



# **DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

## **BYLAWS**

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## **BYLAWS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

### **Article I. Mission Statement**

The central mission of the Department of African American Studies (AFRO) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is to:

- enrich the lives of individuals and transform society through the creation of new knowledge about the experiences, perspectives, and interests of African descended people;
- promote excellence in teaching and research in order to produce a new generation of leadership that is grounded in Black/Africana Studies and committed to public engagement to meet the continuing challenges of a diverse democratic society; and
- foster discourse to stimulate domestic public policy along with more global policies aimed at achieving social justice.

#### ***Vision***

This mission is consistent with our vision: To construct a new paradigm for Black Studies that explores the interconnections among African Americans, transnational Black immigrants, and other racialized communities in the United States; and to evaluate both the collaborative and conflictual interactions of these populations, and their relationship to other forms of social identity and oppression.

#### ***Strategies***

To achieve this vision, we endeavor:

- to utilize the most innovative teaching technologies and advanced research methodologies, building on the University's core values of providing an outstanding education, encouraging dialogue across cultures, and expanding awareness in a richly layered and diverse society; to help students achieve excellence in developing vital creative and critical competencies, including oral and written communication, computed and statistical skills necessary to engage the contemporary concerns of African descended people; and to be recognized as a national leader in African American and Interdisciplinary Studies.

#### ***Values***

These strategies are applied in the context of certain principles we value:

- the centrality of Black women and gender to the construction and development of Black communities;
- the emphasis on historically specific critical analyses of Black racial formations and the centrality of race in the making of the modern world; the use of the African Diaspora as a contextualizing framework;
- the emphasis of African American agency in the context of constantly evolving political economies, governmental policies, and Black expressive cultures; and
- the revitalization of Black Studies' commitment to social transformation.

## Article II. Membership

Membership shall be open to any person affiliated with the University and to non-university affiliated persons whose research, teaching and/or public service activities indicate a commitment to the mission of the Department of African American Studies. For purposes of these bylaws, most AFRO members shall have interests related to the African Diaspora, particularly the United States, but inclusive of North and South America, the Caribbean, and Africa.

- A. **Core faculty** describes faculty who hold appointments with budgeted time of at least 25% and other faculty positions designated by the Department of African American Studies.
- B. **Voting members** consist of the Core faculty.
- C. **Non-Voting members** are made up of five categories: Faculty Affiliates, Non-faculty Affiliates, Zero-percent (0%) Appointments, Adjunct Appointments, and Visiting Appointments.

Faculty affiliates hold faculty status within the University and their research, teaching and/or public service reflect an interest in African American Studies. They have no formal appointment in AFRO.

Non-faculty affiliates are individuals who are not members of the UIUC faculty. They need not hold a degree, but are persons whose teaching, research and/or public service evidence an interest in African American Studies.

Faculty with zero-percent (0%) appointments hold faculty status within the University, their research, teaching and/or public service reflect an interest in African American Studies, and they have an appointment in AFRO, albeit 0%. These faculty members agree to participate in AFRO activities/events and develop a course that unites their field(s) of expertise with African American Studies and meets the necessary criteria to be cross-listed between units.

Adjunct faculty are individuals who have primary appointments elsewhere. They are expected to have a long-term association with the University, or they may hold a non-faculty, salaried appointment as a primary position in another unit within the University.

Visiting faculty are those whose appointments will last three years or less. These appointments may or may not be salaried.

- D. Potential affiliate and zero-percent appointees may apply or be nominated by core faculty, faculty, or current affiliate/zero-percent faculty. The department head will recommend the appointments, but the department's core faculty must approve by a majority vote.

## **E. Specialized Faculty**

For the appointment of specialized faculty, the Department of African American Studies will be guided by Section III.6 of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Policy for Appointment or Promotion for Specialized Faculty, approved by LAS Executive Committee on March 3, 2016, and updated April 5, 2018. (Located at <http://www.las.illinois.edu/faculty/policy/documents/CollegecriteriaforappointmenttoSpecFacultytitlesUpdatedApril2018.pdf>), and guided by the provisions found in the Statutes of the Board of Trustees, Article IV, Section C at [www.bot.uillinois.edu/governance/statutes/](http://www.bot.uillinois.edu/governance/statutes/)

The above document will be used to guide the deliberations of the Department of African American Studies in discussing and finalizing the requirements of the following categories of specialized faculty, and the timetable for their consideration for promotion:

1. Ranks of Specialized Faculty
  - (1) Instructor/Lecturer Series
  - (2) Teaching Professorial Series
  - (3) Research Professorial Series
  - (4) Clinical Professorial Series
2. College Promotion Review Process
3. Guidelines and Procedures for Denial of Promotion of Specialized Faculty
4. College Level Process for Initial Appointments at Associate/Full Specialized Faculty Professor Level

## **F. Annual Review of Specialized Faculty.**

The following provides an overview of the criteria needed to appoint or promote Specialized Faculty in the Department of African American Studies, and a timeline for requests. It is meant as a companion to Provost Communications #25 and #26.

1. The Department Head or a duly appointed committee (e.g., the Faculty Development Committee) will conduct an annual review of the performance of each specialized faculty member. The reviews will be conducted consistent with guidelines provided in Provost Communications 21 and 22. The formal review of each specialized faculty member will examine their accomplishments during the past year in teaching, research, and service, focusing on their area of specialty. The resulting review will be the basis for merit salary increases.

2. Specialized faculty members must provide the Department Head with a written statement of their accomplishments and professional activities for the year, differentiated between teaching, research, and service/public engagement, as appropriate for their specialty. It is appropriate in these reviews to note major presentations at meetings, published papers from the past year, special leadership opportunities, and any other accomplishments in the academic, research, and service/public engagement arenas.

The faculty member must also provide a summary of plans for the upcoming year, and a brief assessment of the accomplishments described in the previous year's plan.

Finally, if needed, the faculty member should provide a discussion about the connection between any of their activities and the mission and expectation of the Department and the University, if that would otherwise not be clear from their previous discussion. The Department Head will request the written statement in late March, and it will be due by April 15. The dates are similar to the required annual activity reports and may vary from year to year to accommodate the calendar and deadline requirements in that year.

3. The Department Head's review, or the review by the designated committee, will be completed in a time frame consistent with University requirements regarding reappointment notifications for specialized faculty. Informed by the Committee's review, the Department Head will provide an evaluation of the specialized faculty member's performance in writing.

4. A meeting of the specialized faculty member with the Department Head will be held to review the evaluation and make any recommendations to improve the faculty member's performance in the upcoming year. This meeting will be scheduled within a week of the date that the evaluation was provided to the faculty member, unless a later date is mutually agreed upon by both the Department Head and Faculty member.

5. All documents associated with the annual review must be retained in each faculty member's personnel file. Consistent with legal requirements and university policies, the contents of official personnel files are open to examination by the faculty member.

6. If a specialized faculty member disagrees with an annual review, the faculty member and Department Head will make a serious attempt to come to a mutually satisfactory resolution through informal interactions and problem-solving efforts. If, despite efforts to reach a mutual agreement regarding the content of the review, a faculty member continues to dispute the accuracy of a review, the faculty member may append a written response to any document in the file.

7. Based on the review and as long as it is feasible, specialized faculty who have been promoted to senior level (instructors and lecturers), or Associate or Full level (teaching, clinical and research professors) may be considered for multi-year contracts. Multi-year contracts will only be offered to individuals who maintain high excellence, as evaluated in the annual review. All information within Provost Communications 17 and 25 will apply.

### **Article III. Governance**

- A. The core faculty and all non-voting members shall assist in the formulation of policy for the Department. The Advisory Committee shall advise the Head in the execution of duties.
- B. The head shall consult the Advisory Committee and the core faculty regarding faculty recruitment, academic appointments, and major curricular revisions.
- C. In order to avoid the appearance of conflict with the Statutes of the Board of Trustees, the Department of African American Studies shall periodically review and revise its by-laws. Such revisions should allow for the appropriate level of faculty involvement in policy development and internal administration without absolving the department head of the responsibilities contemplated and assigned in the Statutes. Consultation on such matters as faculty recruitment, academic appointments, major curriculum revisions, and all other policies shall seek a balance between the advice of faculty and the authority delegated by the Trustees to the Head of department.

### **Article IV. Functions**

The Department of African American Studies is a campus-wide academic unit in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The AFRO offers an undergraduate major, an interdisciplinary undergraduate minor, a graduate minor, and a graduate concentration. It is the responsibility of the unit to:

- A. Stimulate and promote research
- B. Provide undergraduate and graduate curricular offerings in the area of African American Studies.
- C. Integrate interdisciplinary offerings from the social sciences and the humanities, with a concentration on people of African descent in the United States, and the African Diaspora in the Americas.
- D. Help diversify the University's intellectual environment by the department's colloquia, conferences, and other activities.
- E. Support faculty and graduate student research and publication.

### **Article V. Administration**

- A. Article IV, Section 3 of the University of Illinois Trustees Statutes provide the guidelines for a "department organized with a Head." The Department of African American Studies operates under this provision and these by-laws and all aspects of its operations must adhere to the guidelines specified in this statute.  
(see [https://www.bot.uillinois.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_694865/File/Univ\\_of\\_IL-Statutes-Jan-24-2013.pdf](https://www.bot.uillinois.edu/UserFiles/Servers/Server_694865/File/Univ_of_IL-Statutes-Jan-24-2013.pdf))

- B. The administrative officer of the unit is the Department Head. The Head shall be appointed by the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in accordance with appropriate university and college policies and procedures.
- C. The Head of the Department of African American Studies shall report to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.
- D. The Head shall have general direction of the work of the Department. The head shall:
1. Consult with the departmental Advisory Committee in regard to departmental policy;
  2. Consult with each member of the Department regarding the nature and scope of the work in the charge of that member;
  3. Call and preside at meetings of the departmental faculty for explanation and discussion of departmental policies, educational procedure, and research;
  4. Be responsible for the organization of the work of the department, for the quality and efficient progress of that work, for the formulation and execution of departmental policies, and for the execution of University and college policies insofar as they affect the department;
  5. Report on the teaching and research of the department;
  6. Have general supervision of the work of students in the department;
  7. Prepare the departmental budget in consultation with the departmental advisory committee; and
  8. Be responsible for the distribution and expenditure of departmental funds and for the care of departmental property.
  9. In the administration of the office, the Head shall recognize the individual responsibility of other members of the department for the discharge of the duties committed to them by their appointments and shall allow proper scope to the ability and initiative of all members of the department.
- E. Associate Head. After surveying interest among all faculty, the Head shall appoint an Associate Head to assume responsibilities especially relating to faculty, which include serving as liaison with faculty and department committee, assisting in the development of the teaching schedule and assignment of courses, coordinating departmental service assignments, administering departmental awards, and other duties that may be assigned.

## **Article VI. Standing Committees**

Standing Committees shall recommend actions to the Head and the core faculty. However, action on a committee's recommendations requires a majority vote of the core faculty,



except for approval of leaves and course release-time reassignments which can be approved by the Faculty Development and Review Committee.

- A. The **Advisory Committee** shall consist of at least three (3) members of the core faculty, and include the Director of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies shall serve as regular or *ex-officio* member.
1. The Advisory Committee shall be elected annually by and from the faculty of the department by secret written ballot. The department faculty shall elect members of the advisory committee for staggered two- and one-year terms. The advisory committee shall, as determined by the faculty of the department, consist of at least three (3) members of the core faculty. At least two of the members shall be senior faculty elected to two-year terms, and at least one of the members shall be junior faculty elected to a one-year term, provided that in the initial term of the committee, one senior faculty member shall be elected to a one-year term.

The functions of the committee shall be to:

- Provide for the orderly voicing of suggestions for the good of the department,
  - Recommend procedures and committees that will encourage faculty participation in formulating policy,
  - Perform such other tasks as may be assigned to it.
2. Any faculty member shall be entitled to a conference with the committee or with any member of it on any matter properly within the purview of the committee.
  3. If the Advisory Committee is in session to evaluate the Head's performance, the Head shall not be a member, and the committee shall be chaired by a committee member elected by the committee for that purpose.

- B. The **Curriculum Development Committee** shall consist of at least three (3) faculty members.

The Curriculum Development Committee shall recommend the organization of the Department's curriculum including the core curriculum, the undergraduate major and minor, and the graduate minor and concentration. It will also oversee the development of a doctoral degree. This committee shall stimulate and coordinate new course and academic program development.

- C. The **Faculty Development and Review Committee** shall consist of at least three (3) tenured faculty members plus the Head, who will serve as Chair, except in matter of performance evaluations—annual reviews, third-year reviews, tenure and promotion, and assignment of salary increments—in which the Head shall sit as an *ex-officio* member without voting privileges, except as it concerns matters of order and process.

1. The Faculty Development and Review Committee shall comprise the Department's annual review committee.
  2. This committee shall evaluate all faculty members annually and recommend salary increments.
  3. The Faculty Development and Review Committee shall coordinate AFRO's annual peer teaching evaluations.
  4. This committee shall work with the staff to apprise faculty of instructional resources, grants, and fellowship opportunities.
  5. It also has the responsibility for selecting mentors for untenured faculty and postdoctoral fellows.
  6. The committee shall nominate core and affiliate faculty members for research and teaching awards.
  7. It shall also recommend individuals for affiliate, zero-percent, adjunct, and visiting status.
- D. The **Faculty Recruitment Committee** shall recommend areas in which to recruit new faculty. It shall also recommend the awardees for the annual Chancellor's Postdoctoral Fellowships. Current postdoctoral fellows may sit as *ex-officio* members of this committee.
- E. The **Intellectual Activities Committee** shall consist of three (3) faculty members. It is responsible for recommending lectures, symposia, conferences, visiting professors/scholars and institutes.
- F. The **Awards Committee** shall consist of three (3) faculty members. It shall nominate undergraduate and graduate students and faculty for AFRO awards. The committee will review all nominations and select award winners based on criteria set forth in the award guidelines.
- G. The **Publicity and Publications Committee** is responsible for publicizing all departmental events, developing and publishing departmental brochures, fliers, announcements, etc., and public acknowledgement of faculty and department accomplishments.

## Article VII. *Ad Hoc* Committees

*Ad hoc* committees will be constituted by the Head in consultation with the Advisory Committee and will serve as necessary to achieve the goals of the Department.

The **Development Committee** will undertake fundraising as well as other development activities that will benefit the Department.

## **Article VIII. Membership Meetings**

The Head shall hold regular meetings with the staff, core faculty, and non-voting members of the department.

1. Meetings of the core faculty shall occur during the academic year, with at least one meeting per semester.
2. Meetings of non-voting members of the department shall occur periodically.
- 3i. Meetings of the full membership may be convened as necessary by the Head or by a plurality of core faculty.
4. The minutes of all member meetings shall be taken by the departmental secretary and made available to members of the department upon request.

## **Article IX. Salary, Promotion, Tenure and Termination**

- A. The Faculty Development and Review Committee shall annually review all tenured and tenure-track faculty. This review will be used to assess the individual faculty member's progress toward tenure and/or accomplishments within the past year. This review shall also be used to evaluate performance in relation to salary decisions. In cases of joint appointments, refer to Provost's Communication #21.

### **1. Annual Review**

All core faculty members, except those undergoing the third-year review (as stipulated in Provost's Communication #21) are required to submit an annual report that includes:

- A written statement of professional activities and accomplishments during the past year;
- An outline of future plans;
- A brief statement reflecting on the relationship between the Department's goals and the faculty members' professional activities, accomplishments and future plans, i.e., a research agenda;
- Copies of all scholarship, teaching evaluations, and other performance reviews completed during the annual evaluation period.
- The Head or an individual faculty member may choose to broaden the annual review process by soliciting external reviews. See Provost's Communication #21 for broader reviews. In this eventuality, the solicitation of external reviews shall be accordance with the process established for granting tenure.

## 2. **Salary Review**

Salary review procedures are in accordance with Provost's Communication #21. Faculty reviews shall be undertaken annually by the Faculty Development and Review Committee. The deliberations shall occur in late spring before the end of classes. The procedure rates faculty on a five point Likert scale: 0 = did not turn in an AYR, 1 = Unsatisfactory, 2 = Satisfactory, 3 = Outstanding, and 4 = Excellent.

## 3. **Third-Year Review**

See Provost's Communication 13.

- Faculty members undergoing the third-year review are exempt from the annual review requirement, and are instead reviewed under the guidelines proscribed in Provost's Communications #9 and #13.

## 4. **Tenure and Promotion Decisions**

- Promotion and Tenure Committees and Decisions: See Provost's Communication #9

## **Article X. Departmental Staff**

The staff shall consist of the Department Head, and any other academic professionals, clerical staff, graduate assistants and work-study students deemed necessary for the efficient operation of the Department.

## **Article XI. Grievance Procedures**

The AFRO grievance policy adheres to Provost's Communication #21.

- A. Each member of the core faculty can initiate a formal grievance procedure either against the Department or against another member of the Department.

Prior to initiation of a grievance, we strongly encourage the parties involved to make an informal effort to resolve the dispute.

- B. The formal grievance must be explicitly stated in writing. The respondent(s) should be given a reasonable time to reply in writing to the written grievance. The appellant should then be granted a reasonable time to reply to the respondent(s).
- C. An *ad hoc* committee of core faculty members who are both impartial and unaffected by the outcome, as determined by the tenured faculty, shall be convened to address the grievance. Members of the committee must not be participants in the decision or action upon which the grievance is based. Nor shall any member of the committee also serve on a body adjudicating the grievance.
- D. The ad hoc committee must convene a formal hearing in which both the appellant and respondent(s) are present.

- E. The appellant has the right to be accompanied by an advisor of his or her choice at any and all stages of the grievance process.
- F. All committee deliberations shall be confidential.
- G. The committee's findings shall be communicated to both parties in writing within a reasonable time after the hearing.
- H. If either party is dissatisfied with the committee's ruling they may initiate a formal grievance according to the policies of the college in which the faculty member's home department is housed.

## **Article XII. Leave Policy**

For the purposes of this document, "leave" refers to a fellowship, grant, or Department/University policy that generates a release from all obligations, except supervision of graduate students. "Release-time reassignment" refers only to release from teaching obligations, excluding supervision of graduate theses during the time off period. Faculty with release-time reassignment will be expected to fulfill their service duties to the Department, College, and campus, except when related to third-year review reassignments.

AFRO's leave policy is governed by the principles of equity and a desire to enhance the opportunities of its junior faculty. Research and sabbatical leaves shall be recommended and approved by the Faculty Development and Review Committee through a majority vote. In the absence of submittal to the FD&RC, the head shall approve or disapprove based on the following guidelines:

- A. AFRO encourages faculty to seek a grant or fellowship for leave or release time immediately prior to the third-year review or immediately after successful completion of the third-year review.
- B. Faculty members may have no more than two (2) years of leave within a six-year period.
  - 1. Faculty are encouraged to teach at least one year between each leave.
  - 2. Leaves of more than one year are unlikely to be supported.
- C. Faculty members may have no more than five (5) one-semester release-time reassignments during their probationary period or within a six-year period.
  - 1. Contractual release-time reassignments count toward the total of five release-time reassignments within a six-year period.
  - 2. Faculty are encouraged to teach at least one semester between each release-time reassignment.
- D. After a completion of a leave or release-time reassignment, that faculty member rotates to the bottom of the list.

**Article XIII. Acceptance and Amendment Procedures**

- A. Amendments to any portion(s) of these Bylaws may be proposed by the Advisory Committee or by members of the faculty. In the latter case, notification of the amendment shall be conveyed in writing to the Head who shall put the amendment procedure into effect.
- B. Notice of the amendments shall be sent to core faculty and a meeting will be called to discuss the proposed revisions to the Bylaws.
- C. After discussion at a meeting, the proposed amendments require an affirmative vote by ballot by a majority of the core faculty.
- D. In the course of its operations, issues may arise that are not addressed by the By-Laws of the Department of African American Studies. This may include, for example, issues related to conflicts of interests, sexual harassment, and other matters. If such issues arise, the Department will rely on the guidelines provided in the Statutes of the Board of Trustees, Provost's Communications, and the By-Laws of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. The Advisory Board will review these matters and the above guidelines, and propose to the Department that new policies should be developed by the Department and submitted for faculty approval to be included in the By-Laws.