

Bylaws for Faculty Governance
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Grand Valley State University
April 2007

Previously updated 2011, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2023,
2024, 2025. Last updated March 24, 2026

Contents

0. Preamble
1. CLAS Faculty Governance Committees
2. Rules for CLAS Faculty Governance Committees
3. Election Procedures for CLAS Faculty Governance Committees and Committees of University Faculty Governance
4. CLAS Tenure-line Representation in University Faculty Governance
5. CLAS Affiliate Representation in University Faculty Governance
6. Miscellaneous Provisions

0. Preamble

CLAS Faculty Governance is a deliberative and broadly representative forum that exists to consider the activities of the University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) in all of its facets, with particular attention to educational objectives and those matters that affect the common interests of faculty. Any standing committee may recommend general policies and otherwise advise the Dean of CLAS. All standing committees are authorized to initiate policy proposals as well as to express their judgment on those submitted to it by the administrative officers of the University and its various academic divisions. CLAS Faculty Governance is also empowered to request information through appropriate channels from the University administration.

1. CLAS Faculty Governance Committees

a. Faculty Council.

The CLAS Faculty Council (CFC) will serve as the executive committee of faculty governance within CLAS. Its responsibilities include conducting elections within the college, reviewing the functioning of all standing CLAS committees, forming committees as necessary, revising CLAS Faculty Governance Bylaws as necessary, and facilitating and supervising referenda and assemblies as called under these Bylaws. The CFC will serve as liaison between the faculty and the Dean.

The CFC will advise the Dean on policies and issues within CLAS, which includes the overall CLAS budget and staff support for CLAS committees.

The CFC shall seek to represent the general interests of the CLAS faculty collectively. Although the CFC shall always prefer a cooperative relationship with the Dean in particular and the administration in general, the CFC will represent faculty interests first and foremost.

With regards to its advisory role, the CFC shall issue a statement to the CLAS faculty whenever such consultation takes place. The statement shall include, but is not limited to, indication as to the position of the CFC on the respective issue(s). It shall also indicate the committee's affirmation, neutrality, or disapproval of the Dean's decision or course of action.

b. Personnel Committee

Purpose: The CLAS Personnel Committee (CPC) will review and recommend to the Dean on all contract renewals, promotion and tenure decisions, dismissal for adequate cause, personnel policies and issues, and other requirements of the *Board of Trustees Policies: Section 4.2.10*.

Other information: The internal bylaws of the CPC, which include a recommended timeline for personnel actions and a list of procedures for review of personnel files, are subject to the approval of CLAS faculty and the Faculty Council.

c. Curriculum Committee

Purpose: The CLAS Curriculum Committee (CCC) will review and recommend to the Dean on all curricular matters, including, but not limited to, proposals for new courses or programs, course and program changes, program requirements, and general education courses. It will review proposals for potential overlap with, or effect on, other disciplines, units, or colleges. The CCC can inform the Dean's office of requests to assist with communication and coordination among affected disciplines, units, and colleges.

Other information: If the committee has questions about curricular issues pertaining to a unit that is not represented on the committee, the committee shall consult with the relevant unit head and/or the author(s) of curricular proposals from that unit.

d. Faculty Development Committee

Purpose: The CLAS Faculty Development Committee (FDC) will advise the Dean on faculty development in teaching, scholarship, and service. This

includes playing a role in the development of mentoring plans for new faculty that are consistent with the goals of liberal learning. The committee will also advise the Dean on assisting faculty and student research collaboration, and will support faculty in the grant proposal process as a liaison between CLAS and internal and external audiences.

e. CLAS Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee

Purpose: The CLAS Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee will advise the Dean on issues concerning Affiliate faculty, such as working conditions, workload, evaluation process, opportunities for development and advancement, and roles within respective units. It will review current policies and make recommendations to the Dean. Through its work, the committee strives to strengthen the integration of the Affiliate community within their respective departments and across CLAS.

2. Rules for CLAS Faculty Governance Committees

a. Membership.

For each committee, one third of the membership will be elected at the end of each academic year for a term of three years. Members shall be elected following the procedures in Section 3. Filling of vacancies outside of a regular election is also described in Section 3.

The Faculty Council, Faculty Development Committee and Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee shall have nine members each. The Personnel and Curriculum Committees shall have twelve members each. Only tenured faculty may serve on the Personnel Committee and the membership must be selected by direct election. Only Affiliate Faculty may serve on the CLAS Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee. Both the Faculty Council and the Personnel Committee may include an extra member. For CFC, FDC and CCC, one seat can be filled by an affiliate faculty member. To encourage effective communication between Faculty Council and ECS, a member of ECS, selected by the Chair of UAS/ECS, will sit on Faculty Council as an *ex-officio* member. See the membership sections of those committees' internal bylaws for more information.

The Dean, or a designated representative of the Dean, is an *ex-officio* member of the following committees: Faculty Council, Curriculum Committee, Faculty Development Committee, and the Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee. The Dean's role with the Personnel Committee is discussed in the *Board of Trustees Policies* and the CPC internal bylaws.

Membership on a CLAS faculty governance committee requires regular attendance at meetings and full participation in the committee's business.

b. Standard Meeting Times.

Each committee shall have a standard meeting time, which will be communicated as part of the announcement of elections each year. Committees normally meet as described below, but may meet more often if necessary. The standard meeting times are currently:

Faculty Council: Wednesdays, 2:00-3:50 PM, every other week
Personnel Committee: Fridays, 3:00-5:00 PM, every other week
Curriculum Committee: Fridays, 2:00-4:00 PM, weekly
Faculty Development Committee: Thursdays, 4:00-5:30 PM, every other week
Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee, Fridays, 1:00-2:30 PM, monthly

Permanent changes to these meeting times must be approved by Faculty Council.

c. Length of Terms.

During an election, faculty are awarded positions based on the election results. Faculty with the largest percentage of the vote will be awarded 3-year terms for Faculty Council, Personnel Committee, Curriculum Committee, Faculty Development Committee, and Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee positions. Shorter terms will be assigned in descending order of vote percentage. The length of the term awarded will be included in the notification sent to new committee members (see section 3j) For clarification on the approval voting process, see Section 3h. There are times when a committee member is unable to finish the term they were awarded. In these cases, vacancies will be filled with shorter term (1 or 2 years) appointments to complete the original term.

Terms begin the Monday of finals week of Winter semester. Prior to the first day of Spring/Summer semester (each year), each committee must choose its Chair for the following academic year. It is the responsibility of the Chair whose term is expiring to make sure the selection occurs. Whenever possible, rank and experience should be taken into consideration when choosing a Chair.

Sabbaticals and leaves of absence: Faculty members are not allowed to serve on CLAS Faculty governance committees during the sabbatical semester, or any other leave of a semester's duration.

One semester sabbaticals: If a faculty member takes a one semester sabbatical (other than in their first semester of service), they may resume their committee position and serve out the rest of the faculty member's term after the sabbatical is finished,

Multi-semester sabbaticals or leaves: Sabbatical or other leaves lasting two or more semesters require that the faculty member relinquish their seat on the CLAS faculty governance committee.

Those who anticipate taking a sabbatical (of any length) that includes their first semester on the committee are ineligible and will forfeit their term (see section 3c)

d. Alternate Assignment.

The chair of Personnel Committee shall receive one course (3 credit hours) alternate assignment in the fall semester and two courses (6 credit hours) of alternate assignment in the winter semester to complete their responsibilities. The Chairs of Faculty Council and Curriculum Committee shall receive one course (3 credit hours) alternate assignment per semester to complete their responsibilities. The chair of Faculty Development Committee and Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee will receive one course (3 credit hours) alternate assignment in either the Fall or Winter semester (not both) to complete their responsibilities. The alternate assignments listed here are subject to approval by the Dean.

e. Attendance at Meetings.

Committee members should make all efforts to attend all committee meetings. In the event a committee member cannot attend the regular committee meeting as a result of a teaching conflict that arises after they have been elected, a replacement may be appointed by the Faculty Council Chair, or elected (according to bylaws rules) for a maximum of one year. No substitutes or alternates are allowed.

f. Internal Bylaws of Committees.

Committees develop internal bylaws and procedures to describe the selection of officers, procedures to handle responsibilities (e.g. review of curriculum proposals), and other matters. Internal bylaws must be consistent with university policy and these Bylaws. Internal bylaws of each committee need to be approved by the CFC. In addition, CFC and CPC internal bylaws require the approval of CLAS faculty. All internal bylaws, once approved, shall be publicly available.

g. CLAS Faculty Governance Bylaws.

Once CLAS Faculty Governance Bylaws have been modified and approved by CFC, those changes must be approved by CLAS Faculty. These bylaws, once approved, shall be publicly available.

3. Election Procedures for CLAS Faculty Governance Committees and Committees of University Faculty Governance

Overall Timeline

Winter Election

1. Determine the vacancies on each committee. Confirm vacancies in first CFC meeting of the Winter semester.
2. Email faculty members whose term is running out on a committee.
3. Announce vacancies to the CLAS Unit Heads—Before the first unit heads meeting in January.
4. Nominations open—On the fourth Monday in January.
5. Nomination period—Two weeks.
6. Voting Begins—No later than Monday following the close of nominations.
7. Voting closes—One week after voting opened.
8. Certification—No later than four days following the close of voting.
9. Notification—No later than seven days following the close of voting.

Fall Election (If necessary)

1. Call for nominations—No later than the Friday after the first Faculty Council meeting.
2. Nomination period—One week.
3. Voting opens—No later than Monday after the close of nominations.
4. Voting closes—One week after voting opens.
5. Certification—No later than four days after voting closes.
6. Notification—No later than seven days after voting closes.

a. Announcement of Upcoming Election.

The Faculty Council will determine which openings on CLAS faculty governance committees must be filled by a CLAS-wide election. This determination will occur at the first meeting of the Winter semester. Before the first Unit Heads meeting, the Chair of the Faculty Council will communicate the list of openings to Unit Heads.

b. Call for Nominations.

The Faculty Council will issue a call for nominations on the fourth Monday of January by opening the ballot. The ballot will accept nominations for at least two weeks. Nominations are opened on the fourth Monday of January to ensure they are open beyond January 31st when the Dean's office receives the sabbatical awardees list. For people already serving on a committee who are awarded sabbaticals, replacement seats should be added to the ballot.

c. Nomination Procedure.

All tenure-line faculty members whose primary unit is in CLAS may nominate themselves or colleagues for any open position for which they are eligible.

Faculty members may stand for election to one or more committees, but individuals can serve on only one CLAS faculty governance committee at a time.

Sabbaticals and Nominations: Faculty members may stand for election if they expect to take a one semester sabbatical or other leave during the second or third year of the term they are seeking (See section 2c). Faculty members who expect to take a sabbatical or other leave during the Fall semester of the first year of the term they are seeking are not eligible for nomination.

d. Responsibility of Nominees.

Each nominee must accept the nomination by responding to the email from the ballot system. Acceptance should include a brief personal statement (maximum of 150 words) beginning with their unit abbreviation and continuing with an explanation of why the faculty member wishes to serve on the committee. Those personal statements are visible on the ballot once voting has begun.

e. Number of Nominees.

The goal for each election is to have at least two nominees for each open position. If there are not enough nominees for a position after the normal nomination process, the Faculty Council will extend the nomination period for an additional week to actively seek additional nominees.

f. Voting Timeline.

No later than the Monday following the close of the nomination period, the Faculty Council will open the election for voting. Once voting is initiated, faculty members will have a period of seven days to cast their votes. All tenure-line faculty members whose primary unit is in CLAS are eligible to vote in elections for CFC, FDC, CCC, CPC while all affiliate faculty whose primary unit is in CLAS are eligible to vote in elections for CFC, FDC, CCC, and CAFAC.

g. Approval Voting.

For each position, faculty members will use approval voting in which they may vote for as many of the nominees as they approve.

h. Outcome of Elections.

With the following exceptions, the nominee(s) with the highest number of approval votes are elected:

- No more than one person from any one unit may serve on CPC. If there are two nominees from the same unit for these committee positions, the one with the higher number of approval votes will be elected; if both

nominees are tied, a coin toss conducted by the Faculty Council will determine the winner. No more than two faculty members (whether tenure-line or affiliate) from any one unit may serve on CFC, FDC, or CCC. If there are three nominees from the same unit for any of these committee positions, the ones with the higher number of approval votes will be elected; if all three nominees are tied, Faculty Council will draw names from a bag (or hat) to determine the winners.

- If two nominees from different departments are tied for the final position to be filled on a committee, a coin toss, conducted by the Faculty Council, will determine the winner.
- If a nominee is elected to multiple CLAS committees, the faculty member must choose one committee.
- Faculty Council will certify the election results no later than two days after voting closes.

i. Announcement of Results.

The Chair of the Faculty Council will communicate the results of the election by posting an updated roster to the CLAS website by the end of the semester of the election. The Chair, or a designate, will notify nominees of the results of the election including the length of term for those who were elected within 7 days after the close of voting. See Section 2c for a discussion of when terms begin.

j. Filling of Vacancies.

The Faculty Council will maintain a list of all candidates and their vote totals. Outside of the annual regular election cycle, if a seat is vacated on a CLAS committee due to resignation or some other reason, the Faculty Council will offer the seat to the next eligible person on the ballot with the highest number of votes. If the ballot is exhausted, Faculty Council will appoint an interim replacement to the position until it can be filled through the next regular election (with the exception of CPC). If there are no alternates for CPC, there will be a Fall election (faculty must have run in the election for a seat on CPC).

k. Fall Election

If no alternates currently exist for the CLAS Personnel Committee, there will be an election for alternates in the Fall semester.

If any vacancies on the Personnel Committee exist at the start of the Fall semester, a Fall election must be used to fill the vacancies.

The call for nominations will occur no later than the Friday after the first Faculty Council meeting of the Fall Semester.

The nomination period will be at least one week. Voting will open no later than the Monday after the close of nominations. The voting period will be one week.

Faculty Council will certify the election no later than four days after voting closes.

The Faculty Council Chair or designate will notify the nominees and the Personnel Committee Chair no later than three days after the election.

An alternate will serve until the next regular election if a vacancy arises on the CPC. An alternate may also serve for one semester if it is necessary for a CPC member to recuse him or herself. See the CPC internal bylaws for more information.

If an election for alternates occurs, Faculty Council will also use the election results to fill any other vacancies. If no election for alternates occurs, Faculty Council will decide whether to fill vacancies either by appointment or election.

4. CLAS Tenure-line Faculty Representation in University Faculty Governance

a. University Representation.

CLAS has tenure-line faculty representatives on many University faculty governance committees, starting with the University Academic Senate. See the *Shared Governance* Policies section 1.01-1.03 for information about the range of committees and the number of representatives.

There are various other committees at Grand Valley which are not part of faculty governance (for example, the Provost's Advisory Committee). These Bylaws do not address the composition of those committees.

b. Eligibility to Serve.

All tenure-line faculty members whose primary unit is in CLAS are eligible to represent CLAS on the committees listed in the *Shared Governance* policies. All seats will be elected CLAS-wide in conjunction with the election for CLAS faculty governance (see section 3).

The following restrictions also apply:

UAS may have no more than three faculty members may serve from the same unit.

UAC may have no more than three faculty members may serve from the same unit.

Standard-7 committees (seven members from CLAS) and the General Education committee: No more than two faculty members may serve from the same unit.

Standard-4 committees (four members from CLAS): No more than one faculty member may serve from the same unit.

Graduate Council: Only designated graduate faculty members from units that offer at least one graduate course are eligible.

c. Other GVSU Committees Requiring CLAS Representation.

For committees not under the purview of University faculty governance, the Faculty Council is empowered to address filling vacancies on these committees as the need arises.

5. CLAS Affiliate Representation in University Faculty Governance

a. University Representation.

CLAS has Affiliate faculty representatives on one University faculty governance committee: four seats on the Affiliate Faculty Advisory Committee.

b. Eligibility to Serve.

All affiliate faculty members whose primary unit is in CLAS are eligible to represent CLAS. All seats will be elected CLAS-wide in an election run in parallel with the CLAS Faculty Governance Committee election (see section 3). In this election, only CLAS affiliate faculty members will vote for their representatives.

c. Approval Voting.

For each position, affiliate faculty members will use approval voting in which they may vote for as many of the nominees as they approve.

Standard-4 committee (four members from CLAS): no more than one faculty member may serve from the same unit.

d. Other GVSU Committees Requiring CLAS Representation.

For committees not under the purview of University faculty governance, the Faculty Council is empowered to address filling vacancies on these committees as the need arises.

6. Miscellaneous Provisions

a. CLAS Faculty Assembly.

There shall be at least one CLAS Faculty Assembly during each academic year. Faculty Assemblies shall be called by the Dean, by at least six members of the Faculty Council, or in response to a petition signed by 25% of the CLAS Faculty. During an Assembly, representatives from the committees of CLAS Faculty Governance will inform the faculty about various issues. The Dean leads the Assembly.

b. CLAS Faculty List.

The Dean of the College shall be responsible for producing a current list of the members of the CLAS Faculty by name and title upon the request of the Faculty Council. The list shall be updated on an ongoing basis by the Dean's administrative staff. The CLAS faculty members list shall be used to verify the eligibility of candidates and voters in CLAS faculty governance elections.

c. Amending the Bylaws.

Tenure-line and affiliate faculty members whose primary unit is in CLAS may propose amendments to these Bylaws. Any proposed amendment that receives the support of 2/3 of the Faculty Council will be presented to the Faculty. The amendment shall be discussed in a public forum, which may be held in a discussion board or face-to-face. The proposed amendment must be submitted to the CLAS Faculty at least ten working days in advance of the forum. If online, the forum must be available during that 10-day period. A referendum shall be held on the proposed amendment no more than twenty working days after the forum concludes. At least 2/3 of those who vote must support the proposed amendment in order for the amendment to be adopted. Tenure-line and affiliate faculty members whose primary unit is in CLAS may vote on proposed amendments.

d. Referenda Procedures.

For proposals that are not related to these Bylaws, a referendum may be called to seek the approval of the CLAS faculty. In this situation, the procedure in section 6c. will be used.

e. Communication of Committee Activities.

Information on the work of the CFC, CPC, CCC, FDC, the standing committees of CLAS tenure-line Faculty Governance, will be available to CLAS tenure-line faculty. Information, which may include meeting announcements, agendas, minutes, and other documents, will be posted and accessible to faculty through the CLAS Faculty Governance webpage (password protected).

f. Annual Reports from Standing Committees.

Each standing committee will issue an annual report of its activities in April of the winter semester. In addition, an oral report will be part of the CLAS Faculty Assembly (see section 6a).

g. Strategic Planning for CLAS.

CLAS Faculty Governance shall be consulted about strategic planning for the college.

h. Faculty with Joint Appointments.

For faculty with joint appointments, any departmental restrictions on representation in these Bylaws shall be interpreted as pertaining to the primary department of the faculty member.

i. Major Changes in Organization of College or Administration.

Proposals regarding major changes in the organization of CLAS or in collegiate administrative policy must be discussed by the CLAS Faculty Council. The policy and process for appointing an interim or new Dean for CLAS must be discussed by the CLAS Faculty Council.

j. Review of These Bylaws.

The Faculty Council must review these Bylaws every five years to determine if any changes should be proposed to the CLAS faculty.

These bylaws were approved by the CLAS faculty in January 2006 and approved by UAS in April 2006. Revisions were approved by the CLAS faculty in April 2007, April 2011, March 2017, November 2018, November, 2019. February 2020, March 2020, March 2024, September 2025, and March 2026. Meeting time changes for CCC and FDC were approved by CFC and bylaws were revised to reflect these changes in August 2023.