Bylaws, Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Purpose: To define the rules and regulate the affairs of the Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Applies to: Faculty and Staff in the Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Procedures Statement: The purpose of these by-laws is to establish recognized methods of procedure for the conduct and operation of the Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies (hereafter referred to as the Department). The Department recognizes that it is bound in its actions by University regulations and that these by-laws are supplementary to these regulations, in particular the Handbook for Faculty and other Unclassified Staff.

Article I. Program Structure

A. Voting Members. Voting members of the Department shall be faculty holding tenured/tenure-track, visiting, and continuing appointments in the Department (hereafter referred to as core faculty).

B. Tenure and Promotion. In matters pertaining to tenure and promotion, voting is limited to tenured faculty members who hold an academic rank or a professional position equal to or higher than the rank for which the candidate is being considered. The WGSS Advisory Board advises the core faculty on tenure and promotion, but unlike the faculty members, students are not provided access to the files. Although the student members may provide their input about teaching and mentoring by the faculty, they do not participate in any voting that may take place. There are no discussions of specific promotion and tenure cases in the core faculty meetings.

C. Faculty Hiring. In matters pertaining to faculty hiring, voting is limited to tenured and tenure-track faculty members. In all other matters, all members above are full voting members. We have two undergraduate student representatives to our Core faculty and WGSS Advisory Board meetings, and our graduate students attend the WSAB meetings. They and all other WGSS students are invited to attend the research presentations of job candidates and to give their input on the performances of the candidates at these meetings. We encourage the student representatives to try to assess the views of other students who do not come to the meetings. Graduate students serving as the graduate representatives on the hiring committee may be invited to participate in the phone interviews. However, students do not have a vote in the ultimate hiring decision and are not permitted to participate in the faculty meetings regarding hiring decisions.

D. All decisions concerning Department business shall be made by a majority vote of the voting members of the Department who are present and voting, except in the case of tenure and promotion which shall require a two-thirds vote.

E. Advisory Members. The Department is an interdisciplinary program and as such draws on the teaching, research, and service of faculty, students, and staff across the University. The Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Advisory board (hereafter referred to as Advisory Board) shall serve as a consulting body on matters submitted to it by the Chair.

1. The Advisory Board shall consist of faculty and professors emeriti of the Department, all graduate students holding appointments as teaching assistants in the Department, and two undergraduate representatives selected through an application process conducted each Fall. Faculty members who teach cross-listed and cross-referenced courses in the Department shall be invited to serve on the Advisory Board. The Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Bibliographer in Watson Library shall
be asked to serve. Additionally, interested faculty and staff may be invited by the Chair to serve on
the Advisory Board.

2. All Advisory Board Members shall be considered active members and receive all relevant
information about the Department’s activities. Faculty and staff terms shall not be
specified. Graduate teaching assistant terms shall conform to the teaching contract, but interested
graduate students may request to continue service. Undergraduate representative terms will be two
years, but interested undergraduate students may request to continue service.

Article II. Meetings, Standing Committees, and Directorship

A. Meetings. The Department shall be operated with both monthly meetings of the core faculty and two to
four Advisory Board meetings per academic year. The WGSS Department shall annually host a reception
for new women faculty at the University of Kansas.

B. Standing Committees. The standing committees of the Department are the Undergraduate Committee,
the Graduate Committee, the Speakers/Banquet Committee, and the Personnel Committee.

1. Chairperson. The chairperson of standing committees shall be a member of the core faculty or a
member of the Advisory Board.

2. Membership. It shall be the responsibility of the chairperson to select committee
members. Members may be selected from the core faculty, the Advisory Board, or other appropriate
outside members.

3. Committees shall report and consult with members at the Advisory Board meetings and attend
Department meetings when necessary.

C. Committee Functions and Duties.

1. Undergraduate Committee
   a. This committee shall oversee curriculum matters pertaining to the undergraduate program. It
      is charged with review and recommendation of changes in the major requirements, adoption or
      revision of cross referenced and cross listed courses, and all other modifications in the
      Department's curriculum.

   b. This committee shall oversee the adequacy of the Department’s participation in the general
      education program of the College.

   c. The chairperson of this committee shall serve as Honors Coordinator for the Department for
      the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

   d. The coordinator(s) of the Human Sexuality Minor shall be a member of this committee.

2. Graduate Committee

   a. This committee shall oversee curriculum matters pertaining to the graduate program. It is
      charged with review and recommendation of changes in the degree requirements, adoption or
      revision of cross referenced courses, and all other modifications in the graduate program’s
      curriculum. This committee is also responsible for the review and selection of graduate student
      into the PhD program; and, the mentoring program for graduate teaching assistants.
b. This committee shall oversee the adequacy of the Department’s participation in Research and Graduate Studies.

c. The chairperson of this committee shall serve as the Director of Graduate Studies.

3. Speakers/Banquet Committee.

a. This committee shall take primary responsibility for inviting and scheduling speakers from on- and off-campus for the annual February Sisters commemoration, the Vern Wagner Lecture and any other speakers hosted by WGSS during the academic year. Members shall also seek funding for these activities.

b. This committee is also tasked with planning and coordinating the annual spring banquet for WGSS undergraduate seniors with the WGSS administrative assistant. This committee shall oversee scholarships, make timely announcement of availability to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies students, and make recommendations of awards from student applications.

4. Personnel Committee.

a. This committee shall take responsibility for the preparation of third year reviews of tenure-track faculty, and preparation of tenure and promotion cases. The membership in this committee shall be determined by the task required and membership may vary even within a given academic year.

b. For joint appointments in the Department, this committee will coordinate with the appropriate parallel committee in the joint department/program of the candidate for review.

D. Duties and Functions of the Chair. (The Chair is appointed by and serves at the pleasure of the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.)

1. Term of Office. The term of office is determined by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Typically, the Chair shall serve a three- or five-year term, except that the initial appointment of a Chair brought from outside the University may be for a period of as many as five years. This appointment shall be made following the regular procedures for appointing heads of departments and programs in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Incumbents are eligible for reappointment to a three-year term. If the Chair desires to be considered for reappointment, procedures for review are set out by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

2. The Chair shall represent the Department in relation to other units and the administrative offices of the University. The Chair shall attend College Chair meetings and Brown Bags and any other meetings designated for chairs and directors. The Chair shall represent the Department to other universities. The Chair shall represent the Department as a member of the advisory board of the Emily Taylor Women’s Resource Center.

3. The Chair shall set in a timely fashion monthly departmental meetings and two to four Advisory Board Meetings per academic year and act as presiding officer. It is the responsibility of the Chair to consult with and encourage the participation of the advisory board members. The Chair shall coordinate the new faculty women’s reception and the annual banquet.

4. The Chair shall take central responsibility for the day-to-day running of the Department and shall perform the functions necessary to implement all phases of Department operation, including space allocation, equipment procurement, secretarial staff, personnel decisions, and the overall functioning of the office.
5. The Chair shall assume responsibility for administering the Department budget.

6. The Chair shall be responsible for the scheduling of courses and the preparation of the course timetable.

7. The Chair is responsible for the timely publicizing of available scholarships, the selection of committee member(s), and the setting of meeting times for decisions.

8. The Chair shall appoint chairs of all other standing committees in consultation with Advisory Board members and core faculty.

9. The Chair shall be responsible for salary recommendations to the Dean. In the Spring of each year, it shall be the responsibility of the Chair to solicit complete merit information from core faculty members, to review this information, and to make salary determinations based on a merit allocation system approved annually by the core faculty.

10. In case of resignation, the Chair shall inform the core faculty, the Advisory Board, the Associate Dean assigned to the Department, and Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

E. Duties and Functions of the Undergraduate Director.

Curriculum:

1. In consultation with appropriate faculty, make decisions regarding course substitutions and transfer credit

2. Approve student petitions

3. Adviser for Study Abroad Program

4. Coordinate department undergrad advising and work with advising specialist

5. Coordinate department undergrad curriculum (such as class scheduling, course changes/additions, KU core courses)

6. Advising for course registration

Professional Development:

1. Chair Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
   a. In consultation with the Chair and undergraduate committee, determine agenda for each year.

2. Coordinate with the CLAS undergraduate staff advising specialist

3. Attend Undergraduate Coordinator Meetings

Recruitment:

1. Oversee recruiting efforts (outreach to high schools; hosting field trips)

2. Oversee the WGSS web presence for the undergraduate program
3. Coordinate the KU Majors Fair (early fall)

4. Meet with prospective students/families

**Policy & Procedures:**

1. Maintain policy in accordance with the College Undergraduate Studies Office

2. Handle undergrad Academic misconduct charges

3. Handle undergrad grade appeals

4. Coordinate department assessment of undergraduate learning outcomes

**WGSS Student Recognition:**

1. Coordinate department scholarships and award ceremony (spring banquet)

2. Participate in department senior banquet (call out names of undergrads and blurb about each student)

**Article III. Procedures**

A. Appointment of New Staff. New staff positions shall be filled at the lecturer level and higher by the approval of the voting members of the Department who are present and voting or who have cast an absentee ballot prior to the vote.

B. Procedures for Faculty Evaluation. Core faculty in the Department are evaluated on an annual basis. Information about Faculty Evaluation is set forth in the Department’s Faculty Evaluation Plan, approved by the Provost of the University of Kansas.

C. Procedures for Third-Year Review of Non-Tenured Faculty. In addition to annual faculty evaluations, non-tenured faculty will be reviewed in the Spring of their third year. A Personnel Committee (composed of two tenured faculty members of the Department chosen by the Chair in consultation with the candidate) will ask the candidate to provide them with the required candidate documents the comprise the Progress Toward Tenure Review dossier. These documents are available from the Provost Office website. The Personnel Committee will make the candidate’s vita available to core faculty members who wish to participate in the process by contributing their observations and comments to the committee. The Personnel Committee will then prepare the Initial Review Evaluation Documents of the non-tenured faculty member and present it to the voting members of the Department, excluding the candidate, for approval. The candidate will have the opportunity to respond in writing to this review. Copies of these documents will be retained by the Department, the originals, along with the candidate’s documents, will be sent to the College for review by the College Committee on Appointments, Promotion, and Tenure.


1. Guidelines. The detailed guidelines for tenure and promotion are set forth in the Department’s Promotion and Tenure Procedures document located in the Policy Library.

2. Procedures.

   a. For faculty holding 100% appointments in the Department, the Department will prepare the appropriate forms.
b. For faculty in the Department holding joint appointments, the Department will cooperate fully with the other unit in preparing the appropriate forms.

1. In the Spring semester, the Chair of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies solicits nominations for tenure and promotion cases for the following academic year. Candidates may be self-designated nominees, be nominated by another member of the faculty, or be identified by the Provost for mandatory review. In preparation for an individual candidate’s promotion to Associate or to Full Professor, the Chair of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies meets with the Chair/Director of the candidate’s joint appointment unit to discuss mutual participation and responsibilities. The Chair works with the joint appointment unit to develop the list of outside reviewers. The Department follows the procedures for nominating outside reviewers that are set by the primary department.

2. The Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Chair will select a tenured member of the University faculty in consultation with the candidate to act as liaison between the Department and the joint appointment unit, where applicable, to insure good communication and coordination between the two units. In the Fall, this liaison and the Chair will form the candidate’s Personnel Committee.

3. No later than October 1, the candidate’s file and all letters of evaluation must be available for review by the core faculty and the Advisory Board. These files and confidential letters are maintained in the Chair’s office, and available for check out by faculty (other than the candidate) and board members. In mid-October, there is an Advisory board meeting in which the Personnel committee presents a brief summary of the candidate’s file for discussion. After input from the Advisory board, the tenured faculty members of the Department shall meet for any further discussion and vote.

   a. The department review committee shall evaluate the candidate’s teaching, research, and service. In the department the initial review committee will be the candidate's personnel committee consisting of at least three faculty members appointed by the chair from the department, who are at or above the rank for which the candidate is being evaluated.

   b. The recommendation shall be forwarded for consideration to a committee of the whole consisting of all faculty members holding the appropriate academic rank in the department. No students or untenured faculty members, except unclassified academic staff with the rank equivalent to or higher than associate professor, shall serve on the candidate's personnel committee or the committee of the whole, or vote on any recommendation concerning promotion and/or tenure. Members of the committee of the whole must be equal to or higher in rank than the rank for which the candidate is being considered.

   c. By a two-thirds vote by secret ballot, the committee of the whole determines the performance rating in each area and also determines a final recommendation.

   d. After the vote, the Personnel Committee completes the work on the forms, working with the joint appointment department or program if appropriate. In addition, the Personnel Committee develops a cover letter that summarizes the Department’s overall evaluation of the candidate in terms of teaching, scholarship and/or creative work, and service. The Chair then conveys the completion of the Department’s work to the College, or, in the case of joint appointments, to the joint department to be sent to the College committee on Promotion and Tenure.

4. Promotion procedures to associate professor and full professor will meet all requirements set by the Provost’s Office.

E. Grievances Procedures. The Department follows the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences procedures for grievances (pursuant to Article XIV of the University Senate Code and Articles V and VI of the
F. Post-Tenure Review. The Department articulates its criteria and procedures for post-tenure review in its Post-tenure Review Policy formally located in the Policy Library.

G. Grade Appeal Policy. The Grade Appeal policy at the Department of Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies is governed by the University Senate Rules and Regulations, which limits appeals to the “improper application of the grading procedure announced for the course by the instructor” (U.S.R.R. 2.3.5).

The Grade Appeal process is as follows:

1. Prior to submitting a grade appeal, a student should contact the instructor to ensure that miscalculations have not occurred and with a view to resolving any misunderstanding.

2. Grade appeals pertain only to the course grade; appeals are not considered for particular exams, papers, assignments, etc.

3. Grade appeals are accepted for consideration only if the student makes the case that the course instructor failed to apply grade standards consistently across students, or did not follow through on announced or written standards of grading. The grade cannot be appealed on the ground that the student simply disagrees with the grade.

4. A student who decides to pursue a grade appeal after communicating with the course instructor must submit all of the following:

   a. Statement in writing to show communication with the course-instructor and the results of those contacts/communications.

   b. Statement in writing clearly describing the way(s) in which the course instructor failed to follow announced or written standards of grading or failed to apply grade standards consistently.

   c. All class exams, assignments, papers, quizzes, etc., that may serve as evidence in support of (b).

   d. Student should be sure to include current contact information (mailing address, phone number, and email address).

5. No appeals will be considered without all of the above materials. All materials for the appeal may be mailed or submitted to the Department Chair.

6. The Department Chair will assess the situation and communicate with the course-instructor and student to mediate a solution or provide a decision.

7. If the student is dissatisfied with the Department Chair’s decision, the student may submit a written appeal to the Department Chair for a hearing before a WGSS committee. At that time, the Department Chair will assemble an Undergraduate Studies Committee. Both the course-instructor and the student will submit materials in writing for the hearing. The Department Chair shall schedule and chair the committee during the hearing but will not be a voting member. If any member of the hearing committee has a conflict of interest, he or she will be replaced by another member of the department chosen by the Chair of the department.
8. At the conclusion of the department’s Undergraduate Studies Committee hearing, both instructor and student will be informed of the result and their right to appeal to the Judicial Board. The departmental process for grade appeal is exhausted here. In accordance with the University Senate Rules and Regulations (U.S.R.R. 2.3.1), only the instructor on record may submit a grade change unless exceptional circumstances pertain.

H. Parliamentary Practice. The rules contained in the most recent edition of Roberts Rules of Order Revised shall govern the conduct of the Department meetings, Advisory Board meetings, and Committee meetings in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these By-laws.

I. Amendments to the By-Laws. Amendments and revisions to the by-laws are by majority vote of the Department faculty, and can take place at a meeting or by email ballot. In the event that these by-laws are revised, decision-making processes will change accordingly.

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The faculty of the WGSS Department

Approved on:
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Review Cycle:
Annual (As Needed)

Related Policies:
Department Promotion and Tenure Procedures
Department Grievance Procedures
Department Post-tenure Review Procedures
Department Faculty Evaluation Plan

Review, Approval & Change History:
05/18/2015: Added the duties and functions of the undergraduate director.
11/20/2014: Revised committee structure for WGSS department; updated Table of Contents.
09/15/2014: Revised
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