Department of Communication Governance Document

I. Introductory Materials

A. Preamble: The Department of Communication at the University of South Florida has established the following bylaws, based upon the principle of faculty governance, to ensure order, clarity, fairness, and collegiality in the structure and operation of the Department. It is recognized that this document may not contravene US Federal and Florida State law, the University Constitution, the rules and regulations of the Florida Board of Governors (BOG) and the University of South Florida Board of Trustees (BOT), the USF Senate, and the Collective Bargaining Agreement between USF and the USF chapter of the United Faculty of Florida and the USF College of Arts and Sciences Governance Document. The foregoing authorities will govern in the event that any provision of this governance document is inconsistent with or in conflict with them.

B. Mission Statement: The Department of Communication at the University of South Florida is a community of scholar-teachers whose mission is to promote the development of communication skills among critical, relational, and performative axes of research and practice. The Department at both the undergraduate and graduate levels promotes the development of these life-long skills for leading high-quality relational, organizational, and public lives, and in producing effective critical, qualitative, and performative scholarship. Our courses, research, and workshops offer a broad and integrated approach to communication studies that embraces the traditions of humanities and social sciences, the convergence of rhetorical and communication theory, and the intersecting concerns among aesthetic, humanistic, and empirical approaches to inquiry.

C. How to amend this document: Any three voting members of the department may propose an amendment. A proposed amendment must be made at least two weeks prior to the date of the meeting at which a vote on adoption is to be taken. To be adopted, a proposed amendment must receive an affirmative vote, after full deliberation, by a two-thirds majority of the full membership of the department (not simply two-thirds of the attendees at the meeting). Amendments to the Faculty Evaluation Committee guidelines will go into effect one year following ratification while those to the rest of the document take effect immediately. All voting on proposed amendments shall be conducted by secret ballot.

II. The department

A. Membership

1. Voting membership in the Department of Communication shall include the following full-time, permanent academic ranks: Distinguished University Professor, Professor, Associate Professor, Assistant Professor, Instructor I, Instructor II, Instructor III. Non-voting membership is extended to those holding emeritus, temporary, post-doctoral, visiting, or affiliated positions.

2. Those who have joint appointments shall be considered voting members of the department if (i) 50% or more of their budgeted salary is administered through the department and/or (ii) their tenure home is in the department.
3. Faculty from other departments may be designated as affiliated faculty if they receive a 2/3 vote of acceptance by members of the department. Affiliated faculty are non-voting members of the department.

4. Members on leave from the Department shall retain voting privileges pursuant to requisite department policies regarding participation, presence, or fulfilling other responsibilities. Members on leave shall be provided timely information about department affairs and when possible shall be provided opportunities to respond and make recommendations regarding them.

5. In decisions regarding the retention or selection of the department chairperson, the highest ranking USPS staff member will be granted voting privileges.

6. Under the guidance of the chair, committee service will be divided among the voting faculty. In some instances, as stipulated below (in section IV), students or USPS staff may hold voting roles in committees.

B. Meetings

1. The parliamentary authority for meetings shall be the most current edition of Robert’s Rules of Order. All voting members are expected to attend regular monthly meetings of the department. Arrangements can be made for attending electronically, though participation at a distance will preclude participating in votes accomplished by secret ballot. A quorum shall consist of 50% +1 of the members of the department.

2. Regular monthly meetings of the department shall be set before the beginning of each semester. The schedule may be amended by the Chair, as deemed necessary.

3. Special meetings may be called at other times by any member of the Executive Committee or by any two voting members of the department.

4. Timely electronic notification of all meetings, regular and special, shall be made to all members of the department, and shall include the agenda for the meeting.

5. Electronic minutes of each departmental meeting will be distributed in a timely manner.

6. Voting on questions shall be conducted viva voce unless any member present requests a vote by secret ballot (however, questions of faculty hires, amendments to this document, and of tenure and promotion shall always be by secret ballot). A simple majority of the votes cast, ignoring blanks, is sufficient for the adoption of any motion that is in order, except those which require a two-thirds vote (e.g., amending this document, suspending rules in this document, limiting the names to be voted for, among others listed in Robert’s Rules). On a tie vote the motion is lost. The Chair typically does not vote unless the vote is by ballot. In other cases, the Chair may vote to make a tie (equating a failed motion) or to break a tie (to pass a motion). The chair cannot, however, vote twice, first to make a tie and then give the casting vote.

7. When voting on a question or ballot with more than two options, a majority is required to decide the question (not a simple plurality). If there is no majority, a run-off vote is held between the top two options to determine a majority winner. Ranking and rating systems of voting shall not be employed unless the faculty agree by a 2/3 majority to use alternative voting procedures.
8. Electronic Voting Procedures: for expediency sake, the Chair may request electronic votes (by email, electronic polls, or other means) for minor matters.

9. Proxy voting and absentee voting is forbidden.

III. Administration
   A. Chair
      1. The position: The Chair is the chief administrative and academic officer of the Department and is responsible for executing the policies of the Department. In principle, major policy is determined by the Chair and the faculty; in practice, the Chair has final authority for policy and is answerable to the College and University. Thus, on occasion, the Chair may not follow the vote of the majority; in those cases, however, he or she must explain in writing or at a faculty meeting the reasons for his or her decision. It is important that the Chair see himself or herself as an interpreter and administrator of the will of the faculty; it is important that the faculty realize the Chair must have considerable discretionary authority since he or she is held responsible by the College and University for all Departmental activities. The chair typically serves a four-year term and is eligible for re-election.

      2. Charge: The Chair is the representative of the Department to the administration, and is responsible for operating the business of the Department efficiently, fairly, and with transparency. The duties of the department chair will include representing the department within and outside the university, proposing and overseeing the budget, allocating resources including travel funds and office space, nominating the associate department chair and directors of academic programs, appointing members for department committees, scheduling classes, recruiting adjuncts, setting the agenda and presiding over department meetings, and making salary recommendations. The chair is also responsible for making annual faculty assignments and evaluating faculty in accordance with the procedures of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. Perhaps most significantly, the Chair will, in consultation with the Faculty, evaluate and improve instructional and administrative processes, see that all faculty have Departmental privileges and responsibilities appropriate to their rank, encourage research and scholarship, and foster collegiality within the Department.

      3. Selection procedures: Upon a vacancy in the chair position or at the end of a term of an incumbent chair, department members will consider candidates for the position of chair in an election to be held at which at least two-thirds of the full-time faculty is present. All Associate Professors and Professors are eligible for nomination and self-nomination for the Chair position. All internal candidates will have an opportunity to discuss with the department the advantages of their candidacies. The Department will deliberate about internal candidates, about delaying and having an acting chair, and about hiring externally—arriving at a decision by majority vote before proceeding. Election of a chair-designate or acting chair will occur upon simple majority vote of all full-time faculty, for one candidate (see section II, B, 7 for voting procedures with more than two candidates). The outgoing chair or a member of the Executive Committee not running for the chair position will distribute and count the ballots and report a summary of the results and process to the
Dean. If the faculty wish to pursue an external chair, and the Dean approves a search, a search committee shall be appointed (see section IV, F). This search committee may wish to include members from outside the department.

B. Associate Chair
1. We will fill this position when requested by the Chair and approved by the Dean.
2. Charge: The Associate Chair assists in the administration of the Department, in implementing University and College policies and procedures, and in initiating and implementing internal policies and procedures. The Associate Chair works closely with the Chair on department business. The Associate Chair will have primary responsibility for all course scheduling, including considering curricular needs of students and all programs. The tasks will include working with the Chair to determine curricular needs, coordinating the scheduling of classes; working with the graduate director to coordinate graduate course scheduling; working with the undergraduate director, undergraduate advisor, and course directors to coordinate the scheduling of undergraduate classes; serving as liaison with faculty and graduate students to schedule classes; and working with the office manager to input classes. The Associate Chair will represent the Chair and Department at meetings and functions the Chair is unable to attend. Additional duties may be negotiated between the Chair and Associate Chair. The Associate Chair will be a non-voting (ex-officio) member of the Executive Committee and expected to attend all meetings.
3. Appointment: All tenured faculty are eligible for nomination for Associate Chair of the Department of Communication. The Associate Chair is appointed by the Dean upon nomination by the Chair, consent of the appointee, approval by the standing Executive Committee and a majority of the faculty in a secret ballot. The chair will solicit self-nominations from faculty, select a candidate from those nominations, and seek approval first from the Executive Committee, and then the faculty (by majority vote). The Associate Chair’s term is fully, or in part, concurrent with that of the Chair, but the period of appointment cannot exceed that of the serving chair. A person can be reappointed for multiple terms, and during a Chair’s term of service, different Associate Chairs may be appointed through the process described above.

C. Director of the Graduate Program
1. Charge: The Director of the Graduate Program (DGP) serves as liaison with and representative to the School of Humanities, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School, and other entities in and out of the university on matters appropriate to the graduate program. The DGP manages graduate application, admissions, assistantship, and fellowship procedures; coordinates orientation programs and graduate student evaluations; manages recruitment of new graduate students and promotion of the program; approves all graduate student plans of study and committees; meets with and chairs the Graduate Committee; coordinates and analyzes graduate SACS data, and
writes and submits the SACS evaluation report; and reports to the faculty on the state of the graduate program. The DGP serves a three-year term, and is eligible for multiple terms.

2. Selection: All tenured faculty are eligible for nomination and self-nomination when an opening for Director of the Graduate Program is announced. The Chair will discuss nominations with the Executive Committee, and with the Committee’s consent will submit at least one nominee to the faculty for majority approval on a written ballot.

D. Director of the Undergraduate Program

1. Charge: The Director of the Undergraduate Program (DUP) serves as liaison with and representative to the School of Humanities, the College of Arts and Sciences, the office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and other entities in and out of the university on matters appropriate to the undergraduate program. The DUP supervises and coordinates the undergraduate honors program and the undergraduate honor society (Lambda Pi Eta); works with the undergraduate advisor to certify undergraduate students for graduation and to certify transfer courses; meets with and chairs the Undergraduate Committee; coordinates and analyzes undergraduate SACS data, and writes and submits the SACS evaluation report; manages recruitment of new undergraduate students and promotion of the undergraduate program; reviews policies and makes recommendations to the faculty regarding policy changes; works with the Associate Chair on curriculum needs and issues; and reports to the faculty on the state of the undergraduate program. The DUP serves a three-year term, and is eligible for multiple terms.

2. Selection: All voting members of the department are eligible for nomination and self-nomination when an opening for Director of the Undergraduate Program is announced. The Chair will discuss nominations with the Executive Committee, and with the Committee’s consent will submit at least one nominee to the faculty for majority approval on a written ballot.

IV. Committees

A. Unless otherwise noted, voting procedures for committees follow those outlined in sections II-B-6, 7, and 8.

B. Executive Committee

1. Membership: The department Chair serves as chair of this committee. Other members include the Directors of the Graduate and Undergraduate Programs and at least two elected members (one tenured and one tenure-earning), who will serve one-year terms.

2. Duties: The Executive Committee should meet at least once per semester. The Executive Committee serves an advisory and consultative function to the Department Chair on matters of department governance.

C. Graduate Committee

1. Membership: This committee will be chaired by the Director of the Graduate Program (DGP) and include at least two other members of the department assigned to one-year terms.

2. Duties: The Graduate Committee shall review graduate applications and direct the DGP to make offers for admissions to and funding in the graduate
program. The Committee will also review, propose, and implement planning and policy formation regarding the graduate academic program and curriculum; review and recommend regarding new course proposals, oversee policies in recruitment, admissions, and advising of graduate students; and recommend policies regarding graduate comprehensive examinations.

3. **Student Voice**: The committee will seek graduate student input when appropriate, and in a manner of the committee’s choosing

D. **Undergraduate Committee**

1. **Membership**: This committee will be chaired by the Director of the Undergraduate Program (DUP) and include the Department’s Undergraduate Academic Advisor and at least two other members of the department assigned to one-year terms.

2. **Duties**: The Undergraduate Committee shall review, propose, and implement planning and policy formation regarding the undergraduate academic program and the curriculum of the department; review and recommend regarding new course proposals; and oversee policies in admission and advising of students.

3. **Student Voice**: The committee will seek undergraduate student input when appropriate, and in a manner of the committee’s choosing

E. **Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC)**

1. **Membership**: This committee will consist of 3-4 tenured faculty members and 1-2 non-tenured tenure-track faculty members (for a total of 5 members). One of the tenured members will be appointed to a two-year term as Chair-elect, serving as a regular member the first year and as Chair in the second year. The other four members serve one-year terms.

2. **Duties**: The FEC has two principal tasks: in the fall, to prepare tenure and promotion files, and, in the spring, to conduct the annual review of faculty for the department. The Committee may also be asked to participate in the Dean’s annual evaluation of the Department Chair as an administrator. The Committee should also annually review its own guidelines and take the lead in updating and proposing revisions.

3. **Responsibilities of the Committee Chair**: The chair should apprise members of their duties and establish a timetable for completing them. The chair is to set agendas for meetings and see that materials appropriate to the task of evaluation are made available. Upon completion of the committee’s work, the chair is responsible for the preparation and signing of all final reports, such as tenure and promotion forms, committee letters of evaluations, and the online Annual Faculty Review Summary forms. As final orders of business, the chair should update the records of the committee and see that the FRC/FEC Guidelines are passed on to the next committee with an opportunity to discuss them at the committee’s first meeting of the year.

F. **Ad Hoc Committees** shall be created and appointed by the Chair, and approved by the Executive Committee, as need arises.
VI. Tenure and Promotion

A. For purposes of Tenure and Promotion, the Department of Communication will follow the procedures and conform to the standards of CAS and University guidelines. For the purposes of tenure decisions, the faculty Tenure and Promotion committee will consist of only tenured faculty in the department who meet CAS and USF criteria for service on tenure and promotion committees, and no separate vote and recommendation for the T & P committee will be taken or recorded as distinct from the faculty vote. In the case of promotion to full professor, the department committee will consist of tenured faculty in the department who meet CAS and USF criteria for service on tenure and promotion committees, and who have themselves attained the rank of Professor.

VII. Other Policies

A. The Department of Communication will compile a set of policies that guide recurring business (e.g., faculty search procedures, faculty attendance at graduation ceremonies, allocation of summer teaching assignments, etc.) in a separate document.

Revised by the faculty 09/20/2013
Revised by the faculty 10/06/1993
Revised by the faculty 10/07/1992
Revised by the faculty 08/28/1991
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Revised by the faculty 05/01/1986
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