MEMORANDUM OF FACULTY GOVERNANCE  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION  
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS, AMHERST  

September 2009

Articles:

1. The Department of Communication will be presided over by a Chair recognized by the faculty though appointed by the Dean of the College;

2. Personnel Committee: Governance will be rooted, first, in a department-wide Personnel Committee consisting of 5 members, elected at-large from the Communication department faculty, simultaneously, via email ballot. All full-time faculty (tenure system and lecturers) will vote on all members of the Personnel Committee. In the event of a tie, there will be a run-off election;

   a. The following process will be used to determine eligibility for election to the Personnel Committee:

       - If a faculty member is on leave of any sort for the year or for the semester (sabbatical, parental, medical), she/he can be excluded.

       - If a faculty member is herself/himself the subject of a major personnel action (tenure, promotion to Professor), she/he can decide whether or not to stand for Personnel Committee election. In keeping with UMass policies and procedures, if she/he were to serve she/he would recuse herself/himself from deliberations and votes on her/his own case.

       - If a faculty member is pre-tenure, she/he can decide whether or not to stand for Personnel Committee election.

       - If a faculty member is non-tenure stream, she/he can decide whether or not to stand for Personnel Committee election.

       - All other faculty members must make themselves eligible for election.

   b. An individual who is due to undergo a major personnel action (tenure; promotion to Professor) can suggest preferred names of faculty members she/he feels can speak directly to the case for action and will have the opportunity to communicate those preferences to the outgoing Chair of the Personnel Committee.

   c. Before the election, the following pertinent data will be circulated:

      - A list of faculty members who have served on the Personnel Committee in the last five years. This information is offered with the goal of spreading representation on the Personnel Committee as widely as possible over time among eligible faculty members.
- A list of faculty members who wish to be elected to the Personnel Committee. An example would be someone who has mentored a colleague due for a major personnel action.
- A list of faculty members who would NOT like to be elected, given for instance, service on the College-level Personnel Committee or in some other uncompensated major administrative post.
- Any preferred names identified by those individuals subject to an upcoming major personnel action (tenure; promotion to Professor, as discussed in b. above).

d. Should additional expertise be deemed necessary in the construction of the case(s) for major personnel action(s), a subcommittee can be formed consisting of one or more additional faculty members who act as a resource for the Personnel Committee. This process is initiated by the candidate who will undergo the major personnel action and/or the candidate in consultation with the newly elected Personnel Committee. The subcommittee is advisory in nature and does not vote on Personnel Committee matters. The subcommittee would confine its review to materials in the file only rather than bringing in additional information (as does the Personnel Committee itself).

e. Unless multiple simultaneous faculty leaves or other circumstances preclude this, any individual faculty member’s term on the Personnel Committee will be limited to two consecutive years.

3. **Representation:** Areas of interest exist within and between members of the faculty, such as those that correspond to the 5 subject areas of the undergraduate curriculum (Interpersonal Communication and Culture; Rhetoric and Performance Studies; Film Studies; Media, Technology and Society; and Media and Popular Culture Studies). The Chair will consider representation across these areas and groups of interest whenever possible in appointing departmental committees. This does not pertain to Personnel Committee since that committee is elected by the faculty and not appointed by the Chair;

4. An **Executive Committee**, composed of the Chair of the Department, the Associate Chair, the Undergraduate Program Director, the Graduate Program Director, the Chief Undergraduate Advisor, the Chair of the Personnel Committee, and the Office Manager will meet regularly to advise the Department Chair in matters of administration;

5. **Personnel Actions:** Annual faculty review, merit evaluations, reappointment review, mini-tenure review, tenure review, promotion review, periodic multi-year review, and salary anomaly review will be conducted by the elected Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will also determine departmental nominations for the CSBS Teaching Award, Conti Fellowship, College and University Outreach Awards, and others as they may arise. (Some awards are also open to self nominations.) The Department recommends that the Personnel Committee use the
collectively authored point scale and procedures for merit evaluation detailed in Appendix 1, "Faculty Merit Evaluation, Distribution and Notification." Salary anomaly recommendations will be determined by the Personnel Committee for the Department of Communication faculty at large and will be communicated to the Chair who submits to the Dean. All personnel actions will be reviewed and certified by vote of the Personnel Committee;

6. Admissions: Undergraduate and graduate students will be admitted to the Communication Department, not to tracks identified with any areas or groups of interest. The Graduate Admissions committee is encouraged to pursue a diverse group of graduate students that represents as well as possible the range of scholarly interests among the faculty;

7. Curriculum: The undergraduate area groups (Interpersonal Communication and Culture; Rhetoric and Performance Studies; Film Studies; Media, Technology and Society; and Media and Popular Culture Studies) may consult with the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Undergraduate Program Director, Associate Chair, and Chair of the Department with respect to undergraduate curriculum development, and with the Graduate Studies Committee, Graduate Program Director and Chair of the Department with respect to graduate curriculum development (new courses, emphases, teaching assignments etc.). Undergraduate and graduate students in Communication will meet their respective set of requirements, agreed to by the faculty through the Graduate Studies and Undergraduate Studies Committees and certified through a vote of all Communication faculty;

8. Instruction: Communication faculty will rotate, expertise permitting, through required undergraduate and graduate course instruction. In general, faculty members should expect to teach graduate classes no more frequently than once every three semesters;

9. Service Obligations: Communication faculty will rotate through major service obligations including principal committees, Graduate Program Director and Undergraduate Program Director. In making such appointments the Chair may consult with the Personnel Committee regarding both the equitable division of labor and respectful representation of areas. The present practice is to offer the Undergraduate Program Director, Graduate Program Director, and Associate Chair 1 course release per semester to perform these major administrative roles. The Graduate Program Director is asked to coordinate the 1-credit Instructional and Professional Development Program as part of her/his assignment;

10. Hiring: Any faculty member will have the opportunity to make a hiring case for a new tenure-stream colleague in every hiring cycle, based on existing departmental strengths as well as compelling needs. If a general hiring solicitation is made from the Dean, the Chair will draft a hiring plan with input from the faculty. If the Dean requires the Department Chair to rank, select or prioritize cases for hiring, the Chair will provide a priority rationale and discuss the recommendation with the faculty. Search committees will be assembled by the Chair with the goal of ensuring that the necessary expertise exists on the committee as well as attending to committee diversity. Prior to undertaking a search, the Chair will consult with the Personnel Committee regarding the composition of search committees;

For tenure-track searches, all Department of Communication faculty will meet for deliberative
discussion as early as possible after the last candidate’s departure. This will be followed by the search committee’s own deliberation (which will consider the larger deliberation discussion and written feedback from the faculty at large) and announcement of the proposed hire. Within 24 hours of that announcement a ratification recommendation will be conducted by email among all Department of Communication faculty. The final hiring recommendation to the Dean will come from the respective search committee through the Chair, with the faculty ratification recommendation reported. In keeping with Trustees’ procedures, new faculty appointments with tenure must additionally be ratified by the Personnel Committee, following tenure review.

11. Meetings: The Department of Communication faculty will meet at least three times per semester for the purpose of conducting departmental business. At such meetings a voting quorum will be constituted by two thirds of the standing members of the full-time Department faculty. Where a quorum cannot be established, a full-faculty vote will be conducted by email. In some instances, an item may be submitted to a full faculty e-mail vote even if a quorum is present, for items that faculty judge to have wide significance and consequence;

12. Annual budget report: At the final faculty meeting each Spring, the Chair will report broadly on the departmental budget for the year to come, including discretionary account balances, anticipated programmatic revenues and expenditures, significant changes (if any) in TA and part-time instructional resources, fund-raising campaigns, expected consequences of University and College budget cuts or new revenues, etc.

13. Governance amendments: Amendments to any clause within this memorandum of governance can be introduced by any faculty member by requesting that the Chair add an agenda item to an upcoming faculty meeting. All faculty members must be informed of the proposed amendment prior to the meeting in which the amendment will be discussed and/or subject to vote. A change to the memorandum of governance will require a two-thirds or greater vote among the full faculty (not just those present at the faculty meeting in which the amendment discussion occurs). Any change to governance that is passed can be deferred for a maximum of one year by a unanimous vote of the faculty otherwise it is effective immediately.

14. Conflict with contract clause: If the articles in this Governance Document were to conflict in any way with the parameters of the MSP contract, the MSP contract would prevail as a governing authority.

Article 4 amended May 2, 2012
Article 13 amended, January 30, 2013
Article 15 added May 2, 2012
Article 16 amended January 30, 2013
All articles except 1 and 12 amended November 25, 2013
Article 14 added November 25, 2013
Appendix 1: Faculty Merit Evaluation, Distribution and Notification

What is merit?

The Red Book (Section 5.2) states that faculty members must meet the following basic requirements:

a) Performance of assigned teaching duties and other instructional activities including counseling and appropriate evaluation of student work;

b) Scholarly, creative and professional activity adequate, as a minimum, for continuing updating of course content and other instructional and professional activities so as to reflect current professional duties in the faculty member's field;

c) Participation in the operation and governance of the department, college or school, campus or University to the extent normally expected of all faculty members;

d) Participation in extension work, continuing education, and other outreach service when such service is usually expected of all faculty members in the unit in which the faculty member holds an appointment.

Merit scoring for Tenured and Tenure-track Faculty

The following guidelines are for scoring faculty performances relative to Red Book expectations. They do not define the comparative point value of potential items in a faculty member’s Annual Faculty Review (AFR) (e.g. the value of a peer-reviewed article appearing in Journal A or Journal B, or the value of high enrollment/low contact vs. low enrollment/high contact undergraduate teaching). Content judgments are left to elected members of the Personnel Committee from year to year.

The Personnel Committee’s responses to Annual Faculty Review documents (i.e. the paragraph from the Committee that will appear on each faculty member’s review) refer as concretely as possible to strengths, weaknesses (if any) and, especially for untenured, tenure-track faculty, recommendations toward reappointment, tenure and promotion;

Articles, book chapters and creative work will be awarded greatest merit in the year of publication, although submission is meritorious and work-in-progress should be reported on the AFR;

In the case of books and similarly long-term research and creative projects, merit may be awarded in multiple years, e.g. when a contract is issued, a manuscript accepted, the book published, and even in later years when re-
views appear;

At their discretion, faculty members may wish to provide the Personnel Committee with published articles, book chapters, and books reported in the AFR. Such materials will be kept in the department archives and may be displayed in collections of faculty work.

**Contract parameters:** All subsequent items under “Merit Scoring” are conditioned by current contract parameters. Thus, the proviso “Current contract permitting” is implied in each item.

**Pools 2&3 recommendations to the Dean:** To date, contract merit monies are divided between “Pool 1” distributed by the Personnel Committee, and “Pools 2 and 3” distributed by the Dean of the College. The Dean of the College typically seeks the Personnel Committee and the Chair’s input on Pools 2 and 3. Pools 2 and 3 differ only in how the pools are formed, with Pool 2 allocated by FTEs in the Department and Pool 3 by FTEs in the College. Consistent with University regulation, any Chair’s recommendations to the Dean of Pools 2&3 monies must consider recommendations (for overall merit in research, teaching and service, and for distinction in each category) from the Personnel Committee.

**Pool 1**

**Merit**

**Scoring for Tenure System Faculty:** For a faculty member’s performance to be deemed "meritorious," it must exceed the minimum standards as outlined by the Red Book and reported on the Annual Faculty Review. For equitable evaluation, the Personnel Committee will score faculty on a scale from 0-3 in each of the primary categories of Research/Creative Activity, Teaching, and Service/Outreach, for a potential total score from 0 to 9. For each category, we propose the following point scheme:

- 0  Fails to meet basic requirements
- 1  Meets basic requirements
- 2  Exceeds basic requirements: strong performance
- 3  Exceeds basic requirements: exceptional performance

**Teaching evaluations:** To be considered for merit in teaching, instructors at all faculty ranks must conduct and submit teaching evaluations for all courses.

**Negative scores:** No negative merit scores will be considered.

**Distinction:** A faculty member may be eligible for one additional point to recognize distinction during the year evaluated, or for an unusual accomplishment, for a possible maximum score of 10. Distinctive accomplishments may include, for example, winning a teaching, research or outreach award, publishing a book, receiving a large grant, leadership in the field, or making a distinctive service contribution.
Annual faculty review for years including sabbatical: Merit evaluation for the period in which a faculty member is on sabbatical leave will be conducted as follows: The Personnel Committee will evaluate that faculty member (on the 0-3 point scale) only in the category or categories (teaching, research/creative activity, service/outreach) relevant to the approved sabbatical proposal and based on the sabbatical report. If the sabbatical was relevant to fewer than all three categories, the Personnel Committee will give an overall numerical evaluation that is the average of their assessment(s) on the relevant category/ies. That average score should then be adjusted, if necessary, to make it comparable to summative scores over all three categories.

Merit disbursement for faculty no longer in the bargaining unit: In the event that a faculty member for whom a merit percentage has been calculated (per MSP guidelines) is no longer employed in the unit when merit pay is disbursed, her/his merit allocation will be returned to the pool and merit distributions to all others in the unit will be recalibrated accordingly. The exception is retired faculty, whose merit increases for periods of service prior to retirement will respond to current contract parameters.

Merit Scoring for Contract Faculty

According to current MSP contract guidelines, all faculty, including Contract faculty (i.e., non-tenure system faculty) must complete the AFR and should be considered for merit. Furthermore, the salaries of contract faculty are included in the calculation of the merit pool, a further justification for their consideration for merit. However, since many contract faculty are not full-time employees, for those individuals, the Personnel Committee will pro-rate merit scores based on the terms of their contracts (1/4 time, ½ time, or ¾ time status). The goal is to recognize all meritorious contributions to the department as well as to avoid the expectation that contract faculty work beyond the limits of their contract (i.e., faculty hired to teach should not be expected at merit time to have also performed departmental service). Therefore:

In years where the MSP contract includes contract faculty in Merit Pool calculations:

Merit for contract faculty will be based on the area(s) in which the individual was hired to contribute (e.g., just teaching, not research or service);

Within each area, the individual will be judged for merit on the same 0 to 3 basis as tenure-system faculty members;

If the individual has been hired for just one of the three areas, the Personnel Committee will multiply the merit score for that area by 3 in order to allow for full merit consideration for the individual within the single area (e.g., a merit score of 2/3 for teaching would be multiplied by 3 for a total score of 6);

If the individual is a full-time employee, no additional calculations are necessary;
If the individual is not a full-time employee, the merit score will be pro-rated based on their quarter, half, or three-quarter time appointment (e.g., a merit score of 6 would be prorated by .5 for an individual at half-time status for a final merit score of 3).

In the event that the contract faculty member for whom a merit percentage has been calculated (per MSP guidelines) is no longer employed in the unit when merit pay is disbursed, her/his merit allocation will be returned to the pool and merit distributions to all others in the unit will be recalibrated accordingly.

**Personnel Committee Procedures for Determining Merit Scores**

Each member of the Personnel Committee will review each faculty member’s AFR and award separate scores from 0-3 for teaching, research and service (or as noted above for contract faculty, in the areas of their assigned responsibility). For efficiency, each committee member’s completed array of scores (for all colleagues except members of the Committee themselves) will be sent to the Committee Chair to be compiled in spreadsheet form (not summarized). The spreadsheet, representing draft scores in teaching, research and service for all colleagues, will be distributed to all committee members at the first meeting convened to determine merit scores. At that meeting (and additional ones, if necessary), members will review the spreadsheet together and will return to individual AFRs if and as needed, leading with discussion of major discrepancies among members’ proposed scores. Once discrepancies are resolved, the average score in teaching, research and service for each faculty member will be calculated and their sum (plus a point for distinction, if any) recorded as their raw merit score. Then, their score will be expressed as a percentage of all merit points awarded to all faculty. For example, if a total of 160 points are awarded to Communication faculty and Professor Jones receives a personal total of 9 points, her percentage is 5.6 (9/160).

Merit calculations for members of the Personnel Committee will follow the same guidelines, but will not be included in the spreadsheet and will be discussed by the remaining members of the Personnel Committee for each committee member in their absence.

**Reporting Merit to Faculty**

Colleagues need to be informed of the outcome of annual merit review overseen by the Personnel Committee, though the rank order of merit awards need not be reported. Nor is it recommended (by the Dean’s office) that departments translate merit scores into dollar amounts unless we know the actual contract parameters for merit. If, then, we are filing merit scores ("mythical merit") to be figured into actual awards at a later date—when merit parameters are contracted and merit money is available—we need alternate reporting standards.

Therefore:

Individual merit outcomes will be communicated by the Chair of the Personnel Committee in confidential paper memos to faculty;
Merit scores will be acknowledged as a percentage of overall merit points awarded to all faculty in the peer group (e.g. Communication faculty) in a given merit year;

Pending contract parameters (and the inclusion of contract faculty), a faculty member’s memo will acknowledge that their score was weighted by full-time or part-time status;

The potential dollar value of merit awards will be illustrated in relation to current or (if unavailable) most recent contract parameters. For example, if the most recent contracted Pool 1 monies for Communication faculty were $16,000 (but actual parameters for the current year are unavailable), for illustrative purposes only Professor Jones’ 5.6% (from the example above) would have a dollar value of $896.

In years where there is no contract provision for merit, memos will acknowledge that scores will be filed and annual scores averaged as soon as merit funds are restored.

Preventing Pools 2 and 3 Recommendations

In preparation for delivering a memo to the Dean recommending Pools 2 and 3 merit awards, members of the Personnel Committee will consider exceptional overall performance (in teaching, research and service) and/or exceptional performance in any single category. Pools 2 and 3 Merit Recommendations should be made, first, for Outstanding Years in Research, Teaching and Service. Next, recommendations should be made for separate awards in Research (e.g. book publication and grant activity), Teaching (e.g. course development and innovation) and Service (e.g. for exceptional service in a role beyond what is typically expected of a faculty colleague).
For each person recommended for overall recognition the memo should include a brief narrative (~150 words) to justify the recommendation.

Personnel Committee Autonomy in Defining Terms for Merit Evaluation and Scoring

In conjunction with the merit scoring mechanisms agreed to above and in respect of University rules guarding the autonomy of the elected Personnel Committee, each elected Committee reserves the opportunity to propose to the faculty at large new and amended governance articles related to merit scoring and reporting. Such proposals will be circulated and reviewed in time for voting at the last faculty meeting of a given academic year.
Appendix 2: Policy on Faculty Absence from Class Due to Academic Travel

Faculty should make every effort not to cancel classes where they have control of their travel. This is especially important for graduate seminars, which typically meet once a week.

If a faculty member must be absent for a single class, several options are possible:

1. Faculty can arrange for a guest instructor (preferably recruited from among departmental colleagues);
2. Faculty can re-schedule the class with consent of the students (this would make most sense in graduate seminars);
3. Faculty can propose alternate assignments to make use of course time.

In each case, faculty should note adjustments on the syllabus (if they are known in advance) or otherwise inform students in writing (on paper or online) about the change, and should let the Chair and department staff know in advance of both their absence and their coverage arrangements.

If faculty expect to miss more than 1 session, or if they anticipate frequent travel (more than 1 trip requiring the cancellation of 1 or more classes), they need to consult the Chair well in advance. In rare instances, they may be asked to contribute to paid coverage, where their travel is related to grant- or internally-funded projects (e.g. through PMYR proposals);

Faculty may use assigned TAs or RAs to cover sessions in their absence only if TAs/RAs are qualified, agreeable, and prepared in advance. (New TAs, for example, probably aren’t prepared to lecture to a class of 300 undergraduates.)

Faculty may not plan vacation time that affects their campus or on-line course schedule or other academic commitments during the semester.

Faculty members whose academic travel schedules cannot accommodate the guidelines above may want to consider buying themselves out of courses, or, in rare instances (and at the Chair’s discretion), reconfiguring their course assignments to accommodate travel (e.g. changing a 1-1 load to 2-0 to free up a given semester).

Approved, 3/15/2010