

DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES BYLAWS

The Department of Africana Studies is dedicated to enriching the Binghamton University community understanding and knowledge of the Black experience in the United States, Africa, and the African Diaspora. The Department is committed to achieving this goal through teaching, research and scholarship that is informed by interdisciplinary methodological and pedagogical perspectives. These perspectives include cultural, humanistic, and empirical methodological approaches to teaching and scholarship.

- I. Administration. The administration shall consist of the following individuals and committees:
 - A. Chairperson whose appointment and tenure in office will be in accordance with University bylaws.
 - B. Director of Undergraduate Studies to be appointed by the Chairperson in consultation with faculty members and to serve for a period of three years, subject to renewal.
 - C. Library Representative appointed by the Chairperson in consultation with faculty members and to serve for a three year period subject to renewal.
 - D. Ad hoc Committees that the Chairperson shall establish as the need arises to take up the business of the Department and with the consent of the faculty.

- II. Departmental Membership. The departmental membership shall consist of full, half, and part time faculty and professional staff associated with the department.
 - A. Voting Members will be those faculty members holding full or half-time appointments, in accordance with University bylaws.
 - B. Nonvoting Members will be those faculty members having less than half-time appointments, and members of the professional staff associated with the Department, in accordance with University bylaws.
 - C. Associated Faculty Members will consist of faculty members from other Departments who regularly cross-list their courses with the Department. They may attend Departmental meetings but do not have voting privileges.
 - D. Adjunct Faculty will consist of faculty who are routinely hired to cover courses due to vacancies or faculty leaves etc. Adjunct appointments are subject to University bylaws.

- III. Committees. All standing departmental committees will be composed exclusively of voting members. The chairperson shall be an ex-officio member of any standing or ad hoc committees except in cases for Personal Committee dealing with the Chairperson as a faculty member and those dealing with the Chairpersonship. Any individual faculty member may propose items for agenda of a committee by submitting them to the chairperson of the committee for inclusion on the committee's agenda. Each departmental committee will be constituted anew at the beginning of each academic year. All committees shall report their actions and decisions to the Department Chairperson and the Departmental faculty at its regular meetings.
 - A. Undergraduate Committee, consists of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, who will serve as Chairperson, and at least two other faculty members and at least one student member, appointed by the Chairperson in consultation with the Director of Undergraduate Studies. This committee will concern itself with all matters pertaining to undergraduate instruction, including the curriculum, academic standards and honors.
 - B. Senior Personnel Committee with composition and function in accordance with the University bylaws.
 - C. Junior Personnel Committee with composition and function in accordance with the University bylaws.

- D. Grievance Committee. There will be a Grievance Committee with its own informal and formal procedures.
- E. Ad-hoc Committees. The Chairperson shall establish ad hoc committees as the need arises to take up the business of the Department and with the consent of the faculty.

IV. Procedures. Departmental Meetings.

- A. The Department will meet regularly to receive and act on reports from each of the Standing and Ad-Hoc committees and to transact such other business as may be placed before it.
- B. All meetings are open to all members, except as qualified under C below.
- C. The Chairperson has the authority to designate a meeting or portion of a meeting as closed to all except voting members.
- D. Agenda items may be submitted by any faculty member to the Secretary for inclusion on the agenda of the next scheduled departmental meeting.
- E. Quorum. The presence of at least one half of the voting members of the Department in residence shall constitute a quorum. This formula may change when the Department increases its membership to a comparable number which necessitates increasing the number of faculty present to constitute a quorum.
- F. Authority. A majority decision by a meeting of the Department shall be the final authority on all matters within its jurisdiction.
- G. In no instance will individual consultation with members be regarded as equivalent to a convened meeting, and no consensus arrived at by individual consultation shall be binding on the Department.

V. Student Participation.

- A. The Department shall have a Student Advisory Committee, the composition and functions of which shall be in accordance with University bylaws.
- B. Students may submit items for departmental consideration to the Chairperson through their elected representatives.
- C. The Student Advisory Committee will recommend student representatives to departmental meetings or meetings of standing committees or ad hoc committees unless personal matters or other confidential issues are being discussed. Student representatives in most instances should normally be Africana Studies majors. Student representatives are especially requested when the Department is discussing curriculum and other issues pertinent to Undergraduate studies.

VI. Chairpersonship.

- A. Definition. Chairperson should be a senior faculty member who serves initially for a period of three years which may be renewed based on the interest of both the incumbent and the Department. The Chairperson shall be the chief executive officer of the Department to whom all other officers shall be responsible and to whom all committee chairs shall report on the functions of their committees.

B. Selection.

1. At the September meeting of the Department, in the last year of a Chairperson's tenure or in some cases at the February meeting in the Chairperson's last year of tenure:
 - a. The Secretary. Following consultations prior to the September or February meeting, beginning with the oldest member of the Department, the sitting Chairperson will ask for a volunteer to serve as Secretary.
 - b. The Secretary will be responsible for compiling reports for the next two Departmental meetings, and for chairing the decisive Departmental meeting or meetings when this decision will be made for selecting the chairperson.
2. Declinations.
 - a. No member of the permanent faculty (tenure and tenure track) may withdraw his/her name from consideration for Chairperson in the period between the September and October meetings (if decision is made in the spring term) save those noted in Paragraph 2b.
 - b. Two members of the faculty may withdraw from consideration before and during the September/February meeting:
 1. The secretary who must do so in writing to the current Chairperson as a condition of accepting the appointment.
 2. The current Chairperson.
 - c. Between the September and October meetings (if a decision is made in spring term) each permanent member of the faculty (see above B. !.) will be interviewed by the Secretary and asked for his/her nomination for Chairperson.
 - d. The Secretary will interview staff of the Department for their recommendations, and will report these at the October/February meeting.

C. October/February Meeting

1. The Secretary will compile a list of nominations put forth by members of the faculty and rank order them according to the number of preferences each receives. This list will be given to the faculty at the October/February meeting.
2. At the October meeting any member who wishes may withdraw his/her name for consideration, provided always that the faculty may return to that person should they wish to do so. Except that, in no case may any member be asked to serve more than six years as Chairperson of the Department.
3. The final list of candidates will be prepared at the meeting.

D. November/February Meeting

1. Candidates for Chairpersonship will be excused from the meeting.
2. The meeting will be chaired by the Secretary, and at the end of discussions a vote will be taken. A majority is required for selection, with the lowest vote recipient dropped for each subsequent ballot until a majority is obtained.
3. Voting will be by secret ballot, counted by the Secretary and one other.
4. The faculty will direct the Secretary to send one or more names from the October/February list to the Dean, but they must be ranked in order of preference from the November/February vote.

5. Should additional meeting be required, the issue may be carried over until December/April meeting of the Department, but voting must begin 30 minutes before the scheduled termination of the December/April meeting.
- E. If the Department decides to conduct a national search for a Chairperson, the Search Committee shall be governed by the University bylaws. External candidates must be informed if any internal candidates apply for the Chairpersonship.
- F. Acting Chair
1. Summer Temporary Appointments
 - a. The Chairperson may select from the permanent faculty an acting Chairperson for times the current Chairperson is away (such an appointment is required by the administration of the University).
 - b. The appointment must be laid before the voting faculty Department for their consideration at the last meeting before the acting Chairperson is to serve more than 30 consecutive days.
- G. Leave Appointments, of One Semester or More
1. The Chairperson must recommend a candidate to the permanent faculty at least two meetings before the acting Chairperson designee takes up responsibilities.
 2. The voting faculty must approve the choice before the Chairperson designee takes up responsibilities.
 3. In the event the faculty does not approve the nominee, it is charged with the responsibility of producing a recommendation. Should it not do so, the Chairperson's recommendation automatically moves forward.
 4. Should the Department reject the Chairperson's nominee, whether or not recommended by the faculty, it can do so only by approval of its own candidate.
- VII. Grievance Procedures.
- A. Informal
1. The grievant should attempt to find satisfaction first by discussing the matter with the faculty member or student involved.
 2. If no mutually agreeable resolution is reached during phase A.1., the grievant may seek mediation through the Department Chairperson (or Undergraduate Director if the Chairperson is respondent).
 3. When complaints and concerns are resolved through the informal process to the satisfaction of both the grievant and respondent, any written materials that may have been part of mediation shall be disposed of. The Department shall keep the original of any written agreement signed by both parties.
- B. Formal
1. If the informal procedures do not result in a resolution, the grievant may file a formal written complaint, submitted to the Department Chairperson (or Undergraduate Director if the Chairperson is respondent).
 2. A formal complaint must be filed before the end of the semester following the semester during which the incident being grieved occurred. This time frame is consistent with the University Policy that "graded work not returned to students should be kept for one semester following the end of the course, to allow a

means of evaluating the work of students who ask that a grade be reviewed.”
Summers do not count as semesters.

3. Within ten working days of the receipt of the written complaint, the Chairperson (or designee) will forward a copy of the formal complaint to the respondent(s), and may forward a copy to the Assistant/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (or Dean’s designee). The Chairperson also forwards copies to members of the Grievance Committee along with a request that they convene a meeting.
4. The Faculty may select members to the grievance committees. Representation will take into consideration due process and the issue of fairness within context on University bylaws.
5. If one of the parties involved in a grievance is a member of a body that will hear the grievance, the vacancy shall be filled by the Chairperson, or by the faculty if the Chairperson is involved (section 1-3). Where the Department Chairperson is a member of the body hearing a case, he/she shall preside; otherwise the body shall chose a presiding.

C. The Hearing

1. The Grievance Committee Chairperson will schedule the hearing within 30 working days from receipt of the complaint at a time which does not preclude the attendance of either party- save for that period between the end of the Spring term and the beginning of the Fall term shall not be counted and the first 15 working days of the semester shall not count toward the 30 days.
2. Parties will be provided at least five working days notice of the hearing date.
3. The grievant and the respondent have the right to challenge the impartiality of any member of the committee. The other members of the committee shall decide by secret ballot whether that member shall be disqualified for that hearing. The grievant and the respondent have the right to bring one person (who is present in a non-participating capacity) to the hearing.
4. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the members of the Grievance Committee with the proviso that at least one faculty and one student be present in committees including students.
5. Within five working days of the hearing, the Committee Chairperson will send a written report of the committee’s decision to the Chairperson of the Department, and within 10 working days shall notify all parties, including the Assistant/Associate e Dean of Academic Affairs. This written decision will include a description of the appeal process.

Within twenty working days of notification of an action at the department level either party may appeal to the Assistant/Associate Dean for Academic Affairs (or Dean’s designee), or in the case of a graduate student, to the Graduate Council Grievance Committee. (Graduate Grievance Procedures are outlined in the Graduate School Student Handbook. The Assistant/Associate Dean may establish an ad hoc committee to hear the appeal. A student may appeal beyond the Dean to the Provost-Vice President for Academic Affairs if the appeal is based on due process. Under special circumstances, the Dean may serve as first level of appeal. Faculty grievants dissatisfied with the department’s action may also file a grievance through the Senate Professional Standards Committee or through the Union.

VIII. Amendment Procedures.

Amendments to this Constitution of the Department of Africana Studies require vote of two-thirds majority of the voting members of the Department. Amendments will be proposed at one meeting and voted upon at the next meeting providing that two weeks have intervened. Amendments may also be voted on by mail ballot. Faculty on leave may or not in residence may vote on amendments to the constitution through absentee ballots via the Chairperson.