

# Bylaws of the School of Arts & Sciences

Ratified February 2021

Revised: May 2024, December 2024, February 2025, April 2025

## PREAMBLE:

1. The Voting Members of The School of Arts & Sciences of the State University of New York, College at Buffalo established these Bylaws in order to provide for the open discussion and recommendation of policies and procedures of concern to the Faculty and Staff and also to provide for the conduct of business in keeping with the principles of shared governance.
2. Provisions of these Bylaws are applicable when not in conflict with established policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees, the SUNY College at Buffalo Bylaws of the College Faculty, the SUNY College at Buffalo Directory of Policy Statements, and the Agreement between SUNY and the Bargaining Agent.
3. Unless otherwise specified, the terms listed below shall be used in these Bylaws with the meanings ascribed below:
  - a. “School.” The School of Arts & Sciences of the State University of New York, College at Buffalo.
  - b. “College.” The State University of New York, College at Buffalo.
  - c. “President.” The President of the State University of New York, College at Buffalo.
  - d. “Academic staff.” All College employees having academic or qualified academic rank.
  - e. “Academic rank.” Rank held by professional staff with the official title of distinguished professor, professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, assistant instructor, librarian, associate librarian, senior assistant librarian, and assistant librarian.
  - f. “Qualified academic rank.” Rank held by professional staff with the official title of lecturer or any of the titles specified in subsection 10 of the policies of the SUNY Board of Trustees preceded by the designation “visiting” or some similar designation.
  - g. “Professional employee.” An employee in the Professional Services Negotiating Unit, other than an employee with academic or qualified academic rank.
  - h. “Article.” An article of the School of Arts & Sciences Bylaws.
  - i. “The Bylaws of the College Faculty.” The State University of New York, College at Buffalo Bylaws of the College Faculty.
  - j. “DOPS.” The State University of New York, College at Buffalo Directory of Policy Statements.

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5. **Mission of the School of Arts and Sciences:**

The School of Arts and Sciences transforms student lives through rigorous scholarship, artistic expression, and engaged global citizenship.

**Article I: MEMBERSHIP AND VOTING**

1. Membership includes all faculty and professional employees whose primary appointment is in the School of Arts & Sciences.
2. Voting Members are those who hold academic rank of distinguished professor, professor, associate professor, assistant professor, full-time lecturer/instructor, or full-time professional employee (including clinical faculty), and the five members of the Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee. The Dean and Associate Dean(s) of the School of Arts & Sciences are Voting Members. Each Voting Member may cast one vote in non-senate school elections, may attend meetings, and possesses full parliamentary rights at meetings. Voting Members with academic rank described above may vote for school senate representation.
3. Non-Voting Members are all members of the School of Arts & Sciences not included in Article I 2. Such members may attend and speak at meetings but may not vote in school-wide elections and may neither introduce nor vote on motions.

**Article II: OFFICERS**

1. Officers must be Voting Members of the School.
2. Term beginning is August 1 following their election and leaving office July 31st of the year of service.
3. The Officers of the Steering Council
  - a. Speaker

- i. The Speaker shall call and be the presiding officer at School Meetings as prescribed in these Bylaws.
  - ii. The Speaker's term is 1 year. The Speaker may be re-elected two times (a total of three consecutive terms), after which time the Speaker is prohibited from running for Speaker for 1 year.
  - iii. The Speaker shall serve as Chair of the Steering Council.
  - iv. The Speaker shall be an ex officio member, without vote, of all standing committees.
  - v. The Speaker shall direct each standing committee to convene their first meeting no later than the end of September for the purposes of electing a committee chair and conducting any other appropriate business.
  - vi. If the Speaker leaves office prior to the end of the Speaker's term, the Vice Speaker will fulfill the remainder of the Speaker's term.
- b. Vice Speaker
- i. When so designated by the Speaker, the Vice Speaker may act in the Speaker's stead to carry out the Speaker's responsibilities.
  - ii. If the Vice Speaker leaves office or assumes the role of Speaker prior to the end of their term as Vice Speaker, then the remainder of the term shall be filled in a special election, conducted as below (Elections).
  - iii. The Vice Speaker's term is 1 year. The Vice Speaker may be re-elected two times (a total of three consecutive terms), after which time the Vice Speaker is prohibited from running for Vice Speaker for 1 year.
- c. Secretary
- i. The Secretary shall send out the meeting invitations to each member of the school.
  - ii. The Secretary shall record and distribute minutes of all Regular and Special Meetings to each member of the school.
  - iii. The Secretary shall work with the Dean's office to maintain a list of all Voting Members of the school (as defined in Article I).
  - iv. The Secretary shall work with the Dean's office to maintain a permanent record of all minutes and committee reports.
  - v. If the Secretary should leave office prior to the end of their term, the Steering Council shall appoint an interim Secretary and then the remainder of the term shall be filled in a special election.
  - vi. The Secretary is elected for a 1-year term with no limit to re-election.
- d. Senate Liaison
- i. SAS Members currently serving as Senators (see Article III) shall elect from among themselves one member to serve as Senate Liaison.

- ii. The Senate Liaison and/or other Senators shall provide a report at every Regular Meeting of the School (see Article V).
- iii. The Senate Liaison is elected for a 1-year term with no limit to re-election.
- iv. If the Senate Liaison shall leave office, the senators shall elect a new Liaison from among themselves to serve the remainder of the term.

4. Vacancies

If at any point both the Speaker and the Vice Speaker's offices are simultaneously unfilled, both positions will be filled by special election, conducted as below (Elections), for the remainder of the academic year.

**Article III: SENATORS**

- 1. School Senators, as required by The Bylaws of the College Faculty
  - a. School Senators must be Voting Members of the School, excluding professional employees, dean, associate dean(s), and full-time assistant dean(s).
  - b. School Senators shall represent the School at the College Senate.
  - c. If a Senator shall leave office prior to the end of their term, then the remainder of the term shall be filled in a special election consistent with The Bylaws of the College Faculty and conducted as below.

**Article IV: STEERING COUNCIL**

- 1. The Steering Council is composed of the Speaker, Vice Speaker, Secretary, Senate Liaison, Standing Committee Chairs, \*one at-large representative (elected from the Voting Membership), and \*one Voting Member who does not hold a continuing appointment (elected from the Voting Membership). Term beginning is August 1 following their election and leaving office July 31st of the year of service.  
 \*The term for the at-large representative and Voting Member who does not hold continuing appointment is one year.
- 2. The Steering Council is charged with:
  - a. overseeing matters related to strategic planning;
  - b. collaborating with the Dean to ensure effective shared governance in fulfillment of the School's Mission, Values, and Vision;
  - c. planning and facilitating meetings of the faculty of the School of Arts & Sciences in coordination with the Dean, and in accordance with Article V.

**Article V: MEETINGS**

- 1. School Meetings are open to all members of the School of Arts & Sciences.
- 2. The Speaker of the Steering Council shall call at least four Regular Meetings within the academic year.

- a. The first shall be no later than the end of October.
  - b. The second no later than December 15.
  - c. The third during the second semester prior to spring recess.
  - d. The fourth after the spring recess.
3. Regular Meetings shall include a Steering Council report, Dean's report, College Senators reports, and other committee reports, and business as determined by the agenda.
  4. Special Meetings may occur and must be called within one month when requested by any of the following: the President of the College, the Provost, the Dean of the School, the Speaker of the Steering Council, the Elections and Bylaws Committee, or 25% of the Voting Members. The Speaker shall be responsible for calling the Special Meeting.
  5. Emergency Meetings of the School may be called by the Speaker, in consultation with the Steering Council without advance notice, when issues arise that warrant and/or demand immediate attention and action.
  6. For Regular or Special Meetings:
    - a. The agenda, with appropriate documents, will be distributed to each member of the School at least one week in advance of the meeting.
    - b. Prior to distribution of the agenda, the Speaker shall make a reasonable effort to incorporate constituent agenda items.
    - c. Minutes of the meetings shall be recorded and made available to each member of the School within three weeks.

## **Article VI: COMMITTEES**

1. Committee organization
  - a. Each standing committee (other than the Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee, at the time of election) shall consist of Voting Members of the School elected for a two-year term (except a three-year term for the Personnel Committee and a one-year term for the Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee), effective August 1, following their election, and terminating on July 31 in the final year of their term.
  - b. The terms shall be staggered so that approximately one half—or one third, in the case of the Personnel Committee—of each committee membership is elected for each year. (The terms for the initial election shall be determined by lottery.)
  - c. Each standing committee shall elect its own chairperson.
  - d. Each standing committee shall submit a report to the School at each Regular Meeting and an annual report to the School.
  - e. In addition to the responsibilities assigned to the standing committees in these Bylaws, the Speaker of the Steering Council may assign, from time to time, additional responsibilities to one or more of the standing committees and may alter or remove such additional responsibilities.
  - f. Standing committees may be established only by amendments to these Bylaws.

- g. A member of a standing committee may not serve more than two consecutive terms on the same standing committee.
  - h. Departments/units may not have more than one member on any standing committee.
2. Bylaws and Elections Committee
- a. This committee shall consider any implementation or amendment of these Bylaws and make recommendations directly to the School faculty concerning proposals brought to the committee by Voting Members of the School.
  - b. This committee shall supervise all elections and voting that are required for the School of Arts & Sciences.

3. Personnel Committee

The departmental Personnel Committee evaluation, including external reviewers (if required by individual departments), shall be considered the most important element of the promotion review process. The Arts & Sciences Personnel Committee serves an oversight role and provides additional advice to the dean regarding recommendations on promotion.

- a. The Arts & Sciences Personnel Committee shall consist of four voting tenured faculty Members of the School elected by the faculty of the School and one voting tenured faculty Member of the School appointed by the Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. The Dean's primary criterion for such appointments shall be enhancing the committee's breadth of representation.
- b. Committee members shall be limited to two consecutive three-year terms.
- c. Personnel Committee members must recuse themselves from voting on candidates for promotion from their own department but may participate in any discussions.
- d. The Steering Council will appoint a temporary replacement for any committee members who are being considered for promotion during the academic year their promotion application is under review.
- e. This committee shall be charged with recommending policies consistent with College policy specified by the Bylaws of the College Faculty and DOPS, relating to the professional welfare of the faculty, including academic freedom, tenure, conditions of service, appointment, termination, promotion, and retention of faculty.
- f. This committee shall provide a recommendation to the Dean regarding promotion to Associate and promotion to Full Professor and share its recommendations with the candidate.

4. Curriculum Committee

- a. This committee shall provide school-wide faculty input into curriculum development and refinement, reporting back to the A&S faculty as a whole.
- b. This committee shall use accreditation, assessment, enrollment trends, and other sources to identify and encourage opportunities for interdisciplinary curricula and

general education.

- c. This committee shall participate in the review of and make recommendations for changes to proposals for new courses, course revisions, academic majors, minors, certificates, interdisciplinary programs, and graduate programs.
  - d. This committee shall review curriculum-related DOPS policies to make recommendations to the Senate Curriculum Committee.
5. Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee
- a. This committee shall represent the interests and concerns of all contingent faculty employed by the School of Arts and Sciences.
  - b. The Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee shall consist of five full- or part-time contingent faculty members elected by those contingent faculty currently under contract or scheduled to teach in the semester after the election within the School of Arts and Sciences. Each shall be elected to a term of one year, with no limit to re-election.
  - c. The Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee shall elect from themselves one member to serve as Chair of the Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee.
  - d. The Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee Chair is elected for a one-year term with no limit to re-election.
  - e. If the Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee Chair shall leave office, the Contingent Faculty Welfare Committee membership shall elect a new Chair from among themselves to serve the remainder of the term.
6. Ad Hoc Committees
- a. An Ad Hoc committee may be established at any Regular Meeting or through appointment by the Steering Council of the School of Arts & Sciences.
  - b. An Ad Hoc committee shall elect a chair and report to the School at a Regular Meeting.
7. External Committees
- a. The Steering Council Speaker, in consultation with membership at the School Meeting, shall make a determination as to whether School representation on external committees will be constituted by:
    - i. an election within the School.
    - ii. appointment(s) by the Dean.

## **Article VII: ELECTIONS**

1. Nominations and elections will be overseen by the Bylaws and Elections Committee.
2. Candidates for all Officers, Senators, Standing Committee membership, Dean's Review Committee, or other elected representatives of the School (e.g., external committees) shall be:

- a. Voting Members of the school.
  - b. nominated by a Voting Member at a Regular Meeting or by email to the Secretary no later than April 15.
  - c. elected by ballot prior to April 30, with adequate safeguards to ensure secrecy.
  - d. elected by a majority of the votes cast.
3. If a candidate is not elected on the first ballot, a run-off ballot shall be conducted. This run-off ballot shall be restricted to the nominees with the highest number of votes on the first ballot. The run-off ballot shall include one more candidate than the number of open positions.
4. Special Elections
- a. Will be held upon an Officer, other than the Speaker, vacating a position before the end of the Officer's term.
  - b. Will be held for new committees formed and for Standing Committee positions vacated before end of term.
  - c. Elections or nominations may take place in person or electronically.

#### **Article VIII: REVIEW OF THE DEAN**

1. Dean's Review Committee
  - a. The committee shall be elected in the third year after the Dean's initial appointment and thereafter every five years. Resolutions for off-cycle review must be approved by a majority of the Voting Members, and the Bylaws and Elections committee would hold an election for the Dean's Review Committee.
  - b. The committee shall consist of five Voting Members with continuing and permanent appointment (faculty or professional employees), elected by the Voting Members.
  - c. This committee shall be charged with reviewing the performance of the Dean since appointment or the most recent review. It shall discuss its review with the Dean; shall make recommendations to the President of the College for the retention or removal of the Dean; and shall report these recommendations to the School at a Regular Meeting.
  - d. The Voting Members shall vote on whether to accept the review findings.

#### **Article IX: PROCEDURE**

1. Unless otherwise specified in these Bylaws: All business shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition).
2. An election shall be by secret ballot, if even a single Voting Member so requests.
3. Quorum requirements:
  - a. The quorum for all Regular, Special and Emergency Meetings shall be 25% of the

eligible voters.

- b. The quorum for all committee meetings shall be a majority of the Voting Members of the committee.

#### **ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS**

1. Amendments may be proposed by any of the Voting Members, or by the Bylaws and Elections Committee. Any proposed changes must be considered by the Bylaws and Elections Committee as specified in Article VI.
2. Notice of a proposal to amend the Bylaws, accompanied by the text of the proposed amendment, shall be distributed in writing to the Voting Members not less than one week before the meeting at which the amendment is moved and discussed. At this meeting, the Bylaws and Elections Committee will make a report to the School, and at that meeting a vote (decided by majority) shall be taken to determine whether the proposed Bylaw change(s) will go to a secret ballot distributed to the Voting Members following the meeting.
3. An amendment to the Bylaws shall require approval by 2/3 of the votes cast through a secret ballot.
4. The bylaws and elections committee is authorized, without holding a vote among the voting members of SAS, to correct article and section designations, typos, and perform such technical changes as may be necessary to reflect changes in the structure of the University insofar as these changes do not impact the sense and intent of the document. These proposed changes will be announced in the SAS meeting agenda and, upon consent of those at the meeting, be adopted and archived in the records. At the SAS meeting, any two SAS voting members may declare that a change is substantive and call for a vote; the proposed changes would then proceed as outlined in the SAS bylaws.

#### **ARTICLE XI: ADOPTION**

These Bylaws shall take effect after the affirmation by a majority of the Voting Members in a secret ballot, and the official establishment of the School.

### **Addendum: Revisions to the SAS Bylaws**

May 2024 revision: removed “Health, Nutrition, and Dietetics” department from the “Natural Sciences” division, because the department moved to the School of the Professions. (Passed at the April 26, 2024 SAS meeting, and then passed through SAS electronic vote concluding on May 24, 2024.)

December 2024 revision: passed a motion allowing technical (non-substantive) changes to the Bylaws to be approved at SAS meetings via the Consent Agenda, rather than the formal amendment procedure. (Passed at the November 15, 2024 SAS meeting, and then passed through SAS electronic vote concluding on December 13, 2024.)

February 2025 revision: eliminated typos, formatting errors, and redundancies. (Passed through Consent Agenda at the SAS meeting on February 21, 2025.)

April 2025 revision: removed language referring to School “Divisions,” removed the “Division” restrictions on SAS committee elections and Senate elections, and changed one of the Personnel Committee members to a dean’s appointment. (Passed at the April 18, 2025 SAS meeting, and then passed through SAS electronic vote concluding on April 25, 2025.)