

By-Laws
Department of Philosophy, UMSL

The Department of Philosophy

The Department of Philosophy consists of tenured and tenure-track faculty, faculty holding joint appointments with another department, Teaching Professors, Emeritus Professors, adjunct faculty, affiliate faculty and faculty holding honorary appointments.

The Chair

The Chair is the chief executive officer of the Department and responsible for conducting the administrative affairs of the Department.

The Chair is responsible for appointing faculty to service positions (e.g., Director of Graduate Studies, Director of Undergraduate Studies). The titles and responsibilities of these positions shall be determined by the Chair. The Chair may also appoint a member of the voting faculty to serve as Vice-Chair to assist with administrative responsibilities.

The Chair is responsible for the creation and elimination of any departmental committees and for charging them with tasks and responsibilities.

The Chair determines when departmental meetings take place. A majority of the voting members of the Department may also call a meeting of the Department.

Voting

Only tenured members of the Department are eligible to serve as Chair. All and only tenured and tenure-track faculty have voting rights in the election of the Chair.

Furthermore, all and only tenured and tenure-track faculty have voting rights in all other matters in which voting would be appropriate. This includes (but is not limited to) the following: approving candidates for degrees in Philosophy, establishing requirements for a major or minor, faculty recruiting and hiring, recommending candidates for tenure or promotion, and conducting post-tenure reviews.

Non-tenure-track and adjunct faculty may have an advisory vote in some matters, at the discretion of the Chair.

The Department reserves the right to make all decisions concerning its operations and welfare, except in those cases in which such a decision would conflict with University Rules and Regulations.

Faculty on leave retain their voting rights.

Electing A Chair

Chair elections occur in April of the final semester of the three-year term, and are conducted by a secret ballot administered by the Department's Administrative Assistant or Associate (AA).

In the final semester of a Chair's term, the Chair instructs an administrative assistant (AA) to solicit nominations from eligible voters. A period of not less than two-week and up to one month should be allowed for nominations to be made. Self-nomination is permitted.

At the end of the nominating period, the AA circulates to the eligible voters a list of nominees. Anyone nominated who does not wish to be a candidate may withdraw within a week. The Department forwards the names of the nominees to the Dean and/or a committee appointed by the Dean.

The AA then circulates to eligible voters the final list of nominees with the instruction to vote for only one candidate. The vote should take place within a week, and the ballot should be secret.

The candidate receiving the most votes is the Department's Chair nominee for a term that lasts from three or five years at the Dean's discretion. In case of a tie, a run-off election is held between those receiving the most votes. If the run-off election fails to resolve the tie, the Chair is selected from among the tied candidates by a fair lottery (e.g., a coin toss) to be set up by the AA.

Removing a Chair

A majority of the voting members of the Department may at any time during the term of a Chair call for a new election. The election should be conducted in accordance with the rules for electing a Chair. If someone other than the serving Chair receives a majority of votes, the serving Chair must resign, and the candidate who receives the majority shall become Chair and serve out the remainder of the term. If no other individual receives a majority of votes, as in the case of a tie, the Chair shall remain in office.

An election cannot be called for more often than once an academic year. Such elections do not interfere with the regularly scheduled elections, taking place every three years. (For instance, if a Chair is removed after two years, the newly elected Chair will finish out the final year of the term, and be up for re-election at the end of that year.)

Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws can be made by a vote of two-thirds of the tenured and tenure-track faculty.

Departmental Appointments

All permanent or semi-permanent appointments to the Department of Philosophy require the approval of a simple majority of the voting faculty. The vote is open unless there is a request for a secret ballot.

[last amended 31 January 2021]