Bylaws, Theatre Department

Purpose: To define the rules and regulate the affairs of the Theatre Department

Applies to: Faculty and Staff within the Theatre Department

Procedures Statement:

1. Membership and Voting Privileges

(a) Voting Membership. The voting membership of the Department of Theatre, hereafter, “the Department”, shall consist of all faculty holding tenured or tenure-track appointments of .50 FTE or greater in the Department; two elected representative of the Department’s unclassified or university support staff; one elected representative of the Department’s graduate students; and two elected representatives of the Department’s undergraduate students.

(b) All those with Voting Membership shall have one vote each, with the following exceptions:
When considering faculty appointments from the outside, or lecturer or GTA appointments to teach at the 300-level or above, only tenured and tenure-track faculty may vote. Student and staff views on faculty appointments are important and encouraged. Non-voting student and staff representatives shall serve on departmental search committees for outside faculty.

When considering changes to the curriculum, tenured and tenure-track faculty and student representatives may vote. Staff representatives shall not vote. When considering changes to the graduate curriculum, the undergraduate student representatives shall not vote.

In matters involving confidential student information (e.g. grades, financial aid, admissions), only tenured and tenure-track faculty may vote, staff may remain in the meeting, and student representatives shall be excused from the meeting.

In matters involving graduate admissions, graduate teaching or research assignments, or other graduate student concerns (e.g. annual evaluation), only faculty who are members of the KU Graduate Faculty in either Regular or Dissertation Status shall vote, and staff and student representatives shall be excused from the meeting. Tenured and tenure-track faculty who are not members of the Graduate Faculty may remain in the meeting and may offer input, but may not vote.

(c) Emeritus Faculty, Courtesy Faculty, Visiting Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Unclassified Staff, University Support Staff, and Graduate Teaching Assistants are welcome to attend regularly scheduled department meetings, but shall not vote.

2. Department Meetings

By majority vote, the Department Meeting establishes policy and expresses the will of the Department in all matters brought to it for action. Matters such as recommendations for faculty hires, curricular changes, and departmental procedures or regulations must be brought before a Department meeting. The decisions of the Department are binding on its administrators, faculty, staff, and students.

The Department shall meet at least once per calendar month during the academic year – more often as determined by the Chair or by written request of at least three voting members. Notice of meetings shall be publicized at least three days in advance.
Except as provided here, conduct of meetings shall be governed by Robert’s Rules of Order. The Chair votes only to make or break a tie. An exception occurs in motions to amend the bylaws, when the Chair may vote to provide or deny the required two-thirds majority.

(a) Voting Eligibility of Absent Faculty. Faculty on leave retain full voting rights. Faculty on phased retirement may vote only during semesters in which they actively serve.

(b) Quorum. A quorum shall be deemed to exist when 50% or more of voting members are physically present. A quorum call may be used to determine the actual number of people present at the time a vote is to be taken; otherwise the attendance recorded in the minutes shall be binding. If there is no quorum, anyone eligible to vote may request that the vote be conducted via e-mail and the request shall be granted.

(c) Proxy Votes. A majority of those present and eligible to vote must approve the acceptance of proxy votes. A prerequisite for this is that the motion under consideration must have been previously publicized and remains either unchanged or changed only by friendly amendments. The motion to allow proxy votes must be voted on prior to the vote on the motion to which it pertains. If a motion to accept proxy votes fails, then a majority vote to conduct the issue by e-mail shall prevail.

(d) E-mail Ballot. When a motion is referred to an e-mail ballot, those eligible to vote are those eligible to vote on the original motion. The e-mail ballot must include the motion and brief statements pro and con, and allow a reasonable time for responses. Unreturned ballots shall be counted as abstentions.

(e) Secret Ballots. Any voting member’s request that a motion be decided by secret ballot rather than by voice vote shall be honored.

(f) Visitors at Meetings. Non-voting visitors to meetings are sometimes necessary and helpful. Invitations to such persons shall be subject to the will of the Department.

(g) Minutes. Whenever possible, a non-voting member of the Department staff shall serve as Recording Secretary and take minutes of the meeting, which shall include a report of members in attendance. Minutes (redacted, if necessary, to preserve student and/or employee privacy) shall be made publicly available. A unanimous vote is required to temporarily suspend the taking of minutes.

3. Officers

(a) Chair of the Department of Theatre. This person is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Ordinarily, candidates for this office are nominated and voted upon by the Department and recommended to the Dean for a term of three to five years. Only tenured members of the Department faculty are eligible to serve as Chair.

The Chair guides day-to-day and longer-term activities of the Department of Theatre, and officiates at Department meetings (unless noted otherwise). As its chief administrative officer, the Chair is responsible for the operation of the Department within the guidelines set forth in these bylaws. The Chair represents the Department in all appropriate external forums and exercises direct supervision over the internal functions of the Department, delegating such authority where appropriate. As an appointee of the Dean of the College, the Chair is responsible for communicating College policy to the Department, and for bringing before the Department for appropriate consideration and timely action all business originating from the College or University. In accordance with College and University policy, the Chair serves as the Budget Officer for the Department, and is responsible for oversight of the use of all State and KU Endowment funds at the Department’s disposal.

(b) Artistic Director. This person is recommended to the Chair for appointment from among candidates evaluated by the voting membership. The Artistic Director serves at the pleasure of the Chair. The
Artistic Director is responsible for the implementation of the pedagogical, artistic, and research missions of the Department in the context of theatre production. Only tenured members of the Department faculty are eligible to serve as Artistic Director.

The Artistic Director, with the assistance of appropriate department staff, is responsible for supervision of the theatre production facilities and the full range of activities undertaken by the University Theatre. These include staging of performances, fundraising and publicity for Department-sponsored public events, and interaction with other units of the College and University and the general public as a representative of the Department. In consultation with the Chair, and with the advice of the University Theatre Committee and appropriate faculty, the Artistic Director determines production assignments for Department-sponsored performances. Subject to approval by the Chair, the Artistic Director shall have broad discretionary authority in dispersal of the funds allocated, collected, or otherwise obtained for the purposes of theatrical production.

Additionally, the Artistic Director acts as a counselor to the Chair, serving as his or her representative as needed.

(c) Director of Graduate Studies. This person is appointed by the Chair of the Department from among candidates nominated by the voting membership, and serves at the pleasure of the Chair. The Director of Graduate Studies is responsible for oversight of all matters related to the Department’s graduate programs. Only faculty who are members of the KU Graduate Faculty in Regular or Dissertation Status are eligible to serve as Director of Graduate Studies, though untenured faculty may serve in this capacity. Additionally, the Director of Graduate Studies acts as a counselor to the Chair, and may be asked to represent the Department both on and off-campus in matters particular to graduate education.

4. Standing Committees

The provisional membership of committees shall be announced at the first meeting that takes place after their appointment. Approval by the Department, by majority vote, shall be required. The Faculty Evaluation Board shall be determined by lot and shall not be subject to vote.

Standing committee or ad hoc committee members, except student members of search committees, have full voting rights in that committee. The chair of a committee votes only to make or break a tie vote.

(a) Faculty Evaluation Board (FEB). This consists of three tenured faculty members drawn by lot who serve two-year, staggered terms. They are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the tenure and promotion protocols of the College. The FEB is responsible for evaluating the portfolios of all tenured and tenure-track faculty members on an annual basis in February. The Chair of the Department serves as the FEB chair ex-officio.

(b) Promotion and Tenure Committee (PTC). This consists of all tenured members of the Department. In cases involving promotion to the rank of Full Professor, voting is restricted to Full Professors. The Chair of the Department serves as the PTC chair. The PTC is responsible for evaluating candidates for third-year review, tenure, and promotion in rank. For each such candidate, the Department Chair appoints an ad hoc committee of faculty that gathers and evaluates relevant material, and presents a report to the PTC. In the event of a favorable decision the ad hoc committee assists in the preparation of materials to be submitted to the College. The ad hoc committee must include one tenured faculty member from a department other than Theatre within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

(c) University Theatre Committee (UTC). This consists of four faculty including the head of the design program, and at least two staff members including the managing director and the technical director, appointed by the Department Chair in consultation with the Artistic Director. In addition, there shall be one undergraduate student representative and one graduate student representative elected annually by their
peers. The Artistic Director has the option of serving as the chair of this committee. On routine matters, UTC’s actions take the form of non-binding recommendations to the Artistic Director. However, on questions involving the selection of Department-sponsored theatrical productions and other public programs conducted in Departmental theatre spaces, the recommendations of the committee are submitted to the Department for consideration and action. In matters involving confidential student information, student representatives shall be excused from the meeting.

(d) Direct Hire Search Committee (DHSC). This consists of three faculty members appointed by the Department Chair, plus a non-voting graduate student representative elected annually by the graduate students in the Department. The DHSC is responsible for proposing direct hire candidates who qualify under the Equal Opportunity Office’s guidelines for minority status to the Department.

(e) Allocations Advisory Committee (AAC). This consists of four faculty members, including the Department Chair, the Artistic Director, and two elected members, in consultation with appropriate staff members. The Managing Director and the Accountant serve as ex officio members. This committee advises the Chair on the allocation of funds and grants awarded to faculty and staff (including Kimbell grants and travel funds), guest artists and lectureships. The committee advises the Chair on issues of budget, including standard allocations, other expenditures, and rescissions. This committee meets bi-monthly.

(f) Scholarships and Awards Committee. This consists of three faculty members appointed by the Department Chair. This committee is responsible for evaluating and recommending to the Department students for general University scholarships and departmental awards, except for grants secured by individuals with specific administrative requirements.

Other Committees. Other ad hoc committees may be created by the Department Chair, by the Artistic Director, or by action of the Department itself, as needed. Ad hoc committees shall be typically of short duration and created for a well-defined, temporary task. Search committees shall include at least one voting faculty member from a department other than Theatre within the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and shall include at least one non-voting student representative.

5. Faculty Performance Evaluation

The Department’s faculty performance evaluation procedures may be found in a separate document entitled “Faculty Performance Evaluation Plan,” “Faculty Performance Evaluation Plan,” may be modified by two-thirds majority vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty.

6. Program Review

(a) Internal Review. The undergraduate curriculum shall be reviewed by the Department every five years, or whenever requested by a two-thirds majority of the voting membership. By approval of the Department, the Chair may appoint an ad hoc committee for this purpose, which will then make a recommendation to the voting membership.

The graduate curriculum shall be reviewed by the Department every five years, or whenever requested by a two-thirds majority. By approval of the Department, the Director of Graduate Studies may appoint an ad hoc committee for this purpose, which will then make a recommendation to the voting membership.

The practices and procedures of the University Theatre, to the degree that they are independent of curricular offerings, shall be reviewed by the Department every five years, or whenever requested by a two-thirds majority. The Department may appoint an ad hoc committee for this purpose, which will then make a recommendation to the voting membership.
(b) External Review. The Department shall undergo a comprehensive external review once every ten years, or as directed by the College or University. Procedures for conducting the External Review shall be determined in consultation with the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences or an appropriate designee thereof.

7. Grievance Procedures

The Department’s grievance procedures may be found in a separate document entitled “Department of Theatre Grievance Procedures.” This document is located in the Policy Library. The Grievance Procedures may be modified by two-thirds majority vote.

8. Conflicts Between Department of Theatre Bylaws and College or University Policy

Should these Bylaws be found in conflict with any duly-authorized College or University policy, the rules and policies of the latter shall take precedence.

9. Ratification and Amendments

These Bylaws shall be considered ratified when approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty and current staff and student representatives.

Once ratified, these Bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of the voting membership of the Department. Amendments must be circulated at least two weeks before the Department meeting in which the proposed amendments are to be formally presented.

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Theatre Department

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Related Procedures:
The Department of Theatre Grievance Procedure

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