

**BYLAWS
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
Texas A&M University**

Approved at the College Faculty Meeting October 18, 1985
Amended April 9, 1987, Amended October, 1994, Amended May, 1997

AMENDED APRIL, 2004

PREAMBLE:

The faculty of the College of Liberal Arts of Texas A&M University establish these Bylaws to define our responsibilities for College governance and to create a structure through which we may meet these responsibilities including student representation when appropriate; with the rules and regulations of the Board of Regents of the University; and with the laws of the State of Texas.

The Liberal Arts Faculty is responsible for the advancement, refinement and dissemination of knowledge in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts. The Faculty has instituted the Liberal Arts Council to enable us to carry out these responsibilities.

LIBERAL ARTS FACULTY MEETINGS:

1. **FACULTY MEETINGS:** The Liberal Arts Faculty shall meet as a whole at least once a year to receive reports from the Dean and from the Liberal Arts Council on matters of concern to the College.

LIBERAL ARTS COUNCIL:

2. **FUNCTION:** The Liberal Arts Council shall represent the College faculty and serve as the major deliberative and consultative body regarding matters of College academic policy.
3. **RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS:** The Liberal Arts Council shall have both policy and advisory responsibilities.
 - 3.1. The Council's policy responsibilities include the following areas: curriculum, academic standards, academic resources, educational planning, and any other matters which may properly come before it.
 - 3.2. The Council's advisory responsibilities include matters of concern to the faculty other than those mentioned in 3.1. The Council may issue resolutions recommending action to be taken by the College administration. The Dean shall inform the Council of actions taken with respect to such resolutions.
 - 3.3. From time to time, the Council may require a report from any standing committee to aid the Council in its deliberations. In addition, the Council shall receive at least one report of the activities of each standing committee of the College each academic year.
4. **COMPOSITION:** The Liberal Arts Council shall be composed of elected faculty representatives, student representatives, and the Dean of the College.

4.1. The number of faculty representatives shall be equal to the number of departments in the College, plus nine. One faculty representative shall be elected from and by each department and nine faculty representatives shall be elected at-large. Department Heads shall not be eligible to be elected as departmental representatives, but shall be eligible to be elected as at-large representatives. The term of each faculty representative shall be for three years, with the terms staggered so that approximately one-third of the representatives shall be newly elected each year. No representative may serve more than two terms in succession.

4.2. There shall be two Liberal Arts student representatives, one an undergraduate and one a graduate student. The undergraduate representative shall be designated by the Liberal Arts Student Council; the graduate student representative by the Graduate Student Council. The terms of student representatives shall be one year.

5. **OFFICERS:** The Liberal Arts Council shall have three officers: the Dean, a Chair Pro Tem, and a Secretary.

5.1. The **Dean** shall chair meetings of the Liberal Arts Council and may vote only to break a tie vote of the Council.

5.2. The **Chair Pro Tem** shall chair the Council in the absence of the Dean.

5.3. The **Secretary** shall record the minutes of Council meetings and distribute them to each Council member before the next Council meeting.

5.4. Both the Chair Pro Tem and the Secretary shall serve terms of one year. They shall be elected from among the faculty representatives at the first meeting of the Council during the Fall semester.

6. **COUNCIL MEETINGS:** The Liberal Arts Council may hold both regular and special meetings.

6.1. The Liberal Arts Council shall hold **regular meetings on the second Wednesday of every month at 3:00 p.m. unless there is no business before it.** At any regular meeting, the Council may change the time or date of the next regular meeting by a two-thirds vote of those present.

6.11 The Steering Committee (see Para. 10.1) shall prepare an agenda for all regular meetings of the Council. Any Council member may place any item on the agenda, as long as the Steering Committee receives the item in writing before the agenda is published. The agenda shall be distributed to each Council member at least five class days before a regular meeting.

6.2. Special meetings of the Liberal Arts Council may be called by: the Dean, the Steering Committee, petition by one-third or more of the Council members, or petition by ten percent or more of the faculty of the College.

6.21 Petitions for special meetings must be prepared in writing, specify an agenda, and be delivered to a member of the Steering Committee. Upon determining that a petition meets the requirements of Para. 6.2, the Steering Committee shall schedule a special meeting.

6.22 The Steering Committee shall provide written notice of, and the agenda for, special meetings to the members of the Council at least forty-eight hours in advance.

6.23 At a special meeting, the Council may consider only those items which appear on the advance written agenda required by Para. 6.22.

6.3. All Council meetings shall be open to Liberal Arts faculty, but may be closed to others by a four-fifths vote of the Council.

6.4. Any Council member who is unable to attend a Council meeting may appoint an enfranchised faculty member as proxy to vote on the member's behalf, provided that written notice of appointment is given to the Steering Committee one class day before the meeting. Proxy appointments shall be for one meeting only.

6.5. The agenda and minutes of Liberal Arts Council meetings shall be distributed to all Liberal Arts faculty.

7. **RECONSIDERATION:** The faculty of the College of Liberal Arts shall have the right to ask the Liberal Arts Council to reconsider a decision.

7.1. Faculty members who object to a decision of the Council may effect a reconsideration by invoking the procedure specified in Para. 6.2.

7.2. At such a special meeting, members of the faculty shall be invited to explain their objections to the Council's action. The Council shall provide an explanation for the original decision. At the conclusion of the special meeting, the Council shall vote whether to affirm, to modify, or to rescind its original decision, or to suspend it pending further inquiry.

7.3. Should members of the faculty object to the Council's decision at the special meeting, they may call a referendum on the decision by submitting a written petition to the Steering Committee. The petition must state a specific objection and be signed by at least 20 percent of the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts.

7.31 Upon determining that the petition meets the requirements of Para. 7.3, the Steering Committee shall conduct a mail ballot on the issue no later than one week from receipt of the petition.

7.32 In order to rescind a decision of the Liberal Arts Council, a referendum must be supported by a majority of those voting.

COMMITTEES:

8. **TYPES OF COMMITTEES:** The College shall have four types of committees: Policy Committees, Procedural Committees, Administrative Committees, and Dean's Committees. In addition to

the committees provided in these Bylaws, the Council may establish ad hoc committees as necessary to carry out its responsibilities.

9. **POLICY COMMITTEES: Policy** Committees are standing committees of the Liberal Arts Council established to aid it in making decisions on matters of academic policy over which it has authority.

Policy Committees include: Undergraduate Instruction, Graduate Instruction, and Planning and Resources. Faculty membership of the Undergraduate Instruction Committee, and the Planning and Resources Committee shall each consist of one representative elected from and by each department. Faculty membership on the Graduate Instruction Committee shall consist of the graduate advisors of all departments in the College. Student membership on each committee shall be as follows: two students selected by the Liberal Arts Student Council from among its membership to serve on each Policy Committee except Graduate Instruction; one graduate student selected by the caucus of the Liberal Arts Graduate Council to serve on each Policy Committee except Undergraduate Instruction Committee. Any committee may establish standing rules with the advice and consent of the Council. Except for the Graduate Instruction Committee, all faculty in the College are eligible to serve on Policy Committees. Members of Policy Committees shall serve for terms of three years and be eligible for re-election or reappointment. A Policy Committee Chair shall be appointed by the Steering Committee with the advice and consent of the Liberal Arts Council. Items may be discharged from Policy Committees after 90 days by a majority vote of the Council. If a discharge vote is successful, the item shall be placed on the agenda of the next regular meeting of the Council for debate and vote.

- 9.1. **The Undergraduate Instruction** Committee shall study and recommend actions relating to:

- 9.11 Admission, retention, and graduation;
- 9.12 Honors and scholarships;
- 9.13 Proposals for new undergraduate courses and modification of existing courses;
- 9.14 Proposals for new undergraduate degree programs and modification of existing programs.
- 9.15 Other matters relating to curriculum and instruction at the undergraduate level.

- 9.2. **The Graduate Instruction** Committee shall study and recommend actions relating to:

- 9.21 Proposals for new graduate courses and modification of existing courses;
- 9.22 Proposals for new graduate degree programs and modification of existing programs;
- 9.23 Other matters relating to curriculum and instruction at the graduate level.

- 9.3. **The Planning and Resources Committee** shall make general policy recommendations, and, where appropriate, specific decisions about resource allocation, relating to:

- 9.31 Library;
- 9.32 Computer facilities;
- 9.33 Research funding;
- 9.34 Other matters relating to resources necessary to support professional scholarship.
- 9.35 Long-range and short-range planning;
- 9.36 Establishment, reorganization, and discontinuation of organizational units for instruction, research, and administration;
- 9.37 Other matters affecting College development.

10. **PROCEDURAL COMMITTEES:** Procedural Committees are standing committees of the Liberal Arts Council established to deal with matters relating to governance procedures of the Council and the College. Except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, the following provisions apply to all Procedural Committees. A Procedural Committee shall have three to five members, appointed from among the members of the Council by the Steering Committee, with the advice and consent of the Council. Members of Procedural Committees shall serve for terms of one year and shall be eligible for reappointment. Procedural Committees may form subcommittees.

The College shall have the following **Procedural Committees: a Steering Committee and an Elections Committee.**

10.1. The **Steering Committee** shall provide for the effective administration of the Liberal Arts Council, including implementation of appropriate provisions of these Bylaws.

10.11 The **Steering Committee** shall consist of the Dean, the Chair Pro Tem of the Council, the Secretary of the Council, and one member of the Council elected at-large from and by the Council. The Dean shall chair the Steering Committee, and shall vote only to break ties.

10.12 Three members of the Steering Committee shall constitute a quorum.

10.13 The Steering Committee shall have the following responsibilities:

- a) To set the agenda for Council meetings; (see Para. 6.11, as revised);
- b) To assign business to appropriate committees;
- c) To assure that the decisions of the Council are implemented;
- d) To act on behalf of the Council between regular meetings, with the actions of the Steering Committee being subject to review by the Council;
- e) To take other action as directed by the Council.

10.2 The **Elections Committee** shall conduct elections of the Council and the College. These elections include the election of members to the Council, the election of Council officers, the election of the at-large member of the Steering Committee, and such College Committees as require elections.

10.21 The Elections Committee shall elect its chair from its membership.

10.22 The Elections Committee shall develop standing rules for conducting elections consistent with these Bylaws, which shall be submitted to the Council for approval.

1 **ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES:** Administrative Committees are faculty committees established to implement the policies of the Council. The responsibilities, membership, terms, and chairs of Administrative Committees shall be as determined by the Steering Committee with the advice and consent of the Liberal Arts Council.

12. **DEAN'S COMMITTEES:** Dean's Committees shall be established by the Dean to assist in the administration of the College or to advise the Dean on matters affecting the College. No Dean's Committee shall be created to perform tasks assigned to standing committees of the Liberal Arts Council without the consent of the Liberal Arts Council.

FACULTY ELECTIONS:

13. **ELECTIONS:** All faculty-wide elections held under these Bylaws shall be conducted by the Elections Committee and shall employ a secret ballot. Voting shall take place either through a mail ballot or through ballot boxes in each department.

13.1. All faculty members in the College who hold tenure or occupy a tenure-track position which has an administrative location in the College of Liberal Arts; or, hold the rank of Distinguished Lecturer, or Senior Lecturer, or Lecturer receive full-time salary, and report in line to the Dean of the College are eligible to vote and to hold office.

13.2 Regular primary and runoff elections for the Liberal Arts Council and all departmentally elected Policy Committees shall be held in April of each year in accordance with the standing rules on elections authorized in Para. 10.22.

13.21 Nominations of eligible faculty members for both departmental and at-large positions shall be solicited from the faculty through a general mailing. Self-nominations are permissible.

13.22 Representatives on the Liberal Arts Council shall be elected by a majority of those voting.

13.3 If a departmental position on the Liberal Arts Council, or the Undergraduate Instruction Committee or Planning and Resources Committees becomes vacant, the Elections Committee shall promptly hold a special departmental election to fill the remainder of the term. If an at large position on the Liberal Arts Council becomes vacant, the position shall remain vacant until the next regularly scheduled election, at which time the position shall be filled through normal election for the remaining years of the term that was vacated.

PROCEDURAL ARTICLES:

14. **BYLAWS INTERPRETATIONS:** The Steering Committee shall issue such advisory opinions regarding the interpretation of these Bylaws as are necessary to the orderly and expeditious conduct of College business. Challenges to such opinions may be made in the Council and shall be decided by a majority vote of the Council.
15. **SEVERABILITY:** Should any article or clause of these Bylaws be found inconsistent with or in violation of any higher rule, regulation, or law, the offending article or clause of these Bylaws shall be without force or effect. Such a finding shall not invalidate any other article or clause of these Bylaws.
16. **AMENDMENTS:** Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed either by the Liberal Arts Council or by faculty petition, and ratified by vote of the College faculty. A decision to conduct a general review of these Bylaws shall require the same procedures as amending the Bylaws.
- 16.1. Proposals for amendments (or for a general review) initiated through the Council shall be submitted to the Steering Committee for inclusion on the agenda of an upcoming regular meeting. The proposed amendment must be endorsed by a two-thirds vote of the Council members present and voting in order to be submitted to the College faculty for ratification.
- 16.2. Proposals for amendments (or for a general review) initiated through faculty petition must be signed by 20 percent of the faculty of the College and submitted to the Steering Committee.
- 16.3 The faculty shall vote upon proposals for amendments (or for a general review) that have been successfully initiated under the terms of Para. 16.1 or Para. 16.2. This vote shall be through a mail ballot conducted only during the Fall or Spring semesters under the following conditions:
- 16.31 Departmentally-elected representatives on the Council shall distribute copies of the proposed amendment (or proposed review) to the faculty at least four weeks prior to the ratification vote.
- 16.32 To be adopted, a proposed amendment (or general review) must be approved by two-thirds of the faculty voting.
17. **PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY:** The deliberations and actions of the Liberal Arts Council and its committees shall be governed by the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.