

By-Laws for the Department of Economics University of Texas at Austin

I. General.

This document sets forth the authority, functions, organization, rules, and By-laws of the Department of Economics of the University of Texas at Austin (hereafter referred to as the *Department*). Everything herein is intended to be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the current Handbook of Operating Procedures for the University of Texas at Austin (hereafter referred to as the *Handbook*), and the Rules and Regulations of the Board of Regents. In the event of a conflict, the latter shall control.

II. Governance.

A. Declarations. In accordance with the Handbook, the Department has elected the Executive Committee mode of governance. These By-Laws have been adopted by not less than two-thirds of the professors, associate professors and assistant professors of the Department.

B. Executive Committee.

1. *Composition and terms*. The Executive Committee (EC) is comprised of six faculty: five from the ranks of professor and associate professor of which at least three shall be full professors, and one assistant professor. The tenured members serve for two years, the assistant professor serves for one year. Generally, three members are elected each year, one assistant professor and two from the ranks of professor and associate professor. The goal is to have overlapping terms for the tenured members in order to provide some degree of continuity.
2. *Eligibility*. Successive terms are precluded. Any faculty member known to have an FRA or Dean's Fellow award for the forthcoming academic year, or known to be on leave of absence for all or part of it, is not eligible to be on the ballot. If any of these or similar situations arise for an EC-elect prior to the beginning of the academic year, then the EC-elect is to be replaced by the next indicated candidate in the most recent EC election, who then serves a two year term. The replaced faculty member is eligible for the next ballot.
3. *Election procedures*. The election process, which is the secret ballot Approval method, takes place at the end of the Spring semester, usually by the first week of May and is to be concluded, and the outcome reported, by the end of the final exam period. The professor and associate professor members are elected by the professors and associate professors, while the assistant professor is elected by the assistant professors.
4. *Vacancies*. If a vacancy occurs after the beginning of the academic year, it shall be filled by the next indicated candidate in the most recent EC election, who then serves

the remainder of the two-year term. Neither the original EC member nor his/her replacement is eligible to be on the EC ballot at the expiration of the term.

5. *Functions.* The EC shall work closely and cooperatively with the Department Chairperson in the administration of the Department. This embodies being the primary source of advice and consultation. In addition, the EC consults with and informs the faculty at large. Specific functions of the EC include:
- a. *Faculty Appointments without Tenure:* Working together, the Chairperson and the EC decide about recommendations to the Dean of the College for appointments to the rank of Assistant Professor without tenure. Salary and related negotiations are handled by the Chairperson.
 - b. *Faculty Promotions:* If an Associate Professor desires to be considered for promotion to full Professor at a time not stipulated as a “right to be considered for promotion” by University policy, the full Professors of the EC and the Chairperson working together shall decide on whether to initiate the process of consideration. During the review process, the EC shall perform functions as specified in Section IV.B.
 - c. *Faculty Salary Merit Increases:* The elected tenured members of the EC make merit increase recommendations for the untenured members of the Department. The elected full professor members of the EC make merit increase recommendations for the associate professors and develop merit increase recommendations for the full professors (other than themselves). The Chairperson shall forward these recommendations to the Dean in addition to his/her own recommendations.
 - d. *Recommendations for Chairperson:* The Department’s response to a request by the Dean for recommendations for a new Chairperson shall be organized by the EC. The EC shall ensure that the views of all members of the faculty are taken into consideration.
- C. Chairperson. The Chairperson of the Department is responsible for the administration of the Department, including the preparation of the budget, salary recommendations, the teaching schedule, the hiring and supervision of staff, and the business affairs of the Department. The Chairperson is a non-voting ex-officio member of the Executive Committee and works closely and cooperatively with the Executive Committee. At the beginning of each academic year, the Chairperson is to provide a report on expenditures during the previous year and present an expenditure plan for the current year (based on all Department resources, including College funds allocated to the Department, return of overhead funds, endowment funds from unfilled Chairpersons and Professorships, etc.) to the EC for discussion. In addition, the Chairperson is to present his/her goals and plans for recruiting for the current academic year to the EC.
- D. Associate Chairperson. The Chairperson at his/her discretion may appoint an Associate Chairperson, assign those duties, and delegate those powers as may be expedient.

- E. General Meetings. There will be an annual meeting of the membership, typically in September, at which time new faculty and visitors will be introduced, and the Chairperson will present his/her goals for the year. From time to time, the Chairperson may call for meetings restricted to specific ranks. Unless otherwise called for in these By-Laws or specified in a specific motion, all votes shall be by a show of hands.
- F. Working Together. In any case where a decision is to be made by the Chairperson and the EC “working together”, but where the Chairperson and a strict majority of the elected rank-appropriate members of the EC disagree, the Chairperson shall call a special meeting of the rank-appropriate members of the faculty to decide the issue. This applies only to the paragraphs of these By-Laws that use the term “working together.”

III. Standing Committees.

A. Undergraduate Studies Committee.

1. *Composition*: The Undergraduate Studies Committee is appointed by the Department Chairperson. Its membership consists of the Undergraduate Program Director as its Chairperson, the Honors Advisor, and three other members of the faculty chosen to represent the breadth of teaching interests in the Department. The Undergraduate Program Director meets with student leaders, including the officers of UTEA, and the Department’s academic advising unit to obtain their input on the Committee’s work. Meeting minutes will be made available.
2. *Functions*: The Committee will evaluate and make recommendations to the Department concerning proposals for new undergraduate courses and changes in the curriculum. It will monitor the performance of the undergraduate program and make recommendations about changes in program policy and practice. It will consult the faculty as needed during its deliberations and forward its recommendation to the Department Chairperson who will convey all major proposals to the faculty for formal consideration and approval. The Committee also will advise the Department Chairperson with regard to student grievances.

B. Graduate Studies Committee.

1. *Composition*: The Graduate Studies Committee (GSC) is composed of all the professors, associate professors, and assistant professors of the Department. The Department Chairperson nominates the chairperson of the GSC subject to confirmation by the GSC.
2. *Functions*: The GSC makes the policies for the graduate program, including course requirements, certification of comprehensive exam requirements, admission to candidacy, grievance procedures, and other regulations pertaining to graduate degrees.
3. *Duties of GSC Chair*. The GSC Chair will evaluate and make recommendations to the GSC concerning proposals for new graduate courses and changes in the curriculum;

monitor the performance of the graduate program and make recommendations about changes in program policy and practice. The GSC Chair will consult the faculty as needed during its deliberations, and convey all major proposals to the GSC for formal consideration and approval. The GSC Chair will also advise the Department Chairperson with regard to student grievances.

C. The Graduate Advisor.

1. *Appointment.* In accordance with the Handbook, the Department Chairperson after consulting with the GSC shall recommend a Graduate Adviser for the program. This recommendation will be provided to the Dean of the College who will forward it with accompanying recommendations to the Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies for final approval.
2. *Duties.* The Graduate Adviser advises students and represents the Graduate School in matters pertaining to graduate study. S/he provides information about the program, including admission and degree requirements; provides information and about fellowships, teaching assistantships, and research assistantships; and maintains graduate student records.

D. Graduate Admissions Committee.

1. *Composition:* The Graduate Admissions Committee is composed of members of the faculty selected by the Graduate Admissions Director, who is appointed by the Chairperson of the Department.
2. *Function:* The Graduate Admissions Director oversees the graduate admissions process for the M.A. and Ph.D. programs in economics, and with input from the Graduate Admissions Committee makes admission and financial aid decisions, the latter encompassing fellowships and teaching assistantships for incoming students. The Graduate Admissions Committee is also charged with coordinating the efforts to recruit the best possible applicants.

E. Teaching Effectiveness Committee.

1. *Composition:* The Teaching Effectiveness Committee is appointed by the Department Chairperson. It consists of three tenured faculty members, one of whom serves as its chair.
2. *Functions:* The Committee will evaluate and make recommendations to the Department concerning the quality of its undergraduate and graduate teaching, including course content and grading standards. All faculty members must provide the opportunity for students to evaluate their in-class performance. The Committee will annually review the departmental results for the Course-Instructor Surveys and will arrange peer observations to be used in tenure/promotion cases and other in-depth reviews of individual teaching. It will advise the Department Chairperson concerning any faculty members who are not meeting departmental expectations and will provide

support and assistance, including referrals to University resources, for these teachers. It also will organize workshops for the entire teaching faculty to address special issues that may arise.

IV. Tenure, Promotion and Appointments with Tenure.

- A. Voting Eligibility. For any tenure, promotion or appointment-with-tenure decision that confers the rank of associate professor or professor, the eligible voting members shall be those with at least the rank to be conferred, and henceforth these members will be referred to as the *rank-appropriate members*. The Chairperson shall give one-week notice for a meeting of the rank-appropriate members to vote on such decisions. Provisions shall be made to accept written absentee ballots, provided that they are received by the Chairperson prior to the beginning of said meeting.
- B. Review Process for Internal Tenure and Promotion. The goal of the review process for internal candidates for tenure and promotion is to provide a thorough and objective review of the substance and merits of each case by customary methods. The Department's process shall conform to all University policies. Tenure and promotion is recommended only when there is a clear case that the best interest of the Department and the University is served by doing so. The review process shall examine not only the evidence that the candidate has made contributions of appropriate magnitude and distinction in research, teaching and service, but also whether there is evidence that the candidate can sustain appropriate contribution through an extended career with the University.
1. Review Committees. Working together the Chairperson and the EC appoint review committees from the rank-appropriate members of the Department (as defined in Section IV.A) to evaluate the candidate's research, teaching and advising, and service to the Department, university and broader communities. In accordance with University policies, the EC is responsible for approving the written reports of these review committees, which shall be identified separately from the evaluation of the Chairperson. Working together the Chairperson and the EC are responsible for the preparation of the promotion files in accordance with the "General Guidelines for the Preparation of Supporting Materials and the Management of Tenured and Tenure-Track Candidate Promotion Files".
 2. External Reviewers. Candidates shall provide the Chairperson with a list of individuals to be asked to provide peer review letters. Working together the Chairperson and the EC and other rank-appropriate faculty (such as the review committee members) shall also develop a list of external reviewers whom they deem appropriate. In developing the list of external evaluators, both the candidate and the Department are to avoid conflicts of interest (e.g. dissertation chairs, co-authors and collaborators) and seek out credible reviewers knowledgeable about the scholarly expectations of a peer research university. As a general rule, about half the reviewers are to be chosen from the candidate's preference list, and the others are to be arm's-length evaluations from

recognized experts at peer institutions. A minimum of four external reviews are required, and generally the goal is to receive six external reviews. Prior to finalizing the list of external reviewers, candidates shall be allowed to see the list. After considering concerns that may be expressed by the candidate, working together the Chairperson and the EC have final say over reviewer selection.

3. *Review of Materials.* Before the meeting at which the eligible voting members consider the case, candidates shall be asked to check the materials in the promotion dossier *except* for the internal and external peer reviews of research, teaching and service. The candidate shall apprise the Chairperson and/or the EC of any concerns, and may place a statement in the file addressing any concerns they feel have not been subsequently corrected.
 4. *Conduct of Meeting.* The Chairperson of the Department shall conduct the meeting to decide on internal tenure and promotion decisions, but shall not vote. The meeting on internal candidates will be restricted to eligible voting members. There will be an open discussion of the merits of the case(s). At any time during this discussion, any member may move to end discussion. If seconded, and if at least two-thirds of the members present vote to end discussion, then the motion will carry, and a subsequent vote on the case will be conducted by secret ballot. This vote shall be reported on the “Recommendation for Change in Academic Rank/Status” form that accompanies the candidate’s file. In the event that several promotion cases are being considered in a single academic cycle, they will be addressed separately, and the outcomes of the secret ballots will not be revealed to the voting members until all cases have been considered and voted upon.
- C. Review Process for External Appointments with Tenure. The review process for external candidates for appointment with tenure shall conform to all University policies. Appointments with tenure are recommended only when there is a clear case that the best interest of the Department and the University is served by doing so.
1. *Review Committees.* Working together the Chairperson and the EC appoint review committees from the rank-appropriate members of the Department (as defined in Section IV.A) to evaluate the candidate’s record.
 2. *External Reviewers.* Working together the Chairperson and the EC and other appropriate faculty develop a list of appropriate external reviewers. In developing the list of external evaluators, the Department shall avoid conflicts of interest (e.g. dissertation chairs, co-authors and collaborators) and seek out credible reviewers knowledgeable about the scholarly expectations of a peer research university.
 3. *Conduct of Meeting.* The Chairperson of the Department shall conduct the meeting to decide on external appointment-with-tenure decisions, but shall not vote. The meeting on external candidates will be open to all voting members of the Department; however, only the rank-appropriate members as defined in Section IV.A shall be eligible to vote on any motion regarding external appointment-with-tenure decisions. There will be an

open discussion of the merits of the case(s). At any time during this discussion, any member may move to end discussion. If seconded, and if at least two-thirds of the members present vote to end discussion, then the motion will carry, and a subsequent vote on the case will be conducted by secret ballot. An offer will not be recommended to the Dean unless at least two-thirds of the rank-appropriate members of the faculty vote in favor of the appointment.

V. Periodic Faculty Evaluations.

- A. Third Year Reviews of Tenure-Track Faculty. Every tenure-track Assistant Professor is to receive a formal performance review by the end of the third year. Working together the Chairperson and the EC appoint an appropriate review committee from the professors and associate professors of the Department to conduct the review during the third year. This review shall be based upon the research statement submitted by the faculty member under review, an evaluation of the research, grants received and grants applied for, student and peer evaluations of teaching, service to the Department, university and professional community, and all materials submitted by the faculty member under review. The committee shall draft a report which shall summarize its findings, highlight areas of strength and weakness, and assess the faculty member's progress towards promotion and tenure. This draft report will be given to the Department Chairperson, who will provide a copy to the faculty member under review. The faculty member shall be provided an opportunity to meet with the review committee to discuss the report, and to submit additional material. Following such meeting, the committee shall prepare its final report, submit it to the Department Chairperson, who will provide a copy to the faculty member under review, and forward a copy to the Dean of the College.
- B. Post-Tenure Reviews. Working together the Chairperson and the EC appoint a review committee from the members of the Department with at least the rank of the person under review to conduct sixth-year post-tenure reviews. These reviews shall be based upon the research record, the rank and any professorships and/or chairs held, student evaluations of teaching for the review period, service to the Department, university and professional community, annual reports for the evaluation period, and all materials submitted by the faculty member. Upon his/her request, the faculty member shall be provided an opportunity to meet with the evaluation committee. The departmental review committee shall advise a faculty member when it appears that an unsatisfactory evaluation is likely. The committee shall offer the faculty member the opportunity to meet with the committee and provide any additional information s/he wants considered before the committee concludes its deliberations and makes its findings. In the case of an unsatisfactory evaluation the evaluation committee's report to the Department Chairperson shall provide sufficient written documentation to identify the area(s) of unsatisfactory performance and the general basis for the committee's decision.

- C. Merit Salary Reviews. As input to the merit salary review process, each member of the Department will submit a current curriculum vita and a current three-year summary of research, teaching and service.
- D. Other Faculty Reviews: The Department's response to a request by the Dean for other faculty reviews such as endowed chairs/professorships shall be organized by the Chairperson and the EC working together.

VI. Amendments, Interpretation and Continuation.

- A. Amendments. These By-Laws may be amended by no less than two-thirds of the professors, associate professors and assistant professors of the Department. After one or more proposed amendments have been circulated to all these members of the Department for at least one week, a meeting of said members shall be called at a time which will ensure wide participation. The meeting shall assess the merits of the proposed amendments and determine whether they are in a form appropriate for submission to ballot. One week after the close of debate on the proposed amendments, votes on them shall be taken by mail ballot sent to all professors, associate professors and assistant professors of the Department including those on leave. An amendment shall take effect if approved by at least two-thirds of the votes cast, and by the Dean.
- B. Interpretation. Whenever the EC and the Chairperson do not unanimously agree on the interpretation of these By-Laws, a meeting of the professors, associate professors and assistant professors of the Department shall be called. At that meeting, the issue shall be discussed and resolved by a majority vote of those present.
- C. Continuation. In accordance with the Handbook, every three years, the tenured members of the Department shall meet to recommend whether to continue the Executive Committee mode of governance for another three years, or to revert to the Budget Council mode of governance. Continuation of the Executive Committee mode shall entail the continuation of these By-Laws inclusive of all amendments. Election to revert to the Budget Council mode shall render these By-Laws null and void. Provisions shall be made for written absentee ballots. The Chairperson shall forward the outcome of this vote to the Dean.