

Department of African American Studies

Bylaws

Date: August 2004

Preamble

African American Studies is a unit of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University at Buffalo, SUNY. The Department has an obligation to fulfill the mandates of research, teaching and service. AAS requires of each faculty member to assist in carrying out the mission of the Department.

I. Purpose

The purpose of the Bylaws of the Department of African American Studies is to provide a framework for departmental governance within the framework of the College of Arts and Sciences. The faculty of the Department of African American Studies affirms its commitment to collegiality as the most effective basis upon which to manage the affairs of and maintain excellence within the department.

II. Location

The Department of African American Studies is housed in 732 Clemens Hall, Amherst Campus at the University at Buffalo, SUNY, Buffalo, New York.

III. Chair and Departmental Officers

- (a) The chairperson shall guide the teaching, research and service and conduct the administrative operations of the unit, represent the unit to the College and the University, report promptly to the Dean on matters affecting the welfare of the unit, and report and recommend actions regarding the unit's programs, activities and faculty, including faculty appointments, promotions and the terms and conditions of appointments. The chairperson is responsible at all times to the voting members of the department as well as for administering nonvoting members' rights and responsibilities. The chair will communicate to all faculty the policies, guidelines and procedures that follow the voting faculty's direction.
- (b) The voting faculty will deliberate in a meeting of no less than two-thirds of the voting faculty for the reappointment of the chair of the department. Any voting faculty member may put forth his or her name for consideration as a candidate for the position of chairperson. A vote by secret ballot will be taken to determine the preferred candidate for

submission to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. The faculty will jointly record the result of the voting. The recommendation will then be referred to the Dean of CAS.

- (c) The Executive Committee is elected by and from the faculty of the department. The Executive Committee shall advise the Chair with regard to the department's teaching, research and service activities and recommendations of actions affecting programs and faculty. The executive committee shall initiate the appointments of Directors of Graduate and Undergraduate Studies. All nominations require a vote of acceptance by the voting faculty. In the case of a negative vote there shall be a continuing voting process until such time as voting members agree.
- (d) The chair will be a voting member in such cases where committees(s) are inconsistent or tied in their voting.
- (e) The appointees to the positions of DGS and DUS shall remain for at least one academic year, but no more than three years in succession, unless a contractual agreement has been executed.

III. Departmental Officers

The chair may appoint a departmental officer or executive committee member to act as chair in the absence of the chair where there is a need for departmental decision-making. This will be in consultation with the voting faculty when classes are in session.

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 chair reports to the Department faculty. The chair is responsible for conducting the administrative operations of the unit.

IV Voting Members of the Faculty

All full-time faculty and qualified rank adjunct professors shall be voting members of the Department.

V Standing Committees

African American Studies standing committees:

Executive Committee: will consist of the tenured faculty.

Graduate Committee: will consist of the DGS who will serve as chair and at least one additional member of the graduate faculty or affiliated faculty.

Undergraduate Committee: will consist of the DUS who will serve as chair and at least one additional member of the faculty or affiliated faculty.

Curriculum Committee: will consist of the DGS, DUS and at least one faculty member.

Other *Ad Hoc* committees may be appointed as per the needs of the voting faculty.

Committee memberships are determined at the beginning of the each academic year by a vote of the faculty.

The executive committee shall oversee formal grievances, which are brought to the department. Upon the request of any faculty member or student, the executive committee shall hear and deliberate on any and all grievances within the department.

All motions shall be carried by a majority or, in the case of a quorum, by a two-thirds vote.

VI Special Programs

The planning committee shall consist of voting and nonvoting faculty and students who wish to stage programs and events that will extend the activities of the department, university, and the community.

VIII Secret Ballots, Voting and Meetings

The chair will call a minimum of **three** meetings per academic semester. Attendance at the departmental meetings by voting faculty shall be considered an obligation. A meeting schedule shall be presented at the beginning of each semester. Dates and times will be subject to the approval of voting faculty members. Voting members can place an item on the agenda by written notification to the chair at least two days prior to the meeting.

A departmental meeting may exclude nonvoting members as necessary. It is encouraged that the Department meet with at least one administrator of CAS during the course of the academic year. The executive committee will designate which meetings may be closed to others (nonvoting members) when appropriate.

The recording of the minutes will be taken by a departmental staff member; either by the secretary, or administrative assistant. In the absence of one or both, a voting faculty member will be asked to take minutes.

Meetings, elections and ballots of the Department of African American Studies and its committees shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, except as otherwise provided by these bylaws and standing orders of the College of Arts and Sciences.

VIII Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee is responsible for all matters dealing with the graduate school and graduate students, including reports, outreach, awards and celebrations.

IX Undergraduate Committee

The Undergraduate Committee is responsible for all matters dealing with undergraduate school matters, including reports, outreach, awards and celebrations.

X Bylaws Committee

The bylaws committee will review and recommend changes and amendments to the bylaws of AAS. A periodic review will be conducted as needed. The voting members will recommend changes and updates to the bylaws committee. A review of the bylaws should take place at least every three years or as requested by voting faculty.

XI Search Committee

The Department forms a search committee upon authorization to recruit. The search committee, including outside members, will be constituted by a vote of the faculty. At least two-thirds of all search committee members must be tenured or tenure-track members of the Department. The chair is not a voting member of the committee.

A national search for a tenured or tenure-track position will be carried out in accordance with CAS rules.

The search committee will make its recommendation at a meeting of the voting faculty. The voting faculty will vote on a ranked shortlist, which will be forwarded to the Dean by the chair.

Under the special request by the Dean's office for a spousal hiring, it may be examined by the executive committee and voted upon as to the appropriateness of such a hire. With a review of the individual's credentials, an opinion will be forwarded and acted upon in accordance with a national search procedure.

For non-tenured track appointments for more than two consecutive semesters the chair will advertise the position nationally except in cases where a local appointment can be implemented immediately to fill a Department need.

All dossiers will be considered confidential and maintained in departmental offices with access limited to voting faculty and members of the search/executive committees.

XII Promotions and Tenure

The chair is required to meet with individual non-tenured and tenured track members to assess progress toward reappointment for promotion and tenure.

Reappointments of term members should be reviewed at least 6 months in advance of their termination or renewal. Dossiers for promotion and tenure shall be assembled per CAS guidelines. An advocate may be solicited as designated in the faculty handbook.

The chair must make every effort to counsel, advise and mentor non-tenured/tenured track faculty to ensure suitability for promotion. In addition, the Department appoints a faculty mentor in accordance with Provost's Directive of May 20, 1999 and the CAS Dean's implementation memos of June 9, 1999 and September 7, 1999. The department chairperson may arrange teaching load relief, leave time, and any other support mechanisms to assist in a positive way the success of the individual faculty member.

Voting takes place in accordance with CAS and University rules.

XIII Departmental Information

The chair will offer a budget report to the faculty detailing changes in the annual budget and external funding.

IX. Separability and Compatibility

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.

These bylaws shall be compatible with and subordinate to the College of Arts and Sciences Bylaws, the University at Buffalo's Bylaws of the Voting Faculty, the authority and policies of the Trustees of the State University of New York, the authority and policies of the Council of the State University of New York at Buffalo, and the laws of the State of New York and the United States of America.

Ratified: 10/22/2004