

Bylaws of the Faculty Council
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Grand Valley State University
September 2025

I. Scope and Purpose

The CLAS Faculty Council represents the faculty of the College and, in accordance with provisions in the Shared Governance Policies and the CLAS Bylaws, coordinates and reviews the activities of other College faculty governance committees, including standing committees and ad hoc task forces.

Specific responsibilities include:

- conducting elections to college and university governance committees;
- facilitating and supervising referenda and assemblies called by CLAS faculty under the CLAS Bylaws;
- appointing various working groups and *ad hoc* committees that may arise;
- reviewing the functioning of all CLAS committees;
- recommending the appropriate staff support for all CLAS committees;
- advising the Dean of the College;
- advising officers of the University and collaborating with the organs of University-wide faculty government.

The Faculty Council endeavors to reach collective decisions on policies to be initiated or evaluated and to transform the interests of its various constituency groups into forms congruent with the interest of the College and of the University as a whole.

In its representative role, the Faculty Council seeks to express the range and strength of views held by members of the CLAS community, especially when a diversity of views increases understanding and reveals the breadth of considered opinion.

1. Relationship with the Dean of the College.

The Faculty Council will advise the Dean on policies and issues in the College. If needed, it will review the overall College budget and inform the Dean and all faculty members of its findings. It will make recommendations on College staffing issues to the Dean and inform all faculty members of its findings. It will respond to the Dean's requests for comments and suggestions, recommendations, and advice about the feasibility of new programs and other initiatives, about matters of policy, the allocation of resources, and any other issue involving the responsibilities and interests of the faculty of the College.

The Dean may present recommendations to the Council, but the Council shall not be limited in its consideration of issues to those recommended by the Dean, nor shall it be obliged to fulfill particular charges recommended by the Dean.

2. Relationship with the University.

The Faculty Council will advise officers of the University and collaborate with the organs of University-wide faculty government on policies and issues involving the responsibilities and the interests of the faculty of the College.

II. Membership

1. Composition. The Faculty Council shall be composed of administrative officers and elected representatives of the faculty as follows:

- a. Elected members
 - i. Council members will be elected at-large from the CLAS faculty as a whole.
 - ii. The Council will have nine elected members; at the beginning of each semester the elected members of the Council shall consider the need to appoint an additional member to promote broad and/or underrepresented perspectives and shall make such an appointment if the need is pressing and a suitable candidate is identified.
 - iii. One Council member may be affiliate faculty; otherwise all Council members must be tenure-line faculty. Neither unit heads nor assistant and associate deans may stand for election to the Council.
 - iv. There may be no more than two elected tenure-line Council members from any one unit in CLAS.
- b. The Dean or a designated representative of the Dean sits on the committee as a non-voting, *ex-officio* member.

2. Election, Terms of Office, Vacancies. These are described in the Bylaws for CLAS Faculty Governance.

3. Duties. Membership on the Council requires a readiness to attend meetings of the Council regularly and to participate fully in its business, including the work of its subcommittees. It is the continuous obligation of the Council to report to the members of its constituencies about the discussions, decisions, and recommendations of the Council and to solicit questions and suggestions from them for presentation to the Council.

III. Positions

1. Chair

- a. Election of the Chair. Following the timetable in the CLAS Bylaws for CLAS Faculty Governance, the Faculty Council will elect its own Chair from among its members, including newly appointed and returning members. All tenure-line members are eligible for the position of Chair. The Chair shall serve for a one-year term. The Chair may be removed from the office of Chair by the affirmative vote of six members of the Council. With the approval of the Dean, the Chair shall receive one course release per semester in order to complete the responsibilities of the position.
- b. Responsibilities of the Council Chair. The Council Chair shall be the presiding officer and moderator of the Council. The Chair shall be the primary point of communication between the Council and external constituencies. The Chair shall have sole administrative privileges to all official web posting sites. The Chair will certify that the minutes of meetings and other

communications as approved by the Council are correct and will post them. With the approval of the Dean, the Chair shall attend all College unit head meetings. The Chair shall arrange a meeting at least once year that includes the Chair, CLAS representatives on ECS, and the other CLAS committee chairs.

2. Council Recorder. The Faculty will elect its own Recorder from among its members, including newly appointed and returning members. All members are eligible for the position of Recorder. The Recorder shall serve for a one-year term. The Recorder shall record the minutes of each Council meeting and, following their approval, submit them to the Chair for posting.

IV. Meetings

1. Regular meetings. The regular schedule of Council meetings shall be 2:00-4:00 p.m. on alternate Wednesdays throughout the academic year, with meetings typically scheduled when there is not a meeting of CLAS Unit Heads. Regular meetings may be canceled, or the times of regular meetings may be changed, but only with unanimous consent of the Faculty Council as expressed in writing to the Chair.

2. Special meetings. A majority of the members of the Council may call a special meeting either by expressing their request to the Chair in writing or by passing a motion to this effect in a regular meeting.

3. Agenda.

- a. The Chair shall organize the agenda for each meeting of the Council. Any member of the Faculty Council may place an item on the agenda by submitting it in writing to the Chair. The Chair shall respond to requests from the Dean and other college and university officers, from college and university committees and task forces, and from members of the faculty of the College, by placing items on the agenda for consideration by the Council. Whenever possible, the Chair will note on the agenda any items slated for consideration at subsequent meetings.
- b. The agenda should accommodate reports from college and university officers and committees, as well as discussion on issues that occur in the conduct of the Council's normal business or arise unexpectedly during the year.

4. Notice of meetings and committee reports. Notices of all meetings, the agenda, and reports to be presented for action by the Council shall be distributed to members at least two days in advance of a meeting.

5. Conduct of meetings.

- a. Quorum. Two-thirds of the full membership shall constitute an actual quorum. If at any time during a meeting an actual quorum was established, a working quorum will be presumed to be in effect until the scheduled time of adjournment, unless any member of the Council shall in the meantime call for quorum. If an actual quorum could not be established following a call for quorum, the meeting shall be suspended unless and until an actual quorum is established. Otherwise, Council action may be conducted with a working quorum.
- b. Voting. Unless otherwise specified, a question, motion, action, or other decision or resolution of the Council shall require approval by a majority of votes. Abstentions shall not be included in

the number of votes cast. Voting shall ordinarily be by voice or by show of hands, at the discretion of the Chair. A secret ballot will be used if requested by a member of the Faculty Council. Unless a secret ballot is used, any member of the Council may request that a roll call vote to be recorded in the minutes.

- c. Meetings shall be open unless the Council, by a majority of votes cast, decides to close the meeting.
- d. Rules of Order.
 - i. The Chair, or the Chair's designee, shall chair the meetings of the Faculty Council. In matters pertaining to the conduct of meetings that are not specified in these Bylaws, the Chair's ruling shall stand unless this ruling is challenged by a member of the Council and is overturned by a majority of votes cast.
 - ii. Members are not required to obtain the floor before making motions or speaking.
 - iii. Motions need not be seconded.
 - iv. There is no restriction on the number of times a member can speak to a question, and motions to close or limit debate are not allowed.
 - v. While no motion is pending, informal discussion of a subject is permitted.
 - vi. The chair can speak in discussion, make motions, and vote on all questions.
 - vii. When a proposal is perfectly clear to all present, a vote can be taken without the formality of introducing a motion.

V. Ratification and Amendments

1. Insofar as they do not conflict with the Shared Governance Policies or with the CLAS Bylaws, these Bylaws will take effect when they have been approved by two-thirds of the members of the Faculty Council and ratified by two-thirds of the votes cast in a CLAS faculty referendum.
2. These Bylaws will be amended when a proposed amendment, insofar as it does not conflict with the Shared Governance Policies or with the CLAS Bylaws, has been approved by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Faculty Council and ratified by two-thirds of the votes cast in a CLAS faculty referendum.

Approved by the CLAS Faculty Council: November 6, 2019

Approval of CLAS Faculty: Winter 2020. General Faculty approval pending referendum via ballot Winter 2021. (Delayed by the COVID 19 pandemic.)

Approved by the CLAS Faculty Council: April 2024

Approved by CLAS Faculty: September 2025