

# College of Liberal Arts Bylaws

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# BYLAWS

## COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

### PREAMBLE

These Bylaws provide a framework within which the faculty of the College of Liberal Arts (CLA) participate in college level educational and decision-making processes. These Bylaws were developed by the College of Liberal Arts over multiple years consultation and review by departments, faculty and faculty senators between 2016 through 2019. Subsequently they have been updated to reflect changes that have occurred in UTRGV procedures since 2019. These Bylaws are valid to the extent they comply with policies and procedures set forth by the State of Texas, The University of Texas System Regents' [\*Rules and Regulations\*](#), The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV) [\*Handbook of Operating Procedures\*](#) (HOP) and the Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost Guidelines.

### ARTICLE I - NAME

This organization shall be known as the College of Liberal Arts at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

### ARTICLE II - MEMBERSHIP

The General Faculty of the College of Liberal Arts shall consist of all fulltime faculty members within the College who are tenured, tenure track, 3-year lecturer or one-year adjunct faculty with at least two (2) years of continuous fulltime service with the College. This includes College of Liberal Arts faculty with 50% or more appointments within the College of Liberal Arts who hold joint positions in other colleges, institutions or agencies.

### ARTICLE III - MISSION

Located in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, the UTRGV College of Liberal Arts embraces its mission within a Hispanic Serving Institution to prepare students for success in a complex, diverse, and constantly changing world through our disciplinary strengths and engaged teaching in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Our faculty are committed to both theoretical and applied scholarship serving our professions and communities. Our courses emphasize critical thinking, research mentoring, experiential and service learning, analysis, and skills in oral and written communication to prepare bilingual, bicultural, and biliterate students who will serve our communities, nation, and world.

### ARTICLE IV - VISION

The UTRGV College of Liberal Arts will become a top Hispanic Serving College through continuous development of our faculty, staff, and students in transdisciplinary approaches to inquiry by embracing innovation, diversity, bilingualism, biculturalism, biliteracy, innovative teaching, research and service.

We will create generations of thoughtful, humane, and informed graduates who recognize the importance of the past, think critically about issues in the present, and are prepared for a future that is inclusive of peoples everywhere.

## ARTICLE V - ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DUTIES

The College of Liberal Arts Organizational Structure and descriptions of duties are depicted in Appendices A & B and are incorporated as amended from time to time.

## ARTICLE VI - STANDING COMMITTEES

### Executive Leadership Committee:

Purpose: The executive committee assists and advises the Dean to plan for College of Liberal Arts student success through effective management of operations such as scheduling classes, enrollment, oversight of department and college faculty committee selection, etc. and provides clear leadership to the staff & faculty of the College of Liberal Arts in scholarly productivity, excellence in teaching, and significant service to ensure educational opportunities for our students, research impact on the Rio Grande Valley, State and nation, and meaningful community engagement.

Composition: The Executive Leadership Committee is composed of the Dean, Associate Deans, Assistant Dean, and all department/school chairs/directors.

### College Administrative Team:

Purpose: The purpose of the College Administrative Team is to facilitate the flow of information within the College of Liberal Arts, develop college-level policy recommendations for the Dean, and otherwise advise the Dean on matters concerning CLA, including but not limited to matters and activities both internal to CLA and UTRGV and external to the broader community.

Composition: The Committee shall be composed of the Dean, the Associate Deans, Assistant Dean, Graduate Program Directors, Department/School Chairs/Director, one College of Liberal Arts Faculty Senator to be determined by the CLA faculty Senate representatives, and the CLA representative to the Office of Faculty Success and Diversity Faculty Council.

### Assessment Committee:

Purpose: The Assessment Committee is charged with the oversight and guidance of the College of Liberal Arts' efforts toward continuous improvement of student learning, institutional effectiveness, and compliance with SACS/COC's accreditation regulations. The committee will meet as needed to discuss all assessment activities in the college, deliverables, and provide advice to the Dean.

Composition: The Committee shall be composed of one representative for each discipline offered in the College of Liberal Arts. If a representative is also an Assessment Coordinator, they are not subject to the Length of Term clause under Article VII. The Associate Dean of Assessment will chair the committee but shall vote only in cases of tied votes.

## Research & Engagement Committee

Purpose: The purpose of the Research and Community Engagement Committee is to support faculty and student research and to promote engagement activities with the community and other stakeholders. Specific activities of the Committee may include, but are not limited to, identifying and promoting research funding opportunities for faculty, promoting student research and experiential learning, and providing a liaison for consulting, internships, and joint projects with community stakeholders.

Composition: The Committee shall be composed of one faculty representative from each department/school. The Associate Dean for Research and Diversity and the Associate Dean for Interdisciplinary Programs and Community Engagement will serve as *ex-officio* members.

## Student Scholarships & Awards Committee

Purpose: The Student Scholarships & Awards Committee shall administer the College of Liberal Arts College Level scholarships and awards and oversee Departmental Scholarships and Awards at the request of a Department.

The Committee:

- a. publicizes available scholarships and awards;
- b. solicits and evaluates applications and makes recommendations to the appropriate Associate Dean or Department Chair regarding which students shall be considered for scholarships and awards;
- c. makes periodic reports to the College of Liberal Arts to keep it informed of all decisions; and
- d. supports department/school/unit level committees administering student awards and scholarships based upon funding for or from a specific department/school.

Composition: The Committee shall be composed of one faculty member in representation of each department/school. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education and the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education shall serve as *ex-officio* members.

## Tenure, Promotion, Post-Tenure Review, and Annual Review Committee (This is a Committee not under the 3-year rule—it is determined annually):

Purpose: The Tenure, Promotion and Annual Review Committee shall conduct independent evaluations and provide substantive feedback to faculty under review, as appropriate under UTRGV HOP [ADM 6-505](#) (Faculty Tenure and Promotion), [ADM 6-504](#) (Post Tenure Review), and [ADM 6-502](#) (Annual Faculty Review). These independent evaluations shall highlight each faculty member's strengths and weaknesses, as well as areas for improvement. The Committee shall follow the timeline specified by UTRGV procedures.

Composition: The composition shall follow the composition of the College Tenure and Promotion Committee specified in the UTRGV HOP: ADM 6-505 (Faculty Tenure and Promotion), [Sections E.2.b.ii and iii](#). Should the need of a College Post Tenure Review Committee arise, UTRGV HOP: ADM 6-504 Section E.3.i. will be followed.

## Undergraduate Enhancement and Growth Committee

Purpose: The Undergraduate Enhancement and Growth Committee shall act as an agent of continuous improvement to ensure the quality of undergraduate programs and curricula with attention to the connection of the curricula to graduate programs in our College and elsewhere within and outside the institution.

The Committee:

- a. Envisions and operationalizes CLA strategic objectives as related to undergraduate programs and curricula;
- b. Promotes collaboration among College of Liberal Arts undergraduate programs in areas such as student advising, experiential learning, research participation, assurances of learning, outcomes assessment, and distant education;
- c. Critically analyzes information, departmental, and student resources as they relate to undergraduate programs and curricula and provides recommendations for improvement and implementation;
- d. Uses assessment information sources such as the assurance of learning data to appropriately nurture undergraduate programs and curricular connections to graduate training;
- e. Reviews special topics courses as proposed by faculty to ensure that these topics meet requirements for SACS/COC and THECB in terms of overlap with regularly listed courses, the three-offering rules, and other requirements for cross-listing and/or cross-leveling of courses.
- f. Protects quality and integrity of undergraduate curriculum delivery as the institution pursues Emerging Research I status;

Composition: The Committee shall be composed of one faculty member in representation of each undergraduate program. The School of Interdisciplinary Programs and Community Engagement will have a maximum of two faculty representatives on this committee. The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, the Associate Dean for Assessment, and two undergraduate students, one from the Humanities and one from the Social Sciences, shall serve as *ex-officio* members.

## Graduate Enhancement and Growth Committee

Purpose: The Graduate Enhancement and Growth Committee shall act as an agent of continuous improvement to ensure the quality of graduate programs and curricula with attention to the connection of the curricula to undergraduate programs in our College and elsewhere within and outside the institution.

The Committee:

- a. Envisions and operationalizes CLA strategic objectives as related to graduate programs and curricula;
- b. Promotes collaboration among College of Liberal Arts graduate programs with others and undergraduate programs in the CLA in areas where interdisciplinary work benefits the students, the programs, and the College;
- c. Critically analyzes information, departmental, and student resources as they relate to graduate program curricula, recruitment, retention of undergraduate students for graduate programs, and maintaining contact with alumni;
- d. d Reviews special topics courses as proposed by faculty to ensure that these topics meet requirements for SACS/COC and THECB in terms of overlap with regularly listed courses, the three-offering rules, and other requirements for cross-listing and/or cross-leveling of courses;

- e. maintains communication with the Graduate College, and other entities which impact graduate education at UTRGV; and
- f. Protects quality and integrity of the graduate curriculum delivery as the institution pursues Emerging Research I status;

**Composition:** The Committee shall be composed of the Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC) from each program. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education, the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Diversity, the Associate Dean for Assessment, and two graduate students, one from the Humanities and one from the Social Sciences, shall serve as *ex-officio* members.

## ARTICLE VII - MEETINGS

### General Meetings

A meeting of the General Faculty shall be held at least once per year. Special meetings may be called by the Dean or by a petition signed by at least one third of the General Faculty.

Notice of meetings of the General Faculty shall be delivered by e-mail no less than seven calendar days prior to the set meeting time.

Agenda items requiring action of the General Faculty can be submitted to the Dean via e-mail up to five working days prior to the meeting date. Items not included on the agenda may be raised as new business at the meeting.

### Standing Committee Meetings

Unless otherwise noted in Article VI, standing committees will adhere to the following:

**Appointment of Committee Members:** The department/school representatives to the standing committees shall be appointed by the chair/director following a selection process adopted by the General Faculty of the department/school as defined in Article II.

**Leadership of Committees:** Each committee chair shall be elected from among the voting committee members at the first meeting of each academic year. A recording secretary shall be selected by the committee. Both will serve for one year. There is no term limit for either position except for the faculty member's term on the committee.

**Meeting Schedule and Quorum Requirements:** Committees shall meet at least once each fall and spring semester. Special meetings may be requested by the Dean (or other stakeholders) and should be held within two weeks of the call for such meetings. A quorum of the majority of the membership must be present to conduct the official business of the Committee. A simple majority of members present shall decide an action of the Committee at a meeting.

**Length of Terms:** Unless otherwise stated, all standing committee appointments will be for one three-year term. *Ex-officio* members are exempt from this limitation. At the start of each academic year each standing committee should attempt to maintain staggered terms as provided in Appendix C.

**Voting Procedures:** Decisions and recommendations shall be approved by the members present and voting by unanimous consent or by majority vote by voice, show of hands, or secret ballot as appropriate. Any committee member can ask for a secret ballot. Committees should weigh the

importance of the issue being voted upon to determine the voting method. Certain circumstances may be deemed important enough to take to the corresponding faculty body for discussion or vote. An ex-officio committee member, unless otherwise noted, is a nonvoting committee member unless also serving in the role of departmental/school representative on the standing committee.

Voting by email is permissible when a committee agrees by unanimous consent of the members. In such cases, electronic voting shall be open either for five business days, closing at 5:00 p.m. local time on the final day, or until a decisive majority of eligible voting members have cast their email votes, should they do so in less than five business days. E-mail voting via Qualtrics or other secure electronic application will be conducted by an Administrative Coordinator of the College at the request of the committee chair.

Action by Unanimous Consent without a Meeting: An action may be taken by the members of a committee by unanimous consent in writing or by electronic transmission without a meeting. The writing or electronic transmission shall state the action to be taken, and be signed and dated, on paper or digitally, by each member of the committee. The writings and/or electronic transmissions shall be filed with the minutes of the proceedings of the committee. "Electronic transmission" means any form of electronic communication, such as email, not directly involving the physical transmission of paper, that creates a record that may be retained, retrieved and reviewed by a recipient thereof, and that may be directly reproduced in paper form by such a recipient.

Meeting Participation: One or more members may participate in a meeting of the committee by means of a remote electronic communication system, including telephone or videoconferencing technology or the Internet, only if the communication means provides access to the meeting in a manner or using a method by which each person participating in the meeting can communicate concurrently with all other participants with access to all documents, visual aids, and discussion presented at the meeting.

Reporting Requirements: Within a week of a meeting, the recording secretary of the meeting shall circulate a draft form of the minutes to the members in attendance. The draft minutes also shall be attached to the agenda for the next meeting and shall be presented for approval. Once approved, and corrected if necessary, the approved minutes and agenda for the reported meeting shall be posted to a secure College of Liberal Arts electronic file-sharing platform accessible by appropriate constituents.

Parliamentary Procedure: Except as otherwise provided herein, or by unanimous consent of the members, the procedures governing College of Liberal Arts standing committee meetings shall be in accordance with the latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order.

Dismissal from Academic Standing Committee: A committee member may be dismissed from a standing committee if that member has three (3) unexcused absences from properly called committee meetings during an academic year.

Unanticipated Vacancy: If a standing committee vacancy occurs before the normal end of term, the corresponding department/school chair/director, in consultation with his or her faculty, will identify a replacement. If the vacancy is for less than half of the standing committee's term the faculty member filling the vacancy will be eligible for a second term.

Standing Committees' Use of Subcommittees: Standing Committees may utilize *ad hoc* subcommittees for specialized/focused issues. Subcommittees shall be chaired by a Standing Committee member. The composition of subcommittee membership shall be determined by the subcommittee chair, and may include non-standing committee members. *Ad hoc* subcommittee members shall have no vote on

Standing Committees.

## ARTICLE VIII - ADOPTION AND AMENDMENTS TO THE BYLAWS

Quorum is reached if more than half of the General Faculty are present and voting at a meeting, or if more than half of the General Faculty cast electronic votes.

Initial adoption of these bylaws requires a simple majority favorable vote of the General Faculty constituting a quorum.

Any standing committee, the Dean, or a petition of one third (33%) of the General Faculty may propose amendments to the Bylaws. A town-hall meeting may be scheduled to discuss and debate proposed amendments by the Dean or by petition from one third (33%) of the General Faculty.

An amendment to these bylaws requires a two-thirds favorable vote of the General Faculty constituting a quorum.

The voting procedure for initial adoption, or any subsequent electronic vote, is as follows:

- a. The proposed bylaws or amendments must be distributed to the General Faculty for electronic voting by the Assistant Dean.
- b. Electronic voting shall be open for at least ten (10) days.
- c. The measure shall pass if (a) a simple majority approves in the case of original adoption, or (b) two-thirds approve in the case of amendments.
- d. The bylaws shall take effect immediately upon approval. Each amendment shall state an effective date.

## APPENDIX A – ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

[www.utrgv.edu/files/documents/administration/departmental-org-charts/org-chart-utrgv-aa-coll-la.pdf](http://www.utrgv.edu/files/documents/administration/departmental-org-charts/org-chart-utrgv-aa-coll-la.pdf)

## APPENDIX B – ADMINISTRATIVE POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

**Sr. Associate Dean:** will assist the Dean in day-to-day operation of the College of Liberal Arts, including budget preparation and compliance, University process fulfillment, SACS/COC faculty validation for teaching, CLA Program Review per UTRGV cycle, and CLA policy implementation. The Senior Associate Dean will work with department chairs, school directors and faculty to ensure the quality and availability of all College of Liberal Arts programs, regardless of delivery format or location of classes and will oversee class scheduling and choices of modalities so as to achieve the most effective use of faculty resources and the highest quality learning experience for our students as well as will perform other duties as needed by the Dean. The Senior Associate Dean will be drawn from the ranks of the following Associate Deans and will retain those duties in addition to those of Senior Associate Dean.

**Associate Dean for Research and Diversity:** will be responsible for developing and implementing policies to encourage high-quality research, as well as aid in identifying resources for, and facilitating research in the College of Liberal Arts. The Associate Dean for Research and Diversity will also help to ensure that all hiring, committee structures, and College of Liberal Arts policies incorporate best-practice principles of diversity in gender, ethnicity, race, among other criteria.

**Associate Dean for Graduate Education:** will oversee the administration of the College of Liberal Arts' various graduate programs, assist departments in scheduling graduate courses, implement policies regarding graduate programs, monitor and approve graduate program changes for the catalog through the appropriate designated institutional software, and oversee development of additional graduate course offerings and programs. The Associate Dean for Graduate Education will also interact with graduate students, hearing their concerns and assisting them in their degree plans as well as provide extracurricular opportunities for graduate students to enhance their knowledge and skills. Graduate student complaints and grade appeals will be referred to the AD for Graduate Education as needed and the AD will set up the appropriate College level review committee per UTRGV policies.

**Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education:** will be responsible for overseeing the development and administration of undergraduate programs across the UTRGV service region. The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education will assist departments in scheduling undergraduate courses, review enrollment and registration, monitor and approve undergraduate program changes for the catalog through the appropriate designated institutional software, approve substitutions/waivers as needed with input from the department/program, and assist chairs in identifying and launching new undergraduate programs needed in the region. Undergraduate student complaints and grade appeals will be referred to the AD for Undergraduate Education as needed and the AD will set up the appropriate College level review committee per UTRGV policies.

**Associate Dean for Assessment:** will be responsible for ensuring the College of Liberal Arts program assessment efforts are appropriate and timely so as to achieve continuous improvement in all College of Liberal Arts programs. The Associate Dean for Assessment will be responsible for overseeing the accreditation process and ensure compliance with UTRGV standards for the SACSCOG accreditation process.

**Associate Dean for the School of Interdisciplinary Programs and Community Engagement:** will oversee interdisciplinary programs, budget, ensure scheduling of courses, and other details of these programs, as well as assist program directors/coordinators to build student engagement and grow

programs. The Associate Dean for the School of Interdisciplinary Programs and Community Engagement will also work with the department Chairs, the Deans and University Development staff in their efforts to promote the College of Liberal Arts and engage the communities across the RGV.

**Department Chair/School Director:** will be the chief academic officer for the programs offered by his/her department/school. The Department Chair/Director will be responsible for the recruitment, selection, development, evaluation, and retention of a high-quality faculty in the field(s) housed in the department/school. The Department Chair/Director will be responsible for ensuring the program content for each major is timely and relevant to the current environment, courses are appropriately scheduled across campuses, times, and modalities, and students are well-served by the Department faculty, programs, and offerings. The Department Chair/Director will be responsible for leading the department's/school's faculty in the advancement of the quality of their research. Finally, the Department Chair/Director will be entrepreneurial in exploring with his/her faculty new ways for enhancing students' learning experiences in existing courses, as well as opportunities for developing new courses, programs, and delivery modalities that will benefit the region.

## APPENDIX C – PROVISOS

### **Provisions governing the first three years of the College of Liberal Arts Bylaws**

#### Section 1- Article V- Length of Terms

1. To initiate the staggering of terms, 1/3 of each of the standing committee members shall be randomly selected to be one-year appointments, 1/3 to be two-year appointments, and 1/3 to be three-year appointments.
2. Any committee member serving a one- or two-year appointment is eligible to serve one additional three-year term.
3. The beginning of the term of any initial committee member shall be calculated from September 1, of that current academic year notwithstanding prior appointment.

#### **Section 2 – Article VII Adoption and Amendment to the Bylaws**

1. During the first three years following adoption of these bylaws, amendments thereto may be approved by a simple majority vote of the General Faculty constituting a quorum.