Undergraduate Secretary in all duties stemming from the DUS role.

B. Director of International Studies Program

Under the supervision of the Department Chair, the Director of the International Studies Program (DISP) manages the Department's International Studies (INST) undergraduate degree program. Among the duties of the DISP are:

- (i) Managing the advising process for students majoring and minoring in INST.
- (ii) Managing and updating annually the list of courses that satisfy the INST degree requirements, contacting other departments for current information on courses taught, and ensuring that information on the updated degree requirements is reflected in the University undergraduate course catalog and DegreeWorks.
- (iii) Recruiting students into the INST degree programs for example, by attending the Major's Fair with current posters and pamphlets that summarize the major.

(iv) Maintaining records of student populations and progress through the programs and generating data necessary for assessment of the INST programs' performance.

(v) Staying in close communication with College registrar and attending Director's meetings.

(vi) Disseminating graduate school, NGO, internship, volunteer, and government employment opportunities of interest to INST majors in class, in office, and through the INST listserv.

The DISP shall have the assistance of the Department's Undergraduate Secretary in all duties stemming from the DISP role.

C. Director of the Master of Public Administration Program

The Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program Director duties are contained in the MPA Governance Document, which is subject to modification by majority vote of the MPA core faculty. Unless hired externally, the MPA Program Director is elected by the majority of MPA faculty, subject to approval by the Chair of the Department of Political Science and the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The MPA Director reports directly to the Department Chair. The MPA Program Director shall have the assistance of the department's Graduate Secretary in all duties stemming from the MPA Director role.

D. Director of Graduate Studies (see [https://echairs.as.ua.edu/academic-department/#Graduate Director](https://echairs.as.ua.edu/academic-department/#Graduate_Director))

Under the supervision of the Department Chair, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) manages the department's Political Science MA and PhD programs. Among the duties of the DGS are:

(i) Ensuring that admissions decisions, graduate student advising, comprehensive exams, departmental awards and nominations, catalog changes, and handbook issues are accomplished in accordance with relevant policies and in a timely fashion.

(ii) Carrying out the department's processes for evaluating current graduate students.

(iii) Recruiting students for the department's Political Science MA and PhD programs.

(iv) Maintaining records of student populations and progress through the programs and generating data necessary for assessment of programs' performance.

The DGS chairs the department's Graduate Studies Committee. The Graduate Studies Committee makes recommendations to the Chair on graduate admissions and assignment of Graduate teaching Assistantships. The Graduate Studies Committee makes recommendations to the Department Faculty on changes to graduate curriculum and policies regarding the Political Science MA and PHD programs.

The DGS may seek the assistance of other faculty members in accomplishing these tasks. The DGS shall have the assistance of the department's Graduate Secretary in all duties stemming from the DGS role.

- E.** Under the supervision of the Department Chair, the Director of the Undergraduate Economics Program in Arts & Sciences manages the Arts & Sciences Economics Degree. Among the duties of the Director are:
- (i) Serving as the primary contact for students seeking to major in the A&S Economics Degree.
 - (ii) Advising students majoring in the A&S Economics Degree.
 - (iii) Working with the appropriate individuals in the College of Arts & Sciences and the Culverhouse College of Business to manage the advising process for students majoring in the A&S Economics degree.
 - (iv) Updating, as needed, the information regarding the economics degree in UA's Undergraduate Catalog.

The Directors shall have the assistance of the Department's Undergraduate Secretary in all duties stemming from the Director's role.

V. Committees

- A. Standing Committees.** The Department shall have Seven Standing Committees: Planning Committee; Undergraduate Studies Committee; Graduate Studies Committee; MPA Committee; Tenure and Promotion Committee; Speakers Committee; and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee. Standing

committees report periodically to the Department on their activities. The Department may debate and accept, reject or modify any proposed policy changes. Temporary Committees, including search committees, may be appointed to accomplish specific tasks.

- B. Assignment of Faculty and Chairs to Department Standing Committee.** At the beginning of each academic year, the Department Chair shall assign faculty members to each of the Department standing committees, except that membership on the Department Tenure and Promotion Committee is governed by the Faculty Handbook and membership on the MPA Committee is governed by the MPA Governance Document. The Director of Graduate Studies shall be the chair of the Graduate Studies Committee, the Director of Undergraduate Studies shall be the chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, and the MPA Director shall be the chair of the MPA Committee. The Department Chair shall be the chair of the Planning Committee.
- C. Assignment to Committees.** Degree program committees shall consist of at least five members. Assignment of faculty to standing committees shall be at the discretion of the Department Chair, with the exception of the MPA Committee which consists of the core MPA faculty. However, the Department Chair shall consider the following factors:
- (i) Faculty members' interest in and qualifications for serving on the particular committees,
 - (ii) Faculty members' other service roles and obligations,
 - (iii) The advice of the Degree Program Directors,
 - (iv) The representativeness of each committee in terms of race, gender, fields, and ranks in the department, and
 - (v) Continuity of membership on the committee.
- D. Planning Committee.**
- (i) The Planning Committee serves as an advisory body to the Chair, whereby the Chair may bring ideas and issues to the Planning Committee and the Planning Committee members may bring ideas and issues to the Chair to discuss. The Planning Committee shall have a standing meeting with the Chair at least once per semester. The standing meetings shall occur regardless of an agenda to allow

a forum for open discussion between the Chair and Planning Committee members.

(ii) The Planning Committee shall be chaired by the Department Chair. The Committee shall have three reserved seats for the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Director of Graduate Studies, and MPA Director. The Committee shall have three additional members appointed by the Chair at the beginning of each academic year: two tenure-track members from the rank of Assistant and one tenured member from the rank of Associate or Full. Appointments are made at the beginning of each academic year and, ordinarily, appointed members will serve no more than two consecutive years.

- E. Undergraduate Studies Committee.** The Undergraduate Studies Committee shall meet at least once every semester, or more often as requested by the DUS and/or Department Chair.

The Undergraduate Studies Committee has jurisdiction over the following matters. All proposals by faculty members within or outside the Committee dealing with the following matters, must be considered and voted on by the Committee before being considered and voted on by the Department.

(i) Proposed new courses or major changes in existing courses

(ii) Proposed changes to the structure of, and requirements for, the Political Science major or minor

(iii) Proposed changes in the qualifications or selection criteria for honor societies, scholarships, or awards administered by the Department (subject to the constraints imposed by the College and/or scholarship donors)

(iv) Proposed changes in the system of registration advising for Undergraduate students.

(v) New policies or proposed changes in policies relating to academic enrichment programs for Undergraduate students, such as Honors courses and/or programs, internships, or research/independent study courses.

- F. Graduate Studies Committee.** The Graduate Studies Committee shall meet at least once every semester, or more often as requested by the DGS and/or Department Chair.

All proposals by faculty members within or outside the Committee dealing with the following matters, must be considered and voted on by the Committee before being considered and voted on by the Department. The Graduate Studies Committee has jurisdiction over the following matters with respect to the Political Science MA and PhD programs.

(i) Proposed new graduate courses or major changes in existing graduate courses.

(ii) Proposed changes to the structure of, admission criteria for, and degree requirements for, the MA or PhD in Political Science.

(iii) Nominations for graduate student awards, fellowships.

(iv) Making recommendations to the Chair on graduate admissions and assignment of Graduate teaching Assistantships.

- G. MPA Committee.** The MPA Committee shall be constituted and shall exercise authority over the MPA program as described in the MPA Governance Document.
- H. Speakers Committee** The Speakers Committee shall normally include all untenured, tenure-track faculty. The instructor of PSC 500 and PSC 501 shall normally chair the Speakers Committee.
- I. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee** This committee shall be constituted annually by the chair. The mission of the DEI Committee is to study and make recommendations to the Department on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- J. Assignment of Faculty to Search Committees.** Assignment of faculty members to faculty search committees shall be at the discretion of the Department Chair. Where possible, a majority of the members of the search committee should come from the subfield(s) in which the search is expected to hire. If the search is for a faculty member whose primary responsibility will be teaching undergraduate courses, the Director of Undergraduate Studies will normally be a member of the search committee.
- K. Announcement of Committee Members.** The Chair will communicate the assignments for all committees to the faculty once the assignments are made. Membership of all standing committees will be announced at the beginning of each academic year.

VI. Procedures for Hiring of new Tenure-Track Faculty Members

- A. Voting membership.** At all stages of the hiring process, voting members shall be tenure-track faculty only.
- B. Planning meeting.** There shall be a yearly faculty meeting toward the end of the Spring semester to discuss recruitment priorities for the coming academic year; voting members shall be all tenure-track faculty. If proposals are put forth for more than one hire, a vote will be held by secret ballot in which faculty members rank their priorities. The final ranking will form the basis of the Chair's recruitment requests to the Dean.
- C. Search Committees' composition.** In the Fall of each year the Chair will appoint a Search Committee for each position for which we are recruiting. Normally each Committee will consist of a search committee chair and three committee members who will be appointed from among the tenure-track members of the relevant subfield along with one member from an outside field. Composition of a search committee for an MPA faculty member is governed by the MPA Governance Document. Committees should be diverse, as much as possible, in keeping with Arts and Sciences guidelines. Search Committee members are responsible, in coordination with the Chair, for carrying out any recruitment activities mandated by A&S for diversity purposes.
- D. Search Committee initial process.** The Committee shall compose the job description, subject to approval by the Department Chair. The Chair shall ensure that all job descriptions accurately reflect departmental needs. After meeting to discuss the merits of all applicants, the Search Committee shall present a short list of candidates to the full Department for their consideration at least one week prior to a faculty meeting where top candidates are discussed. The list will be presented to the Chair who will determine whether candidates remain available.
- E. Full faculty meeting to discuss candidates.** At this meeting, the chair and members of the Search Committee will describe the top applicants, how they match the job description and departmental needs, and what factors make them appealing as candidates. All faculty members are invited to ask questions and provide feedback about the candidates. No decisions are made at this meeting; the idea is for the Search Committee to hear faculty views.

- F. Final Ranking.** After hearing from the full faculty, the Search Committee will present to the Chair a final ranking of the short list of candidates, with the top two candidates (in rare circumstances, top three) being invited for campus interviews.
- G. Campus interviews.** The Department Chair normally makes logistical arrangements for campus interviews, but this task may be delegated to the search committee chair. Candidate interviews include the candidate's research presentation, individual meetings with faculty members, and a meeting with graduate students.
- H. Final faculty meeting.** After the candidates' campus interviews, the full faculty will meet to vote on these candidates. There are two votes held: the first is on whether or not each candidate interviewed is acceptable for hiring (i.e. whether each candidate is "above the bar"). The second vote is for whom to hire. In the case of just two candidates, a simple majority vote in favor of an individual means they are given an offer. In the case of three candidates, faculty will rank the choices and an "instant runoff" process will be used. First, first-place votes will be counted; if one candidate receives a majority of first-place votes, they will be offered the position. If no one receives a majority of first-place votes, the third-place candidate will be dropped, and the second-place votes on those ballots will be redistributed to the remaining two candidates, ensuring a majority winner. All voting will take place by secret ballot.

If neither candidate is deemed acceptable we will discuss bringing in for an interview the next-ranked person on the short list or ending the search.

- I. Hiring Process.** If one or more of the candidates we have interviewed are deemed acceptable, the chair will proceed with trying to hire the top-ranked candidate. If we cannot hire the top-ranked candidate, we will move to the next highest-ranked candidate. If neither candidate accepts the job, we will invite the next available candidate from the Search Committee's ranked list, or end the search.

VII. Annual Faculty Evaluation Process (See <https://echairs.as.ua.edu/duties-of-a-department-chair/#Evaluating> and Chapter 2, Section XI, "Policy and Guidelines on Faculty Evaluation," in the UA Faculty Handbook).

- A. The annual faculty evaluation process is governed by the policies of the College of Arts and Sciences and the University of Alabama. Each spring faculty are required to submit a report of their activities and accomplishments in the areas of teaching, scholarship, service, and administration (for those faculty who have administrative responsibilities). The information in these reports plays a role in assessing faculty and in generating reports about Department, College, and University accomplishments. The Department Chair reviews these reports and gives each faculty member a numerical score and comments about each area, and schedules in-person conferences for faculty who wish to have them. The Chair's evaluations form the basis of the Chair's recommendations to the College for faculty salary increases, during years in which increases are offered. The College determines all faculty salaries.
- B. The Department Chair shall notify faculty of the date by which reports are due and the standards and criteria which shall be applied in each area at least one month before the reports are due. The Department Chair shall consult with the faculty of each subfield annually to determine the criteria used to evaluate research quality.
- C. The processes for retention, tenure, and promotion decisions are separate from the annual Faculty Evaluation Process and are governed by the College and University rules.

VIII. Records of Department Policies and Meetings

- A. **Department Policies.** Maintaining a master document of policies adopted by the Political Science Faculty is critical to continuity of practice, particularly in times of leadership transitions and acclimation of new faculty members. As such, the Department Chair is responsible for managing an archive of Department Policies in Box, available to view and download by Political Science faculty members. Program Directors are responsible for providing the Chair with written notification of new policies relevant to their Programs. The Department Chair shall have sole power to upload documents to the Department Policies folder in Box.
- B. **Minutes of Department Meetings.** Preservation of meeting minutes is an important mechanism to maintain transparency and a record of discussions, votes, and decisions in the Department. As such,
 - (i) the Department Chair is responsible for creating a "Faculty Meeting Minutes" folder accessible to voting members of the Department, in Box for Faculty

Meeting Minutes and uploading the minutes in the folder by the end of the business day they are approved.

(ii) the Director of Undergraduate Studies is responsible for creating a “Undergraduate Studies Meeting Minutes” folder, accessible to all members of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, in Box for Undergraduate Studies Meeting Minutes and uploading the minutes in the folder by the end of the business day they are approved.

(iii) the Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for creating a “Graduate Studies Meeting Minutes” folder, accessible to all members of the Graduate Studies Committee, in Box for Graduate Studies Meeting Minutes and uploading the minutes in the folder by the end of the business day they are approved.

(iv) the Director of the MPA Program is responsible for creating a “MPA Program Meeting Minutes” folder, accessible to all members of the MPA Committee, in Box for MPA Program Meeting Minutes and uploading the minutes in the folder by the end of the business day they are approved.

IX. Approval and Amendment of Bylaws

- A. Adoptions of Bylaws** These Bylaws will become effective upon approval by two-thirds of the eligible voting members of the department.
- B. Amendment of Bylaws.** Amendments to the Bylaws may be proposed by petition of one third of the faculty or by motion at a faculty meeting. Voting on the proposed amendment shall take place at the next faculty meeting, except that the vote shall not be earlier than one week after the proposal. Approval of the proposed amendment requires a two-thirds majority of the eligible voting members of the department.