

**BYLAWS OF THE UTK DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
(February 2015)**

**Preamble**

By adoption of these Bylaws, the Faculty of the Department of Sociology affirms its commitment to both full participation in and the incumbent responsibilities of shared departmental governance. Successful governance is critical to achieving teaching, research and service missions of the department. The collaboration of the department head and the departmental faculty is an essential cornerstone of this success. The Bylaws and appendix implement the spirit of collaborative Departmental decision-making and shared governance described in the *Faculty Handbook* and defines the policies and procedures of the Department

The Faculty also commits itself to the continued pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and service in the sociological specialty areas of criminology, environmental sociology, political economy and globalization. The Faculty pledges its cooperation with other programs and departments of the University of Tennessee that pursue similar goals.

**Article I**

**The Department**

**Section A** The Faculty refers to all tenured and tenure-track faculty members of the Department of Sociology, University of Tennessee at Knoxville. Collectively, they are known as the “Voting Faculty” of the department.

Tenured faculty are faculty members that have voting rights on such matters as tenure and promotion below their rank, selection and re-appointment of the Head, selection and appointments of tenure-track and non-tenure track positions, committee elections, and on other significant department matters.

Tenure-track faculty are faculty members that have voting rights on all of the above except in matters of tenure and promotion.

Non-tenure track faculty are full and part-time non-tenure teaching and research faculty members, adjuncts and visiting faculty and lecturers. They are non-voting members of the department appointed to serve and fulfill the needs specified by the terms of their appointment but who enjoy the same academic freedoms as tenured and tenure-track faculty that are specified in Section 2.1 of the Faculty Handbook.

In addition, non-tenure track faculty members of the department have the option of participating in faculty meetings and discussions that directly affect them in such things as performance review, undergraduate curriculum, office and classroom assignments and teaching and research technologies.

- Section B** The Department Head is the principal officer for the Department. The Head is chosen by the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in consultation with the departmental Faculty and serves at the pleasure of the Dean.
- Section C** The Associate Department Head is a member of the Tenured Faculty who is appointed by the Head in consultation with the Faculty. The Associate Head assumes the responsibilities of the Head when the Head is absent, but operates within a previously agreed upon framework established by the Head.
- Section D** The Performance Review Committee is the vehicle for providing to the Faculty, to the Head and to the Dean the results of peer reviews and recommendations based upon them. The Performance Review Committee consists of the Department Head and two additional tenured faculty members, elected according to procedures specified in Article IV.
- Section E** The Undergraduate Studies Committee consists of three Faculty members (including a Director) elected by the voting faculty according to the procedures specified in Article IV. The Director of Undergraduate Studies will chair the committee.
- Section F** The Director of Undergraduate Studies oversees the operation of the undergraduate program. This role requires regular communication with the Head and the Undergraduate Committee. The Director is a member of the voting faculty who is elected according to the procedures specified in Article IV.
- Section G** The Graduate Studies Committee consists of four Faculty members (including a Director) elected by the voting faculty according to procedures specified in Article IV. The Director of Graduate Studies will chair the committee.

**Section H** The Director of Graduate Studies oversees the operation of the graduate program. This role requires regular communication with the Head, and the Graduate Studies Committee. The Director is a member of the voting faculty who is elected according to the procedures specified in Article IV.

**Section I** Departmental Graduate Students are all students that have been admitted to the Graduate School at the University of Tennessee and to the department's Graduate Program and who currently fulfill both the university and department registration and enrollment requirements for graduate students.

## **Article II**

### **General Duties and Rights**

**Section A** The implementation of departmental policies and the conduct of Departmental business are responsibilities of the Department Head. The Head not only provides leadership for the department but also works closely with the Faculty to facilitate departmental operation. The faculty retains the prerogative to propose and adopt new policies or to modify existing ones. Committee and Faculty recommendations normally are followed by the Head, but the Head has final authority on all decisions made in the Department. Occasionally, circumstances may require the Head to recommend or to follow a course of action different from a Faculty recommendation. In these instances, the Head shall inform the Faculty of the reasons for such actions. The Department Head is responsible to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, to the departmental Faculty, and to the department's students for conscientious, competent and professional administration of departmental business. In pursuit of these responsibilities and objectives the Head shall:

Part 1. Schedule and chair departmental meetings, designate a person to take minutes, and circulate the minutes to the faculty in a timely fashion.

Part 2. Work to promote faculty career development and to enhance both the collective interests and the reputation of the Department of Sociology.

Part 3. Review the budget with the faculty at the August and April faculty meetings and at the Faculty's request.

Part 4. As fully as possible, inform the Faculty of all decisions that concern the department.

Part 5. Receive and respond expeditiously and equitably to complaints and grievances from faculty, from students and from staff.

Part 6. Have one annual conference with each faculty member. This conference shall be held, and the Head's assessment shall be completed, only after the results of peer reviews conducted by the Performance Review Committee and cumulative review committee have been made available to the Head and to the faculty member.

During the Head's conference with each faculty member, the Head shall: (a) discuss with the faculty member the results of peer review by the Performance Review committee and, where applicable, the cumulative review committee; (b) the relationship between the faculty member's performance in the preceding year and her or his salary adjustment and teaching load for that year; (c) receive from and discuss with the faculty member a written summary of the activities that the faculty member wishes to have considered in evaluating his or her performance and in recommending future salary adjustments to the Dean; and (d) discuss the faculty member's goals, objectives, and resource needs for the upcoming academic year.

Part 7. Prior to the September faculty meeting, prepare and distribute to faculty and staff a written annual report on the Head's activities and performance in the preceding academic year.

**Section B** The Associate Department Head performs administrative duties delegated by the Head such as reviewing and updating the department bylaws, and recommending faculty awards.

**Section C** The Performance Review Committee assists the Head in reviewing the performance of faculty members. In pursuit of these responsibilities, the Committee shall:

Part 1. Use the guidelines and criteria established by the voting faculty, as contained in the Appendix to these Bylaws, to review annually the contributions and performance of each faculty member in the areas of teaching, research and service. In summarizing its reviews, the committee shall use five rating categories: Far exceeds expectations for rank, exceeds expectations for rank; meets expectations for rank, falls short of meeting expectations, falls far short of meeting expectations for rank. The committee will base its assessment on materials provided by each faculty member that may include the Colleges of Arts and Science Faculty Workload Report, curriculum vita, and other materials related to teaching, research and service.

Part 2. Following consultation with the Faculty and Head, nominate faculty for appropriate College and University awards.

Part 3. Assist the Head in the process of evaluation faculty applications for zero teaching loads/sabbaticals and for other similar things.

**Section D**

The Undergraduate Studies Committee oversees the undergraduate program. In pursuit of this objective, the committee shall:

Part 1. Review the undergraduate curriculum as appropriate and make recommendations to the Faculty regarding curriculum and requirements.

Part 2. Nominate undergraduate students for awards.

Part 3. Develop plans for assessing and improving undergraduate education.

Part 4. Distribute information about actions taken to the Faculty.

Part 5. Solicit input from undergraduate students about the curriculum.

Part 6. Review undergraduate student applications for admission to the Sociology Honors Concentration and monitor students' completion of Honors requirements.

Part 7. Develop communication channels with current and past undergraduate majors.

**Section E**

The Director of Undergraduate Studies oversees the operation of the undergraduate program. In pursuit of this objective, the Director shall:

Part 1. Chair the Undergraduate Studies Committee.

Part 2. Disseminate information to undergraduate students as appropriate.

Part 3. Co-ordinate any efforts by the department, college or university designed to assess or improve the Undergraduate Studies Program.

**Section F**

The Graduate Studies Committee is responsible for ensuring that the Department recruit and admit the best qualified students possible. Further, it is responsible for ensuring that the best of those students are rewarded with departmental funding and other forms of recognition. In pursuit of those objectives, the Committee shall:

- Part 1. Engage in a wide range of recruiting activities (preparation of paper and web based materials attendance at events where undergraduates make presentations, initiation of campus visitation days or weekends).
- Part 2. Establish and periodically revise admission standards.
- Part 3. Review and recommend students for admission to the graduate school.
- Part 4. Review and, if necessary, revise criteria for awarding funding.
- Part 5. Recommend students to be awarded funding.
- Part 6. Assign a temporary advisor to each incoming graduate student.
- Part 7. Prepare an annual report describing the characteristics of applicants and students admitted to the program.
- Part 8. Collect and disseminate information about other funding opportunities on campus.
- Part 9. Collect and disseminate information about scholarships, fellowships, and other internal and external awards..
- Part 10. Nominate graduate students for awards.
- Part 11. Disseminate information about awards and honors received by graduate students.
- Part 12. Receive recommendations from MA committee chairs for student continuation for PhD and present to faculty for approval
- Part 13. Report on its deliberations at monthly faculty meetings.

**Section G**

The Director of Graduate Studies works closely with graduate students supporting their professional development and progress through the program, as well as chairs the Graduate Studies Committee. The Director, in consultation with other members of the Graduate Studies Committee and the Head, and with the assistance of Department staff, shall:

- Part 1. Prepare a fall orientation for new graduate students.
- Part 2. Organize a fall reception to introduce new graduate students.

- Part 3. Establish professional development activities (e.g., preparation for teaching, grant and fellowship applications, CV, job talks, etc.).
- Part 4. Provide students with information about career opportunities and how to pursue them.
- Part 5. Serve as the instructor for social justice and pedagogical graduate seminars.
- Part 6. Notify students and their advisors when there are deviations from policies.
- Part 7. Engage in an initial hearing of graduate students' concerns and complaints.
- Part 8. Assist the Head in making GTA assignments.
- Part 9. Ensure that qualifying examination committees are selected and that all other aspects of the examination process operate smoothly.
- Part 10. Maintain records of graduates' employment.
- Part 11. Conduct an annual review in consultation with the full faculty each spring term to assess the progress of each graduate student.
- Part 12. Co-ordinate any efforts by the department, college or university designed to assess or improve the Graduate Studies Program.

**Section H** All students are entitled to the rights specified by Family Education Rights and Privacy Act and by other federal and state laws and regulations as well as the rights granted to undergraduate and graduate students by the University and by the College of Arts & Sciences. Additional rights pertaining to graduate students are granted by the Graduate School, the Graduate Council and by the department. These departmental rights are specified in the current Graduate Manual. In addition to the above rights, elected graduate student representatives of the Sociology Graduate Student Association shall have the right or the option to the following:

- (1) Attend regularly scheduled department meetings or portions of these meetings.
- (2) Attend meetings of the Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committees and ad hoc committees.

- (3) Participate in discussions within these meetings that do not involve decisions affecting the current Head, current non-tenure track, tenure track and tenured faculty members, or decisions affecting prospective or current individual students on issues such as student admissions, conduct, academic performance, awards and others forms of institutional, departmental or faculty support or recognition.

*In addition to these rights, all graduate students are responsible for the following:*

Graduate students must assume full responsibility for knowledge of rules regulations and requirements of the University, College of Arts and Sciences, Graduate School, Graduate Council and the department. Any exception to the graduate policies stated in the *Graduate Catalog* must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. Any exception to the department's graduate policies stated in the Graduate Handbook or in its bylaws must be approved by the voting faculty of the department. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all of the requirements listed in these documents and any changes that may occur. Graduate students may consult with the department's Director of Graduate Studies and documents found on the following websites for further information on graduate rights, responsibilities, rules, waivers and petitions: (<http://gradschool.utk.edu>; <http://dos.utk.edu/hilltopics>; [web.utk.edu~utsocdep/](http://web.utk.edu/~utsocdep/))

## **Section I**

The department's Reviewer of Research is chosen by the Head in consultation with the voting faculty. The Reviewer of Research shall:

- Part 1. Review all departmental research projects that involve the use of human subjects.
- Part 2. Provide recommendations to those who are preparing a research proposal ("Human Subjects Protocol") that will be submitted to and reviewed by the Office of Research's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects.
- Part 3. Brief the department Head about the research proposal and its protocol for the protection of human subjects.
- Part 4. In consultation with the Head, recommend that the protocol be approved by the department and submitted for review to the IRB.
- Part 5. Make recommendations to the IRB on the type of review that it should conduct with regards to the research.



**Section J** The department's Alternate Reviewer of Research is chosen by the Head in consultation with the voting faculty. The Alternate Reviewer of Research shall perform the duties detailed in Section H when the Reviewer of Research is unavailable or unable to perform them due to such things as a conflict of interest, leave of absence, illness or other related conditions.

**Section K** The departmental Library Representative, who is chosen by the Head in consultation with the Faculty, represents the interests of the department in policy decisions affecting library use, acquisitions, and collections development and maintenance.

### **Article III**

#### **Procedures**

**Section A** Regularly scheduled departmental meetings and Undergraduate and Graduate Studies Committee meetings and ad hoc meetings or portions of them shall be open to voting and non-voting faculty members and elected graduate student representatives of the Sociology Graduate Student Association unless specified by current university, college or department policies or bylaws.

**Section B** At least one departmental meeting shall be held in September, October, November, January, February, March, April, and May. Meeting times will be designated and announced to the faculty and the elected graduate representatives by the first day of class in the fall and spring semesters. Additional meetings may be called by the Department Head at least three working days before the proposed meeting. The date, time, and place will be established by the Department Head. Meetings called by petition shall be limited to consideration of items stated in the petition. Petitions for such a meeting must be supported and signed by at least one-third of the voting faculty.

**Section C** The Department Head is responsible for preparing the agenda for departmental meetings. Items may be placed on the agenda by any voting member. The agenda must be distributed to each voting member at least three working days before the scheduled meeting.

**Section D** Minutes shall be taken at each departmental meeting and distributed to each voting faculty member at least three working days before the next scheduled meeting.

- Section E** A quorum for departmental meetings consists of any number that is more than one half of the persons eligible to vote on a motion which is on the floor.
- Section F** Departmental and committee meetings shall be conducted in accordance with the procedures outlined in *Robert's Rules of Order* (most recent edition), except when these conflict with the Bylaws, in which case the Bylaws take precedence.
- Section G** Tenured and tenure-track faculty members (i.e., the “voting faculty”) shall have voting privileges on departmental matters that are based upon their rank within the university, college and the department. Proxy votes are not permitted in any departmental or committee meeting.
- Section H** The Performance Review Committee shall meet at least once each academic year and at other times as the chair or committee members shall determine.
- Section I** The Graduate Committee, the Undergraduate Committee, and the Performance Review Committee shall present a list of task priorities at the September faculty meeting and provide written annual reports at least three working days prior to the April faculty meeting.
- Section J** Policy changes proposed by the Head shall be submitted to the faculty at a Departmental meeting for a vote. All recommendations made by departmental committees must be submitted at a faculty meeting for approval
- Section K** To assist in completion of specific tasks, departmental ad hoc committees or positions may be established by the Department Head. Unless otherwise specified, the term of said committee or position will end with completion of assigned work. Appointments to ad hoc committee and positions shall be confirmed by faculty vote.
- Section L** Appointment, promotion and tenure matters shall be handled by ad hoc committee.
- Section M** The date, time, place and proposed agenda of all committee meetings shall be distributed to faculty and graduate students at least three working days before the scheduled meeting.

**Section N** Candidates for promotion and tenure shall be discussed at special faculty meetings according to procedures outlined in the *UT Manual for Faculty Evaluation*. To facilitate responsible and thoughtful assessment of candidates' credentials, the Head shall ensure that all relevant materials are made available to the Faculty in reasonable time for careful study and deliberation. The candidate may choose to select a committee to help compile and summarize the materials for the departmental faculty to review. The Head shall solicit and receive comments from all departmental faculty members. Subsequent voting by eligible faculty members shall be by written and signed ballot.

Although the Head makes the final recommendation to the Dean on promotion and tenure candidates, the faculty vote must be reported and explained to the Dean by the Head. In the event that the Head's recommendation conflicts with the vote of the faculty, the Head shall explain to the Faculty in a meeting the decision he or she reached. The Head shall also provide an opportunity for faculty members to submit a dissenting report for transmittal to the Dean along with the Head's report and recommendation.

#### **Article IV**

#### **Elections**

**Section A** Tenured faculty are eligible to fill all elected positions within the department. Tenure-track faculty are eligible to fill all of these positions except for members of the Performance Review Committee. Non-voting faculty members are not eligible to fill any elected position within the department.

**Section B** No member of the voting faculty may serve on more than one standing committee (i.e., Performance Review, Graduate and Undergraduate Studies Committees).

**Section C** Nominations for regularly scheduled office openings on standing committees, shall be made at the April departmental meeting and elections held at the May meeting. Members of standing committees serve two-year terms of office. Directors may not serve more than two consecutive terms of office.

The Department Head shall call for nominations for any unscheduled office opening that may occur on these committees and place the election on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled departmental meeting or call a special meeting for the purpose of filling the vacancy. The term of office of a person elected to fill such a vacancy shall be the completion of the unfilled term.

Nominations for any office opening may be made after they are announced by the Head and from the floor when the election is held.

**Section D** Election to the standing committees shall be by secret ballot. Each eligible member of the voting faculty present at the meeting shall have one vote for each position to be filled. However, voting may proceed verbally or by faculty acclamation (i.e., “approve/disapprove”) when there is no competition for a position and when no faculty member opposes using these alternative voting procedures.

**Section E** Should a vacancy occur in an elective departmental office, the Department Head shall call for nominations and place the election on the agenda of the next regularly scheduled departmental meeting or call a special meeting for the purpose of filling the vacancy. The term of office of a person elected to fill a vacancy shall be completion of the unfilled term.

**Section F** Departmental elections will be in the order: Graduate Director, Undergraduate Director, Performance Review Committee members, Graduate Studies Committee members, and Undergraduate Studies Committee members.

**Section G** Members of standing committees serve two-year terms. Directors may not serve more than two consecutive terms. Terms of office begin June 1 and end May 31.

**Section G** Members of standing committees serve two-year terms or its equivalent. Chairs and the Graduate Director may not serve more than two consecutive terms or its equivalent.

## **Article V**

### **Amending the Bylaws**

These Bylaws and Appendix may be amended with a two-thirds vote of the faculty present at a departmental meeting, but only if the quorum is present, and provided that all petitioned Amendments have been placed on the agenda and their texts have been presented to the faculty in writing at least three working days before the meeting.

## Appendix

### Evaluation of Tenure-Line Faculty Members

Evaluation of faculty performance requires systematic review of teaching, research, and service activities. These guidelines and procedures supplement the criteria and procedures that appear in the revised *Faculty Handbook* (2005) and the current *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.

#### Annual reviews

In regard to the annual retention of non-tenured faculty, the department will follow procedures outlined in the current *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.

Every year each faculty member and the Department Head will engage in a performance and planning review meeting during February or March. During this meeting, they will review the faculty member's teaching, research and service activities for the year and plan activities for the forthcoming year.

The Department Head will convene the Performance Review Committee to evaluate all faculty members' performances. The assessment will be based on a summary of activities during the previous year and support documentation provided by each faculty member. Based on this meeting a document will be produced which summarizes the review and specifies an overall performance rating (exceeding expectations, meeting expectations, needing improvement, or unsatisfactory). The faculty member must sign the document to indicate he or she had the opportunity to review it. Both the faculty member and the Dean of the Arts and Sciences will receive copies of the report and a copy will be placed in the faculty member's personnel file. If the faculty member is dissatisfied with the document, he or she may submit a rejoinder to the Department Head and the Dean. The rejoinder will be submitted with the evaluation.

If a faculty member's performance is evaluated as needing improvement in any of the three areas, the faculty member in conjunction with the Department Head must develop a statement of areas requiring improvement.

If a faculty member's performance is evaluated as unsatisfactory, the Dean must review the evaluation, concur with it and notify the Chancellor of the faculty member's unsatisfactory rating. The faculty member is not eligible for rewards and must provide the Department Head with regular progress on steps being taken to improve. Any faculty member whose performance receives an unsatisfactory evaluation in two consecutive annual reviews must undergo a further review as detailed in the *Faculty Handbook* and be subject to the possible further outcomes specified therein.

#### A. Evaluation Guidelines

Each faculty member's evaluation will be based on the agreed workload for that faculty member relative to the three areas: research, teaching, and service. Detailed standards as

to how work meets or exceeds expectations have not been agreed on within the discipline of Sociology. Specified goals serve as targets with more general information about professional attitudes and goals providing the context for assessment.

## **Research**

Faculty research production that will be evaluated includes peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and books. Other work that will be assessed includes grant submissions, and successfully funded research. Research reports that are conditions of research grants will not be considered for evaluation of faculty research production. Book reviews, comments, and articles for general public reading will also be evaluated, but will not be weighted as highly as peer-reviewed materials.

Normally, it is assumed that a tenured faculty member will meet expectations for an ongoing research by annually publishing two refereed articles or their equivalent. Emphasis should be on the continued production of published materials rather than the specific date of a publication, so the time horizon for viewing publications may vary in accordance with views as to the degree of difficulty of the project undertaken with some projects requiring more time and effort than others. The Head and the Performance Review Committee will consider the professional contribution of publications based on their substance, place of publication, reviews, number and nature of citations, and so on.

A faculty member who averages more than two refereed articles a year or their equivalent may be judged to have exceeded expectation. A faculty member who fails to meet expectations for a given year normally shall be judged to need improvement for the year. A faculty member will be judged unsatisfactory for a given year if he or she fails to meet expectation for the year and is not engaged in an ongoing program of scholarly production.

## **Instruction**

Many variables impact teaching performance and effectiveness (level of instruction—undergraduate, graduate; class size; students' characteristics.) Thus, various measures need to be utilized in evaluating instruction. All faculty members shall maintain a portfolio with evidence demonstrating their teaching performance: course information (syllabuses, assignments, and examinations), student evaluations (objective and subjective), distribution of grades, and participation in teacher development activities. Faculty members are expected to engage in individual work with students in addition to teaching conventional classes (e.g., undergraduate and graduate independent studies, direction of undergraduate students' honor theses, MA theses, and dissertations). In addition faculty members are expected to advise and mentor undergraduate and graduate students. Each faculty member's instructional performance will be thoroughly reviewed on a four-year rotation. Additional materials may be requested for that extensive review. A faculty member shall normally be judged to exceed expectations in a given year so long as he or she has performed overall in an outstanding manner with respect to the criteria deemed relevant to meeting expectation or receive external recognition of

outstanding instructional performance. All faculty members shall be regarded as meeting expectations in a given year if the students' evaluation from the preceding two semesters are overall near or above the departmental mean for faculty members, an appropriate portfolio has been assembled, and the other instructional activities mentioned above were not neglected.

A faculty member will be judged as needing improvement in a given year if the student evaluations from the preceding two semesters are overall substantially below the mean for the departmental mean for faculty members. The other criteria deemed relevant to meeting expectations also must be taken into account. A judgment of unsatisfactory in a given year will be made if the faculty member failed to meet expectations for the year, and was insufficiently conscientious in efforts as a teacher and mentor.

### **Service**

Service work is an important part of faculty evaluations. Expectations of service work will vary by rank. Service includes regular attendance at all departmental meetings; fulfilling departmental committee responsibilities; advising a fair share of majors; reviewing or editing professional journals advising; student groups or organizations; being a member of a regular or ad hoc college or university or college interdisciplinary program; serving as an extramural tenure or promotion reviewer; organizing conference sessions; serving in elected office in a professional organization; participating in university, college, or departmental outreach; and providing community services of various types. All faculty members are expected to engage in multiple types of service activities. Faculty members will have to demonstrate through provision of written material both the quality and quantity of their service activities for the previous year. A faculty member normally will be judged to have met expectations, if he or she can demonstrate involvement in the types of service activities expected of a faculty member of that rank. A faculty member will be judged to need improvement by failing to meet minimal expectations of service involvement. A faculty member exceeding expectations must demonstrate substantial service to the department, college, and profession.

## **B. The Categories for Overall Evaluation in an Annual Review**

**(1) Exceeds Expectation in a given year:** (a) exceeds expectations in research production and above average performance in teaching; and (b) does not fail to meet expectation in any category.

**(2) Meets Expectations in a given year:** (a) is not unsatisfactory in any of the three areas; and (b) if needs improvement in any area, then exceeds expectations in at least one other.

**(3) Needs Improvement in a given year:** (a) fails to satisfy the requirements for meeting expectations; and (b) is either not unsatisfactory in more than one area or, if unsatisfactory in two, then exceeds expectations in the other area.

**(4) Unsatisfactory in a given year:** A faculty member normally shall be judged unsatisfactory in a given year if he or she fails to satisfy the above expectations.