

# UW Department of Geography By-Laws

## Governance

### I. Regulations

Department members are governed by five interdependent sets of regulations: 1. Federal and State laws and regulations, 2. UW policies and rules, 3. The Faculty Code, 4. College policies and rules, 5. Departmental bylaws. These departmental by-laws supplement the UW Faculty Code and College policies and rules. In case of conflict, the Faculty Code and College policies take precedence. Note that the Faculty Code delegates certain powers and duties to departments: [Section 23-43A, Subsection A](#), delegates certain academic matters, and [Section 23-43, Subsection B](#), delegates certain personnel matters. These by-laws address these powers and duties, as well as departmental governance.

### II. Voting

A. The voting members of the department are defined under Faculty Code [Section 21-32](#).

B. The department shall decide all matters of department policy and practice delegated to it by the faculty code. Voting typically happens at faculty meetings. The department uses a majority voting system.

C. If a faculty meeting cannot be scheduled, an electronic vote may be held, if: (a) a majority of the eligible voting faculty consent to an electronic vote, (b) the faculty are given 24-48 hours to review the motion and any related materials (i.e. proposed new or revised policy language).

D. If a faculty meeting cannot be scheduled and the faculty do not consent to electronic voting on the matter, it should be tabled until a faculty meeting can be scheduled.

E. The faculty may vote to delegate authority to the Executive Committee to act on the department's behalf in a specific matter or decision (unless College policy or the Faculty Code explicitly require a vote of the faculty).<sup>1</sup> Note: If the faculty have authorized the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the faculty in a specific matter, meetings related to this issue are subject to the Washington Open Public Meetings Act.

### III. Executive Committee

A. The Executive Committee consists of 2 elected members who serve a 1-year term. The term runs from the first day of Autumn Quarter classes in the election year until the first day of Autumn Quarter classes the following year.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, we could vote to delegate a hiring process or other personnel matter to the Executive Committee if the issue required action during summer.

B. All members of the voting faculty in Geography (including joint appointments) who have served at least one year in the department are eligible for election to the Executive Committee, except the Chair and affiliate and adjunct faculty. Faculty who served on the Executive Committee the previous year are excused from the ballot. For faculty with joint appointments, the chair should abide by the allocation of service responsibilities articulated in the colleague's joint appointment agreement, and must include the colleague on the ballot if they request to be included and are otherwise eligible. A colleague with 2 or more quarters of academic leave in a single year is not eligible. If a colleague with a single quarter of leave is elected, the colleague receiving the next most votes in the election will fill that seat during the leave quarter.

C. Meetings of the Executive Committee can be called by the chair or by any current member of the committee.

#### **IV. Election of the Executive Committee**

A. Committee members are elected annually, prior to the first day of Autumn Quarter classes.

B. Voting will be online and secret ballot, typically administered by a staff member. The colleagues who receive the top 2 vote totals are elected to the committee. In the event of a tie a runoff vote shall be conducted as soon as possible.

C. 50% or more of the eligible voting faculty must vote for the election to be considered valid.

#### **V. Functions of the Executive Committee**

A. The Executive Committee advises the Chair on strategic and fiscal planning for the department, policy development and revision, and other matters that fall outside the scope of the department standing committees. The executive committee also constitutes the committee for short-term faculty appointments in Geography. Members of the executive committee may propose agenda items for faculty meetings or retreats, on their own or on behalf of other faculty, and the chair is expected to include those items in the agenda for an upcoming meeting as soon as reasonably possible. The executive committee typically reviews proposed quarterly TA and part-time instructor appointments. The Chair may rely upon the executive committee for additional decisions and roles they deem important for sustaining the department's research, teaching and service missions.

B. If a faculty member disagrees with the interpretation or application of these by-laws in a specific decision or action, they should communicate this disagreement to the Executive Committee and/or the Chair, which will decide (by majority vote) how to proceed on the specific decision or action. In such a scenario, the Executive Committee and Chair should also consider whether revision of these by-laws is necessary (see Section VIII).

## VI. Standing Department Committees

A. **Graduate Program Committee:** Chaired by the Graduate Program Coordinator. Typically includes 1-2 additional faculty, and the Graduate Program Advisor (in a non-voting role).

B. **Undergraduate Program Committee:** Chaired by the Undergraduate Program Coordinator. Typically includes 1-2 additional faculty, and the Director of Advising Services (in a non-voting role).

C. **Colloquium Committee:** Typically includes 1 faculty member and 2-3 graduate students.

D. **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee:** Typically includes 1-2 faculty members, 1-2 graduate students, and 1 staff member.

E. **Technology Committee:** Typically includes 1-2 faculty members, the senior computing specialist, and 1 graduate student.

Unless otherwise noted in this document, faculty and staff participation in department committees is assigned by the chair, in consultation with faculty and staff on their preferences and workloads. Promotion, re-appointment and search committees for faculty and staff hiring are formed by the chair on an as-needed basis. When necessary, the chair may form other short-term ad-hoc committees. Where relevant, graduate student membership on department committees is determined by the chair, in consultation with the president(s) of the Geography Graduate Student Association.

## VII. Meetings of the Faculty

A. Regular meetings of the faculty are typically called by the chair. The chair and any member of the executive committee may call a special meeting of the faculty outside of the regular meeting schedule, provided all requirements of the [Washington Open Public Meetings Act](#) are met.

B. If the chair is absent, a member of the executive committee will preside over the meeting.

C. The agenda for the meeting must be distributed to the faculty at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

D. 50% or more of the eligible voting faculty must be present for a meeting to proceed.

E. If an otherwise eligible voting member is unable to attend a faculty meeting, they may submit an absentee vote in advance, if the motion being voted on is known prior to the meeting and if relevant materials informing the decision can be made available in advance.

F. Voting on faculty appointments, promotions, and other personnel matters shall be handled via secret ballot. Votes on adjunct and affiliate renewals may be conducted by show of hands.

G. Voting on continuing appointments and reappointments shall be conducted by secret ballot.

## VIII. Amendments and Additions to the Bylaws

- A. These bylaws should be reviewed at least once every 5 years.
- B. Amendments or additions to the bylaws may be proposed by the Executive Committee, or by any group of 3 or more department faculty.
- C. A meeting or vote to change the bylaws may only be convened if the proposed amendment or addition has been distributed to the faculty 48 hours in advance and if the meeting conforms to requirements of the Washington Open Public Meetings Act. If no meeting can be scheduled, an electronic vote may be taken, provided it follows the stipulation in Section II of this document.
- D. Proposed amendments and additions shall be decided by majority vote of the eligible faculty. In the event of tied vote, the proposed change should be revisited for discussion and re-vote at a future meeting.
- E. The dates of any amendments or additions should be recorded at the bottom of this document, with prior versions retained in the department's administrative records.

## **IX. Institutional Record**

- A. Policies and procedures adopted by the faculty are considered in effect absent a faculty vote to revise or eliminate a specific policy or procedure.
- B. Policies and procedures adopted by the faculty are available via the Department of Geography's Faculty & Staff Document Repository, or from the administrator upon request.

Approved by Geography Faculty vote: **25 February 2025 (original)**.

Approved by Divisional Dean: **24 July 2025 (original)**.

Reviewed and affirmed by Geography faculty vote: **[By Winter 2030, every 5 years thereafter]**