

# Bylaws of the Department of Linguistics

(April 2024)

## 1. Preamble

These bylaws provide a structure of governance for the Department of Linguistics (henceforth: “the Department”) at the University at Buffalo (henceforth: “UB”) in accordance with Article V, 5 of the Bylaws of the UB College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). These bylaws are designed to be sensitive to the fact that the Department is organized around a number of semi-autonomous programs, including the Linguistics Program and the language programs, some of which have their own directors and multiple faculty members. The faculty of this Department affirms its commitment to collegiality and mutual consultation as the most effective bases upon which to manage its affairs and maintain its academic excellence.

## 2. Membership

1. The voting members of the Department are all full-time tenure-line and Teaching faculty. All tenure-line faculty shall have unrestricted voting privileges; Teaching faculty shall have voting privileges that are restricted to issues deemed appropriate to their positions (e.g., matters pertaining to programs that they oversee or matters pertaining to general governance of the Department).
2. The non-voting members of the Department include
  - a. part-time and adjunct faculty, as well as any other faculty holding qualified academic rank;
  - b. full-time and part-time lecturers;
  - c. post-doctoral fellows;
  - d. graduate students pursuing an advanced degree in Linguistics;
  - e. undergraduate students pursuing an academic degree in Linguistics.
3. Representation
  - a. Full-time lecturers shall have a representative voice in matters that directly affect them; the appropriate committee and/or superordinate authority (e.g., Language Program Director or Associate Chair for the Language Programs) shall establish a means of ensuring their representation and shall present their views during any relevant discussion at faculty meetings.
  - b. Graduate students shall elect a representative who will present their views in all relevant matters.

## 3. Officers and Duties

1. Chair. The Chair of the Department is appointed by the President upon recommendation by the Dean after consultation with the faculty of the Department. The Chair normally serves a term of three years and may be reappointed after consultation with the faculty of the Department. The procedures for the search and appointment of the Chair are specified in the CAS Procedures for Department Chair Search. As part of these procedures, a written petition to the Chair of one-third of the voting faculty is sufficient to convene a meeting during which prospective candidates may address the voting membership and respond to questions in advance of any decision being made regarding the appointment. The Chair’s duties shall include, but not be limited to, the following:
  - a. to oversee the teaching, research, and service responsibilities of the members of the Department;
  - b. to conduct the administrative operations of the Department;
  - c. to represent the Department to the College and University;

- d. to report promptly to the Dean, or their designated representative, on matters affecting the Department;
  - e. to report on and recommend actions regarding the Department's programs, activities, and faculty, including faculty appointments, promotions and terms of conditions of appointments;
  - f. to report at least annually to the voting faculty of the Department on all matters affecting the Department, including a report of the department finances and resources;
  - g. to ensure the observance of, and adherence to, the bylaws of the Department.
2. Associate Chair for the Language Programs. The Associate Chair for the Language Programs shall, by agreement with the Chair, and with the approval of a majority of the voting faculty, normally be appointed by the Chair to serve a three-year, renewable term. The Associate Chair for the Language Programs shall
- a. support Directors of Language Programs in the management of these programs, in particular regarding matters that require interaction with higher levels of administration;
  - b. provide administrative oversight for language instruction for those languages where there is no Director;
  - c. advise the Chair on matters pertaining to the language programs, including personnel matters, scheduling, and budgets, especially when these pertain to the language programs as a whole rather than a specific program.
3. Directors of the Computational Linguistics Programs. The Directors of Computational Linguistics Programs shall, by agreement with the Chair, and with the approval of a majority of the voting faculty, normally be appointed by the Chair to serve three-year, renewable terms. The Directors of Computational Linguistics Program shall
- a. manage the advising process for students in the Computational Linguistics program, including BS and MS students;
  - b. manage the admissions process for the MS program in Computational Linguistics;
  - c. oversee curricular revisions to the programs in Computational Linguistics;
  - d. advise the Chair on matters pertaining to the Computational Linguistics program, in particular regarding course scheduling.
4. Director of Graduate Studies for the Linguistics Program. The Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) shall, by agreement with the Chair and with the approval of a majority of the voting faculty, be appointed by the Chair to serve a three-year, renewable term. The DGS shall
- a. meet regularly (at least once a semester) with each of the resident graduate students whose advising is not within the purview of another program director and monitor each individual's progress;
  - b. apprise graduate students of any relevant requirements and policies and advise them on appropriate actions;
  - c. ensure that the faculty mentoring process functions in accordance with Departmental policy;
  - d. coordinate all relevant graduate student activities (e.g. qualifying paper presentations);
  - e. oversee all academic deadlines for both faculty and graduate students;
  - f. ensure that graduate students' records and the Graduate Student Handbook are appropriately maintained and updated.
  - g. oversee curricular revisions to the graduate programs in Linguistics;
  - h. advise the Chair about matters pertaining to course scheduling;
  - i. take on those additional responsibilities assigned to Departmental Directors of Graduate Studies by the Dean.

5. Director of Graduate Admissions for the Linguistics Program. The Director of Graduate Admissions for the Linguistics Program shall, by agreement with the Chair, and with the approval of the voting faculty, normally be appointed by the Chair to serve a three-year, renewable term. The Director of Graduate Admissions for the Linguistics Program shall:
  - a. manage the process of graduate admissions for the Linguistics Program, including chairing the Admissions Committee and liaising, as needed, with the appropriate representatives of the Dean's Office;
  - b. following the advice of the faculty, prepare nominations for highly evaluated students applying to the program for appropriate scholarships and fellowships;
  - c. organize recruitment events related to graduate admissions and communicate with prospective students to advise them on their applications for graduate study and the review status of their applications;
  - d. report to the faculty on the recruitment process as needed.
  
6. Directors of Undergraduate Studies for Linguistics. The Directors of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) for Linguistics shall, by agreement with the Chair and with the approval of a majority of the voting faculty, be appointed by the Chair to serve a three-year, renewable term. The DUS shall
  - a. communicate regularly with the Department's undergraduate majors and minors in Linguistics and monitor their progress;
  - b. advise undergraduate majors and minors in Linguistics on course selection and general academic progress;
  - c. authorize adjustments to undergraduate degree requirements to ensure their ability to successfully complete their degrees while maintaining appropriate academic standards;
  - d. oversee curricular revisions to the undergraduate programs in Linguistics;
  - e. take on those additional responsibilities assigned to Departmental Directors of Undergraduate Studies by the Dean;
  - f. ensure that all undergraduate students' records and the Undergraduate Handbook are appropriately maintained and updated;
  - g. advise the Chair and Department about matters pertaining to course scheduling.
  
7. Directors of Language Programs. The Directors of Language Programs shall, by agreement with the Chair and with the approval of a majority of voting faculty, normally be appointed by the Chair. Directors of Language Programs shall:
  - a. Serve as the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the programs that they oversee, coordinating with the Director of Undergraduate Studies for Linguistics, as needed;
  - b. advise undergraduate majors and minors in their programs on course selection and general academic progress;
  - c. authorize adjustments to undergraduate degree requirements in their programs to ensure their ability to successfully complete their degrees while maintaining appropriate academic standards;
  - d. oversee curricular revisions to the undergraduate requirements in their programs;
  - e. provide support, as needed, for tasks assigned to Directors of Undergraduate Studies
  - f. advise the Chair about matters pertaining to course scheduling.

#### **4. Committees**

1. Any faculty member(s) may propose the formation of a new Committee. To do so, the member(s) shall
  - a. propose it to the faculty at a general meeting, giving a rationale for its formation;
  - b. suggest a title and a well-defined charge for the committee, and whether it should be ad hoc or standing;

- c. solicit members to serve on the committee, one of whom would agree to serve as committee Chair;
  - d. request, after due discussion, a vote for the formation of the Committee. A simple majority suffices to allow the formation of the committee.
2. Standing committees are those which are permanent or periodic and conduct a certain business on a continual basis and are required to report at least annually to the faculty. The standing committees of the Linguistics Department, and their charges, are:
- a. Consistent with the CAS Bylaws, the Executive Committee shall serve as an advisory body to the Chair with regard to Department's teaching, research and service activities and recommendations of actions affecting program. The Department's Executive Committee shall consist of all of the voting faculty of the Department.
  - b. the Graduate Admissions Committee shall be chaired by the Director of Graduate Admissions for the Linguistics Program and
    - i. evaluate applications to the M.A. programs in General Linguistics, Germanic Linguistics and Sociolinguistics and to the Ph.D. program in Linguistics, as well as advise the faculty on admissions decisions and make admissions decisions on behalf of the faculty where empowered to do so;
    - ii. design its own admission and evaluation procedures, within the constraints set by the policies of the UB Graduate School, and with the approval of the voting faculty of the Department;
    - iii. advise the faculty on funding offers to applicants to the Ph.D. program.
  - c. the Graduate Committee shall
    - i. discuss, monitor, and advise the Chair on, all matters relating to or affecting the graduate program in Linguistics.
    - ii. review proposed exceptions to Departmental graduate student policies for specific students and determine whether or not they can be approved.
  - d. the Space and Resources Committee shall
    - i. report to the voting faculty at least once a year on the state of the department's spaces and other resources, in particular budgetary resources which can be used under the discretion of the voting faculty;
    - ii. advise the voting faculty on policies regarding the use and apportionment of departmental space.
  - e. the Diversity Committee shall
    - i. report to the voting faculty at least once a year on the state of the Department's efforts to ensure that its policies and activities promote inclusivity;
    - ii. advise the voting faculty on policies regarding maintaining an inclusive climate in the Department.
  - f. the Bylaws Committee shall
    - i. review on a regular basis, or as needed, the bylaws of the Department and attend to any discrepancies;
    - ii. propose revisions to the Voting Faculty as needed by University policy or as desired by the Department.
3. Ad hoc committees are non-permanent, formed for a specific, one-time task, and are dissolved once that task has been completed. Among the more common are:
- a. Search committees. Search committees for the recruitment of new faculty shall be formed by the Department Chair and given their explicit structure and charges, in accordance with University policy. In addition:

- i. The search committee's task is to submit to the faculty a ranking of applicants in order of qualification for the position, including a large enough number in the ranking to permit the faculty a true choice. It should not be the job of search committees to make a recommendation regarding the specific composition of the short list.
  - ii. Faculty search procedures at any level should not include exclusion (as opposed to low ranking) of applicants unless a specific applicant is considered so unsuitable for the position in question that the faculty's or search committee's consensus is that a failure of the search would be preferable to hiring the applicant.
- b. Grievance committees shall be formed by the Department Chair to deal with any grievance leveled by a student or faculty member against another member of the department or against the Department itself. There shall be a pool of candidates for grievance committees on both the graduate and undergraduate level, with a student representatives chosen annually to be part of this pool each.

## 5. Meetings

1. General meetings. The Chair shall convene at least one general meeting per semester. The purpose of these meetings is the dissemination and discussion of any matters relevant to the Department. These meetings are normally open, to which graduate students or other members of the Department, are invited as non-voting participants, and to whom a limited period shall be granted for comments and discussion. On occasion, the Chair, in consultation with the voting Faculty, may schedule a closed meeting that is restricted to members of the Executive Committee. The Chair shall propose the agenda one week prior to a meeting. The transactions of these meetings shall be formally recorded in the Minutes.
2. Special-purpose meetings. Special-purpose meetings typically concentrate on one specific agenda item (e.g. graduate student review, tenure discussion) to the exclusion of any new business. They are held in executive session and are normally not recorded in Minutes. The Chair shall convene these as required by Department or University policy, at his/her discretion, or at the request of the faculty (see 3 below).
3. Any general or special-purpose meeting may be requested, by written petition to the Chair, by one-fourth of the voting members of the Department.
4. Attendance of the voting faculty at relevant meetings of the Department is considered a professional obligation. Faculty may attend via electronic means.
5. Meetings shall be conducted by the Chair in an informal but collegial manner. The faculty may vote at any time to conduct a meeting in a more formal manner in accordance with established parliamentary procedure (e.g. *Robert's Rules of Order*).
6. Minutes shall be taken for all general meetings, and as needed or requested otherwise. The Minutes shall be amended as needed and approved at the following meeting. Minutes shall be posted on a secure, faculty-only website.

## 6. Voting Procedures

1. Only voting members may cast votes at Department meetings. It shall be understood that a ballot shall be cast only if the voting member is fully informed of the issue under discussion. Each member has one vote.
2. A vote shall be considered binding only if a quorum is present; a quorum is defined as a simple majority of the voting members.

3. All votes except those to approve the Minutes shall be by secret ballot. Votes may be submitted *in absentia*. Votes may be submitted electronically. The Chair shall then assemble and count the ballots and immediately thereafter announce the results.
4. A measure or resolution passes if approved by a simple majority, except for amendments to bylaws, which require a two-thirds majority, or in cases requiring a two-thirds majority in accordance with the bylaws of superordinate authorities.
5. All votes and results shall be recorded in the Minutes.

**7. Resolutions and Promulgation**

1. Any member of the Department voting faculty may propose a resolution or policy change under New Business at general meetings. The proposed resolution must be distributed, in its exact wording, to the voting faculty two weeks prior to its introduction. The proposed resolution must be seconded, then given full discussion, then voted upon. A resolution shall be adopted if it receives a positive vote of a simple majority of the voting faculty.
2. These by-laws shall be posted on the departmental website.

**8. Ratification and Amendments**

1. Ratification of these bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of approval of the voting faculty of the Department.
2. Any amendment to these bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of approval of the voting faculty of the Department.

**9. Separability and Compatibility**

1. If any portion of these bylaws is adjudged by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, such judgment shall not invalidate the remainder of these bylaws.
2. These bylaws are compatible with, and subject to, the Bylaws of the College of Arts and Sciences, the Bylaws of the Voting Faculty of the University at Buffalo, and the authority and Policies of the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York.