

**Bylaws of the Department of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies**  
**Revised and approved, April, 2019**

We seek to implement bylaws that support the fullest and most democratic participation possible of all members of the department and create a culture of open discussion and transparent decision making.

**1. Department name & general provisions:**

In accordance with Article 12 of the UMass-MSP Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA), these Bylaws have been adopted by consensus of the faculty of the Department of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies (the “Department”) in the College of Humanities and Fine Arts (the “College”) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst (the “University” or “UMass”). Federal and state laws, UMass Trustee policies (including, but not limited to, T76-081, the Academic Personnel Policy, aka the “Red Book”), the CBA, and other established university policies will prevail in instances of conflict with these Bylaws.

**2. Membership**

The department of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies (WGSS) consists of our faculty, staff, and students and is bound by connections to our Advisory Board and the Five College Women’s Studies Research Center.

Membership:

- A. Core Faculty. Those tenure track, tenured, or non-tenure track continuing faculty in the Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Department, and the chair of WGSS.
- B. Full-time staff in the department.
- C. Adjunct and Affiliate Faculty. For the purposes of the Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Department, “Affiliate” faculty members are those who are listed as Affiliates of WGSS, meaning they have met the criteria of the category through their teaching, research, and/or service. An “Adjunct” is a temporary faculty member in the Department, appointed typically for 3 years. Adjuncts’ curriculum vitae are reviewed by the Faculty on a triennial basis in order that Affiliates may continue to demonstrate their commitment to the department, based on their research record and active involvement in one or more of the following WGSS activities: participation in Advisory Board, departmental committees, and/or cross-listed courses. Also included among Affiliates is any Central Reference librarian assigned responsibility for Women’s Gender, Sexuality Studies.

- D. Lecturers and Visiting Scholars. Full time visiting lecturers and scholars may or may not attend Advisory Board or regular meetings, through mutual agreement.
- E. Students. Undergraduates majoring or minoring in WGSS; Graduate Students pursuing the Advanced Feminist Studies Certificate.
- F. Faculty who are MSP unit members on paid leave (including, but not limited to, parental leave, sabbatical leave, and sick leave) maintain their rights but not their responsibility during the leave to participate in the governance of the Department with the exception of sick leave which would be prescribed by the parameters of that approved leave. In the case of all paid leaves, decisions that directly impact an individual's area of responsibility shall not be made in the absence of that faculty member.

### **3. Committees**

#### General Statement

Bearing in mind that this is a small department with many committee responsibilities that need coverage, departmental committee work will be shared equitably and be determined in an open, democratic process at department meetings the semester prior to when the work will begin.

#### Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is a crucial body of faculty whose expertise and campus-wide leadership strengthens the department. The department will regularly utilize their expertise through feedback on proposals, involvement in events and programming, and participation in the life of the department.

A list of possible members will be suggested by the faculty and other Advisory Board members and will be invited by the chair. The Advisory Board will meet at least once every semester, preferably towards the beginning of the year in the Fall and the end of the year in the Spring, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. In addition to these meetings, Advisory Board members will be invited to give input and participate in department events and programs according to their areas of expertise and interests.

#### Department Personnel Committee

##### Membership

All core MSP faculty members of the department are members of the DPC. At the end of the spring of each year in a department meeting, chair and subcommittees are elected to do the work of the department in the upcoming academic year. The subcommittees may be supplemented by appropriate affiliate and adjunct faculty as long as they are MSP members. Subcommittees should preferably consist of an odd number of members. For tenure and promotion cases, the subcommittee will be made up of everyone of rank. The vote will be made of that group, and they will have access to all materials. Subcommittee chairs will have authority to write letters to the department Chair and other University entities as needed regarding the cases each individual subcommittee is tasked to address.

## Responsibilities or Areas of Authority include

1. Merits, Promotion, tenure (by vote of all members)
2. AFRs
3. Recommendations and evaluations to Department Chair for special faculty awards.
4. Other personnel issues as appropriate.

Procedure: Subcommittees prepare reports and bring them to the full DPC for a vote and make recommendations to the chair. For tenure and promotion, the subcommittee will be constituted of all faculty members at rank.

## Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Membership

- A. Scheduling officer for the Program
- B. Chair of the committee must be core faculty
- C. One or more other core faculty
- D. One associated or adjunct faculty
- E. Chief Undergraduate Majors Advisor
- F. Undergraduate student
- G. Responsibilities or Areas of Authority include
  1. Establishing criteria for cross-listing of courses and granting final approval of such courses
  2. Establishing a list of courses to be taught each academic year drawing on a list of preferences indicated by soliciting from individual faculty members, if possible, then Undergraduate Committee finalizes the list.
  3. Establishing criteria for core/component courses
  4. Conducting periodic reviews of requirements for the Major and Minor, and procedures for admissions, recruitment and advising
  5. Responding to student petitions for exceptions to the major and minor requirements
  6. Developing proposals for any policy changes, to be brought to the faculty meeting
  7. Approving new courses through the course approval system

## Graduate Committee Membership

- A. Director of Graduate Studies: The Director of Graduate Studies shall be appointed by the Chair of the Program and will have a 2-3 year term. This appointment will vary based on availability.
- B. Associate Graduate Program Director
- C. One to three associated faculty
- D. It could also include one additional core faculty member, based on availability, though this is not a requirement.
- E. One to two graduate students (who do not participate in the admissions process, appeals by other students, or other matters related to their peers).

### Responsibilities and Areas of Authority

1. Provide input on the curriculum of the Graduate Certificate in Advanced Feminist Studies
2. Give advice regarding overall administration of Graduate Certificate
3. Serves as liaisons as appropriate with departments and University administrative entities
4. Advise regarding procedures and criteria for admission, evaluate applications, and give or withhold permission to count courses previously taken as meeting core requirements; respond to petitions by graduate students for exceptions to requirements in a timely manner
5. As necessary, develops policy proposals and brings them to the faculty meetings

### Hiring Committee

The hiring committee will be comprised of the chair, core faculty and appropriate staff as needed to review applications for the following:

- TAs/TOS/RAs, etc.
- Visiting, adjuncts, instructors,
- Fellows
- Ad hoc searches

Hiring criteria will be determined by the committee based on the position and needs of the Department.

### Programming Committee

The programming committee will include at least two core faculty members. The committee will make decisions about and take responsibility for curating and delegating organization and funding of department-sponsored events for the year.

### Membership in External Committees

One core faculty member each year will serve as a representative on:

- 1) faculty senate
- 2) Five College Women's Studies Research Center Steering Committee.
- 3) Core faculty members will also serve on university committees as needed.

### **4. Department Meetings**

Following our commitment to democratic governance, we will strive to have discussions and make decisions in department meetings, with agenda items clearly determined in advance, so as to have decision making processes clearly documented.

Frequency - There will be 1-2 meetings a month (one regular meeting and one extra meeting when there are pre-designated collective tasks to be completed. Hereafter referred to as "regular" and "extra" meetings).

### Quorum

50% FTE currently in residence/not on leave. Reschedule meetings if quorum cannot attend.

Consensus process will operate to bring the group to a vote. Blocking concerns should be raised during this process (including any ethical questions that require discussion). Upon agreement to vote, a majority vote will determine actions.

Sufficiency for action: no blocking concerns; all reservations have been discussed and sufficiently resolved.

Advance notice of meetings: All regular faculty meetings will be scheduled before the first semester begins. Extra meetings will be scheduled at or before the previous regular meeting (i.e. 2 weeks in advance).

Agenda: A rotating facilitator should send out a draft agenda with request for additional items at least one week in advance of meeting (facilitation should be assigned each meeting for the following meeting)

Minutes and record keeping

In the last five minutes of the meeting action plans, decisions made, and matters to follow-up on in future meetings will be recorded by facilitator and sent to the Department. This is not meant to be exhaustive minutes or otherwise labor-intensive, but rather the record agreements, commitments, votes, and action plans.

Expectations

All faculty will attend regular faculty meetings. FT faculty will attend Advisory Board meetings. Individual faculty may request additional Department meetings. These additional meetings must be requested at or before a regular meeting at least 2 weeks in advance (see advance notice of meetings)

## **5. Search Procedures**

Searches will aim for the most diverse, qualified pool possible, with extensive outreach and recruitment toward this end. Searches will abide by university policies in using the information disclosed in the materials. In particular, they will adhere to the university's guidelines on impartiality/objectivity in the university's nondiscrimination policy. Except for applicants' CVs and cover letters, confidential materials should not be made available to students.

Composition of the Search Committee

Membership: Ordinarily it should have at least 5 members, including two Core faculty who are past their first year of service, one or more Associated or Adjunct faculty and one or two students (If two students, preferably one undergraduate and one graduate). The committee will elect its own chair.

The Role of the Search Committee.

Search Committees will organize and administer searches, secure and review materials from candidates, conduct initial interviews, and recommend a group of finalists to the Faculty (a long short list). Before that meeting, materials from all the candidates—including confidential materials—will be made available to all members of the core faculty in addition to the search committee.

The search committee will finalize the short list with inputs from the core faculty.

The search committee will organize on-campus visits, including a talk, meetings with the entire faculty, the search committee, and other relevant groups, and a teaching evaluation opportunity, typically a guest lecture in a class.

#### Decision-making process after campus interviews

Following the completion of all campus interviews, the search committee should attend a meeting of the department faculty to present (orally or in writing) the committee's assessment of the candidates to the department faculty and to receive the assessments of the faculty, students, and other stakeholders. (For example, the search committee should actively solicit the assessments from other programs or interdisciplinary groups with which the new position will be affiliated, and relevant members of the Advisory Board.) At that meeting, the committee should hear and capture the sense of the faculty and observe the faculty vote. The committee's members should debate and vote alongside the faculty (all faculty with multi-year appointments). Faculty members who cannot be physically present to participate in the discussion may submit, in writing to the chair, arguments for considering some candidates "unacceptable."

Based on that meeting and other assessments received, the committee should then prepare a written report that represents the faculty at large rather than the committee's independent point of view. The report should:

- summarize the departmental discussion (including the diversity of views expressed);
- describe the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate
- differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable candidates, and produce a rank ordering of acceptable candidates
- report the faculty vote; and
- communicate the reasons for the rank order

The committee provides this report to the department head/chair.

The Role of the Department Chair. The chair also writes a report to convey the sense of the faculty, the candidate, and the field.

#### The Roles of Graduate Students.

All graduate students should be invited to job talks and their representatives should take responsibility for canvassing graduate student opinion about the candidates who visit the campus. Graduate student representatives should provide to the search committee a (written or oral) report evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each short-listed candidate; that report should reflect their community's discussion, not just the views of those on the search committee or those composing the report.

Confidential materials—all members of the search committee, with the exception of students (See 5), and all core faculty members should be able to see them.

## 6. Reappointments, Tenure and Promotion

All reappointments, tenure and promotion processes will follow the Red Book and the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

### First Year Reappointment

A. Reappointment after the first year is carried out by the chair in consultation with the DPC.

### 4.2 Review

4.2 reviews are internal and typically done in the faculty member's third year. Any delays approved by the dean and provost will be treated without prejudice. As per the schedule determined by the Provost's office, the candidate will submit their cv, personal statement, any published materials and reviews of those published works; appropriate review of teaching effectiveness, including but not limited to student evaluations; evaluations of extra-departmental contributions, including letters from chairs, directors, deans, or provosts of any other units from which the candidate derives part of their FTE, plus any others they wish to have requested; annual faculty reviews, and any other materials he or she believes will be essential to an adequate consideration of the case.

- A. A subcommittee of the DPC appointed for this purpose, together with an affiliate member agreeable to the candidate in the candidate's field will prepare a letter summarizing the faculty member's accomplishments and make a recommendation for or against reappointment, acting in accordance with the standards set out below. All members of the entire DPC will discuss the case, and those who are at rank will vote on the case and record that vote. They will send their letter to the candidate, who will have 10 days to respond to the letter. Then the entire case, including the DPC letter and the candidate's response will be submitted to the Department Chair.
- B. In exercising its primary responsibility of peer review, the faculty has the obligation to present a clear, complete and convincing case for the recommendation so as to assure the faculty member of a complete presentation of his or her qualifications and achievements, and so as to provide the basis both for full reviews of the recommendation, and for the decision.
- C. Personnel recommendations and decisions shall be made only after a review of all of the qualifications and all the contributions of the individual in the areas of teaching; of research; creative or professional activity; and of service. For reappointment, the candidate must show evidence of continuing achievement and growth since initial appointment and reasonable assurance of continuing professional development consistent with the ability to reach the level for eventual promotion to the next higher rank.
- D. The DPC will also prepare a statement indicating how the reappointment or non-reappointment of the candidate accords with the department's long-term goals, including affirmative action goals.
- E. The department chair will then likewise prepare a letter and make a recommendation for or against reappointment, again allowing 10 days for the candidate to respond to that evaluation and recommendation.

## Tenure and Promotion

- A. The department chair initiates the process of compiling the file by notifying the faculty member in April of the prior year about the upcoming TDY. If the department chair is the one being evaluated, the chair of the DPC, in consultation with the dean, will appoint an external person (typically another department chair) to serve in their stead.
- B. Compiling the file follows the same procedure as above, but with the addition of letters by external evaluators. Ideal evaluators will be those at peer institutions, at or above the rank to which the candidate seeks to be promoted, who are at arm's length from that candidate--i.e, those that have not collaborated with the candidate or been a direct mentor (e.g., a dissertation director). Solicitation of external letters will begin as early as possible, ideally before April 15.
- C. For appointments at, or promotions to, the ranks of Associate Professor and Professor and for tenure recommendations, the Department Chair shall obtain outside letters of reference from a list of scholars and professionals which includes, but is not limited to, those suggested by the faculty member.
- D. The Chair of the department in consultation with the DPC will solicit a total of 5- 10 external letters, half of which shall be suggested by the candidate, and at least 5 of which will not be "close" reviewers. The number of letters will depend on the size of the sub-field of the candidate's expertise, especially since some candidate's sub fields may be very small.
- E. The department chair, in consultation with the faculty member being evaluated, will solicit letters from undergraduate and graduate students that speak to teaching effectiveness.
- F. The procedures for the formation of a subcommittee of the DPC, the preparation of a clear, complete, and convincing case will be the same as set out above for reappointment. Consideration of a candidate for tenure shall be based on the following:
  - a) Convincing evidence of excellence in at least two, and strength in the third, of the areas of teaching; of research; creative or professional activity; and of service, such as to demonstrate the possession of qualities appropriate to a member of the faculty occupying a permanent position.
  - b) Reasonable assurance of continuing development and achievement leading to further contributions to the university.
- G. The evaluation of productivity, impact and quality of scholarship will include interdisciplinarity, intersectionality and impact in the field, and may include public engagement, creative works, policy papers, and multi-media formats. The evaluation of teaching effectiveness may include teaching evaluations, class visits, pedagogical innovations, evidence of excellence in graduate student mentoring, and writing on teaching and pedagogy. The evaluation of service may include service to the department, college, university, five college efforts, and includes service in venues in the community, as well as nationally and internationally. Service to the profession includes reviewing for journals and presses, as well as consulting for non-profits, policy makers, and student groups, and serving on the committees of professional associations or in other academic



leadership positions.

The Chair of the department will solicit external reviewers consistent with current university personnel policies (the Red Book) and current collective bargaining agreements (the MSP Contract) in consultation with the DPC, and will submit the final list to the appropriate DPC subcommittee to be endorsed by core faculty at rank.

- H. The process for preparation and response to evaluations by the DPC and Chair will be the same as above under reappointment.

Promotion to Full Professor:

K. The process for promotion to full professor will be the same as above for tenure. For promotion to Professor, the faculty member must have a record of achievement sufficient to have gained substantial recognition on and off campus from scholars or professionals in their field; and must show significant potential for continuing professional achievement.

## **7. Review of the Department Chair/Head**

If the Chair/Head wishes to be reappointed to another term in that position, the Department's Faculty, led by the DPC, will conduct a review of the Chair/Head during the fall semester of the final year of her/his appointment. The DPC will follow the procedures prescribed by Senate Document #82-021, beginning the process no later than October 15 during the final year of the Chair/Head's appointment.

- 7.1 Self-Evaluation. As an initial step, the Chair/Head will prepare a written self-evaluation of her/his administrative achievements during the current appointment and will provide that document to the Faculty no later than October 15th.
- 7.2 Survey. The DPC will prepare and distribute four confidential surveys no later than November 1st: (1) one to departmental staff; (2) one to all undergraduate majors and all graduate students; (3) one to Heads/Chairs of Departments within the College and to those outside of the Department who have interacted with the Head; and (4) one to the Department's Faculty. Each survey will include specific questions regarding overall performance, both administrative, interpersonal, and management of departmental interactions. These surveys will provide space for extended comments. Raw data and summaries of responses to these surveys will be reviewed by the DPC, will be redacted to protect the identities of all respondents, and will be included with the DPC's report to the dean but will not be available to faculty, staff, or students.
- 7.3 Meetings with Constituencies. The DPC will offer to meet with employee and student groups to receive confidential assessments of the Chair/Head's performance. Summaries of information gathered in such meetings will be included with the DPC's report to the dean but will not be available to faculty, staff, or students.

- 7.4 Meeting with the Chair/Head. After most data collection is complete, the DPC will invite the Chair/Head to meet to discuss the initial findings of the data collection process. The Chair/Head may decline to meet.
- 7.5 Draft Report. No later than December 1st, the DPC will complete and distribute to the Faculty a draft report (excluding raw or other data that could compromise the confidentiality of those contributing to this process), including a summary of findings, an assessment of areas of success and of needed improvement, and a non-binding recommendation regarding whether the Chair/Head should be reappointed. The report should assiduously limit its assessment to areas within the purview and control of the Chair/Head.
- 7.6 Concluding Meeting of the Faculty. Before the end of fall semester, the DPC will convene the Faculty to discuss the draft report and to receive recommendations for revision of the document.
- 7.7 Final Report. The DPC will finalize its report and will then submit it to the Dean, simultaneously providing a copy to the Chair/Head (excluding raw and other confidential data). The Dean may ask to meet with the DPC to discuss the report, but neither the DPC nor the Dean is obliged to meet.
- 7.8 Chair/Head's Response. The Chair/Head may prepare and submit to the Dean a written response to the final report.

## **8. Implementation of these bylaws**

By at least a two-thirds' majority vote of the Faculty, these bylaws are adopted and take effect on April 5, 2017. The terms of these bylaws supersede existing policies or practices of the Department to the extent that they address or conflict the matters addressed by such policies and practices. However, if ongoing processes would be unreasonably disrupted by implementation of these bylaws, individual provisions of these bylaws may be deferred until those processes are complete, provided that such deferral lasts no longer than one year beyond the effective date cited in this paragraph. Deferral of individual provisions will not result in deferral of other provisions.

## **9. Amendment of these bylaws**

By majority vote, the Faculty may elect an ad hoc committee to review and propose amendments to these bylaws. Adoption of any such amendments, including their dates of effectiveness, requires a two-thirds' vote of the Faculty.