

UW Department of History By-Laws

Mission & History

The Department of History's mission is to further scholarly inquiry of the past, extending from ancient and medieval times to recent times, and across the globe. Many faculty engage in teaching and research that examines the history of religion, war, empire, colonialism, race, gender, class, sexuality, Indigeneity, and power. We also explore how non-human actors and material forces have shaped and, in turn, have been shaped by patterns of human experience.

We teach undergraduates and graduate students the skills needed to craft, critique, and revise narratives of the past. We also teach knowledge and skills essential to students' future success in the workplace and as citizens of the world. We take pride in the quality of our instruction and the impact of our research. For decades now, the department has won more Distinguished Teaching Awards than any other unit on campus. Faculty are leaders in their respective research fields and also make important contributions to public scholarship.

The University of Washington started offering bachelor's and master's degrees in History around 1900; the department conferred its first doctoral degree in 1921. The early curriculum focused on ancient Greece and Rome, and Western European and U.S. history. Over time, and especially after World War II, the size of the department grew. Faculty expertise also expanded to include East Asian, Russian and Eastern European, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Latin American and Caribbean, and African history, and more diverse, critical, and transnational perspectives within all of these fields.

Guiding Principles

The Department of History embraces the following principles that the College of Arts & Sciences has adopted:

- *Engage from a place of trust*
- *Recognize and celebrate our differences*
- *Promote the common good*
- *Pursue social justice*
- *Foster community*
- *Support risk, learn from failure, applaud success*
- *Seek joy in our work*
- *Remember why we are here*

Members of the department pride themselves on having fostered a community that honors these principles through its sense of collegiality and trust, adherence to practices of shared governance, foregrounding of values of listening and respect, and commitment to academic freedom. Faculty and staff in the department implement the College's guiding principles in ways that center questions of equity, justice, and inclusion, and seek to address the historical roots of structural inequalities. This commitment informs our scholarship, our contributions within the classroom, our service and administrative work within the department, our interactions with

different publics across the university and beyond, and our participation in history associations, organizations, and communities regionally, nationally, and internationally.

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 after faculty meetings using electronic ballots. The chair may call for an in-meeting vote provided quorum is present. A quorum is more than 50% of the voting members. For new faculty appointments and promotions – apart from adjunct and affiliate – and major policy changes or initiatives (as determined by the chair), discussion will take place over two meetings with voting following the second meeting. The department uses a majority voting system.

C. In extraordinary circumstances when a timely decision is necessary as determined by the chair and 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).¹ Note: If the faculty have authorized the Executive

¹ 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.

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 (formerly, Chair's Advisory Committee)

A. The Executive Committee consists of department chair, department associate chair, director of undergraduate studies, director of graduate studies, chair of the diversity committee, and three members elected by their corresponding ranks who serve a one-year term. The ranks consist of 1) tenured and teaching-track full professors; 2) tenured and teaching-track associate professors; and 3) tenure-track and teaching-track assistant professors. The term for these three elected representatives runs from October 15th in the election year until October 14th the following year.

B. All members of the voting faculty in History (including joint appointments) who have served at least one year in the department and are not on academic leave are eligible for election to the Executive Committee. Ideally, faculty who served on the Executive Committee as the elected representative for their rank 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. The department chair is chair of the Executive Committee. The chair may appoint a secretary.

D. Meetings of the Executive Committee can be called by the chair or by three other members of the committee.

IV. Election of the Executive Committee

A. See IIIA above.

B. Voting will be online and secret ballot, typically administered by a staff member. 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 of each rank 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. Department retention policy requires the Executive

Committee to approve the case before it can be taken to the full department meeting. 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. Committee appointments, standing and *ad hoc*, are decided by the chair. The chair may choose to discuss committee appointments with the Executive Committee.

VI. Standing Department Committees

A. **Graduate Studies Committee:** Chaired by the director of graduate studies. Typically includes 2 additional faculty, and the graduate program assistant (in a non-voting role).

B. **Graduate Admissions Committee:** Chaired by the director of graduate studies. Typically includes three to four faculty representing different fields and the graduate program assistant (in a non-voting role).

C. **Undergraduate Studies Committee:** Chaired by the director of undergraduate studies. Typically includes two additional faculty, and the director of academic services (in a non-voting role).

D. **Assistant Professors & Lecturers Review Committee:** Typically three faculty of superior rank.

E. **Associate Professors Review Committee:** Typically three faculty of superior rank.

F. **Full Professors Review Committee:** Typically the chair with the assistance of 2 faculty of equal rank.

G. **Salary Committee:** Department chair, associate chair, and three full professors (one elected by assistant professors, one elected by associate professors, one elected by full professors).

H. **Diversity Committee:** Typically includes one to two faculty members, one to two graduate students, and one to two staff members.

I. **Digital History Steering Committee:** Committee chair invites participation by faculty, graduate students, and staff.

J. **History Colloquium:** Typically includes one faculty member and one graduate student.

K. **Graduate Liaison Committee:** Three graduate students elected by their colleagues

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.

VII. Meetings of the Faculty

A. The chair typically calls meetings of the faculty. If the chair has temporarily delegated authority to the associate chair, the associate chair may call meetings of the faculty. If the majority of the Executive Committee requests a department meeting, one will be held. Similarly, members of the voting faculty may call a meeting if at least eight faculty request it. Special

meetings of the faculty outside of the regular meeting schedule may be called, provided that all requirements of the Washington Open Public Meetings Act are met.

B. The associate chair will preside over the meeting if the Chair is absent. If neither the chair nor the associate chair is available to preside over the meeting, the Executive Committee will vote to select one of its members to do so.

C. The agenda for the meeting must be distributed to faculty by 5 pm on the day prior to the meeting.

D. A meeting of the faculty may proceed without a quorum, but a quorum of 50% or more of the eligible voting faculty must be present for department business to be discussed that will result in a vote during or following the meeting.

E. Voting typically happens by electronic ballot following the meeting. If a vote is to occur during the meeting, the chair must notify faculty when the agenda is distributed. If relevant materials informing the decision can be made available in advance of the meeting, faculty will then be allowed to vote absentee. Faculty wishing to vote absentee may do so prior to the meeting by submitting their vote via email to the person who will preside over the meeting, at least 30 minutes before the meeting's start.

F. Voting on job candidates, tenure and promotion, and other personnel matters will be handled by secret ballot. Recommendations for continuing appointments and reappointments shall also be handled by secret ballot.

G. In the case of votes taken by secret ballot, an absentee vote cannot preserve the secrecy of the absentee voter's ballot because the identity of the voter will be known to the person presiding over the meeting. However, the identity of the absentee voter will under no circumstances be disclosed to the rest of the faculty if the voting procedure is by secret ballot.

H. Proxy voting is not allowed.

I. Decision-making on tenure and promotion, continuing appointments and reappointments, and other personnel matters may never be delegated to the Executive Committee. Decision-making on other matters can be delegated to the Executive Committee at the chair's discretion, but only during periods outside of the nine-month academic year, or under extraordinary circumstances in which it is impossible for faculty to meet. Whenever possible, the chair, associate chair, or Executive Committee should endeavor to call a meeting of the faculty.

VIII. Amendments and Additions to the Bylaws

A. These bylaws should be reviewed at least once every five years.

B. In the interim, amendments or additions to the bylaws may be proposed by the Executive Committee, or by any group of three or more department faculty.

C. A proposal to change the bylaws requires discussion at two department meetings and will be decided by majority vote in accordance with the section IIB voting rule for major policy decisions.

D. 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 History's Faculty & Staff Document Repository, or from the Administrator or Assistant to the Chair upon request.

Approved by History Faculty vote: ***May 2025 (original)***.

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

Reviewed and affirmed by History faculty vote: ***[By Spring 2030, every five years thereafter]***