

THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Faculty Council Constitution¹

I. The Mission of the School

The School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) responds to the world's greatest challenges with agenda-setting research on human societies, institutions, minds, arts, and cultures. With outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs and a world-renowned faculty, HASS is home to an interdisciplinary and highly creative research community. The academic mission of HASS is to conduct research and to offer degree programs that are rigorous, innovative, and responsive to contemporary problems and prospects; and to equip all Rensselaer students with the skills and outlooks needed to address complex social issues in their lives as innovators and citizens.²

II. Preamble

To accomplish these goals, it is essential to have shared governance and mutual understanding, based on a community of interest and joint effort. A university in which all of its members are aware of their interdependence, of the usefulness of communication among themselves, and of the force of joint action, will enjoy increased capacity to meet educational challenges.³

¹ Ratified by the tenured/tenure track faculty of the School of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences on 5/23/2014.

² HASS Mission Statement approved by the HASS FCCC Reps, Heads, Faculty, Dean and HASS Executive Council 2/4/2014

³ Adapted from the AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities <http://www.aaup.org/report/1966-statement-government-colleges-and-universities>
Introduction

III. The Role of the Faculty in the School⁴

The faculty has primary responsibility for the development and delivery of curriculum, teaching, topics and methods of instruction, research, and service. On these matters, the power of review lodged by the dean should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. The faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the dean. Practical constraints (time, resources, etc.) may set limits on the realization of faculty advice.

Faculty status is primarily a faculty responsibility; this area includes appointments, reappointments, decisions not to reappoint, promotions, the granting of tenure, and dismissal. Scholars in a particular field or activity have the chief competence for judging the work of their colleagues. The faculty should actively participate in the determination of policies and procedures governing salary increases.

Department heads should be selected either by departmental election or by appointment following consultation with members of the department and of related departments. Appointments should normally conform to a department faculty's judgment. The dean's decision should contradict department faculty preferences only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. The head should serve for a stated term with the option for reelection or reappointment by procedures that involve appropriate faculty consultation.

IV. Purpose of the Faculty Council and Curriculum Council

A. Safeguarding and enhancing the role of the faculty in the School requires a vehicle, a deliberative body: a Faculty Council. The Faculty Council (Council) represents the views of the faculty on issues affecting the common purposes of the School. The Council furthers the faculty's participation in academic governance by providing a forum for policy deliberations on matters of importance to the faculty, and by advising the dean and associate deans regarding faculty views on matters relating to the principal missions of the School. The Council distills and formulates issues of concern, brings issues before the

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general HASS faculty for discussion and votes, represents the faculty to the executive committee, and provides advice to the dean's office and heads. Given the level of work required of the Council chair, and ombudsperson, his or her service constitutes a full service load. Council meetings proceed in accordance with mutually agreed upon rules regarding discussion, resolutions, and voting on resolutions.

B. The Faculty Council also serves as the Curriculum Committee (Committee) for the School. The Committee oversees the development and revision of the HASS curriculum, and safeguards academic freedom and standards. The Committee oversees all curricular matters, including approval of specific proposals for the addition, change, or deletion in the Institute catalog of both undergraduate and graduate courses and programs. The Committee assesses courses proposed by other Schools as suitable to count toward the HASS core, and HASS core curriculum requirements. The Committee evaluates new program proposals, including minors, majors, dual majors with new curriculum, and courses cross-listed among Departments and Schools. The Committee ensures that curriculum development takes place within the rules and guidelines set forth by the Faculty Senate. The Council chair also serves as Committee chair. The associate dean joins Committee meetings under conditions described in Article VII.8-10 below.

V. Faculty Council Eligibility, Voting and Procedures

A. *Eligibility for Office and Voting*

- (1) Tenured and tenure track faculty who are not administrators (dean, associate deans, department heads) may hold positions on the Council.
- (2) One contingent faculty representative will be elected by the contingent faculty.
- (3) The Council consists of five departmental representatives (one from each department), one contingent faculty representative, and two at-large representatives (chair and ombudsperson).
- (4) The two at-large representatives are elected by a vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty (with the exception of the administrators).
- (5) Each department votes for its respective representative.

B. *Election Process*

- (1) The chair sets the deadline for nominations for open positions (typically late in Spring semester).
- (2) Nominations for open positions consist of individual submissions to the chair.
- (3) The chair distributes to and collects from each department a consolidated ballot (including candidates for departmental representative, chair and ombudsperson).
- (4) Election to all positions is by secret paper or email ballot submitted directly to the chair. Space exists on all ballots for write-in candidates. The recipient of the most votes wins the election.
- (5) The term of office is two years for all members. Terms of office begin on July 1.

C. *Role of Chair and Ombudsperson*

- (1) The chair and ombudsperson serve staggered terms.
- (2) In the first year, the ombudsperson serves as recording secretary for Council and Committee business. The ombudsperson also handles individual faculty grievances (guided by the Rensselaer Faculty Handbook and Rensselaer Employee Handbook as necessary) and brings them to the Council as appropriate. Other members of the Council may also bring grievances to the Council.
- (3) In the second year, the ombudsperson becomes the Council chair. The chair attends executive committee meetings, chairs council and committee meetings, generates initiatives, crafts resolutions, and conducts elections. If the chair cannot attend executive committee meetings, s/he may select an alternative representative from the Council or, failing that, the faculty at large.

VI. General Faculty Meetings

- (1) The chair, in consultation with the dean, calls general meetings of the faculty. The general faculty is defined as all faculty members (including non-tenure-line faculty, the dean, the associate deans, and department heads).
- (2) General faculty meetings take place at least once per semester. They are scheduled early enough in the semester

to permit votes on policy matters to be taken in a timely fashion.

- (3) General faculty meetings address issues forwarded by the Council and Committee. In consultation with the Council and the dean, the chair determines and distributes the general meeting agenda.
- (4) The Council may present issues and resolutions for discussion at general faculty meetings. The general faculty may decide by majority vote to reject, accept or amend the recommendations, or to return the recommendations to the Council for further discussion. See Article IX below for the special case of constitutional amendments.
- (5) General faculty meetings are conducted in accordance with some generally acceptable rules of order.

VII. Curriculum Committee Procedures

- (1) Individual faculty or groups of faculty develop course and/or program proposals and submit them to heads or program directors of the pertinent departments or programs.
- (2) All course and program proposals must be approved by at least a majority of the faculty in the relevant department(s) according to the procedures developed by the faculty of the respective department(s).
- (3) The department head submits course and program changes to the chair of the Committee.
- (4) The chair of the Committee provides an agenda for each meeting. Support materials for meetings devoted to curriculum review include proposed syllabi, catalog descriptions, and other information provided by the proposal originators.
- (5) Departments and individual faculty communicate any concerns about specific proposals either directly to the Committee chair or via the department's representative. The Committee attempts to mediate objections by meeting with the parties separately or at a Committee meeting. If the issue remains contested, it goes to the general faculty for a vote.
- (6) Approval of curriculum changes requires a majority vote of the Committee. Approved curriculum changes are transmitted to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee through the associate dean.
- (7) If a faculty member is adversely affected by the decision of a majority of his or her department faculty, s/he may submit a

course or program proposal directly to the Committee as part of an appeal process for cause.

- (8) The dean appoints the associate dean to serve ex-officio as a non-voting member of the Committee.
- (9) The associate dean serves as a liaison between the Committee and the dean's office, and is responsible for verifying the resource implications of new curricula.
- (10) The associate dean serves as the administrative HASS representative to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee.

VIII. Ad Hoc Committees

The Council may create ad hoc committees to study issues of concern, and to make recommendations. Ad hoc committees report to the Council.

IX. Amendments

This Constitution may be amended through the following procedure. Proposed amendments are submitted to the Council chair for placement on the agenda of a general faculty meeting, where they are discussed and debated. Ratification of amendments proceeds through an email ballot distributed by the Council chair. Ratification is successful when ballots in favor of the amendment(s) of two-thirds of the faculty who vote are returned to the Chair by the stated deadline.