

Charter of the Department of Geological Engineering and Sciences

I. Vision Statement

The Department of Geological Engineering and Sciences intends to provide international leadership for academic programs in geological engineering, by being a leader in both education and research in geological fields, and by being a strong advocate of breadth in the study of earth systems. We intend to provide the best possible education for students by promoting a holistic problem-solving approach. Courses and educational outreach in environmental science and engineering, as well as the discovery and recovery of natural materials, will provide students with the skills necessary to prosper in a competitive, environmentally conscious global economy. We intend to provide strong support for industry, government, and the general public by communicating information about the geological sciences and engineering and about natural materials, their discovery, and their recovery and protection.

II. Departmental Procedures

A. General Philosophy

The faculty and staff of the Department of Geological Engineering and Sciences are to establish the principles of conducting Department business, primarily through mechanisms established in this Charter. The Department Chair is empowered to act on Department affairs using the input of the faculty and staff as guidance, but with reasonably wide latitude to implement policy within those guidelines.

B. Governance

This Charter is intended to guide the Department in its operations, by stating the function and general intention of various governing bodies and procedural steps. By charter, the Department shall have a Chairperson and five standing committees; provision to establish ad hoc committees is also made. For permanent changes to the Charter, a mechanism is established for amendments as stated in a later section of the Charter.

III. Faculty Classification

A. Participating Faculty

All faculty, including those with tenure track academic faculty appointments (Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor), non-tenure track academic faculty appointments (Lecturers, Adjunct, Visiting, and Emeritus Professors), non-faculty research academic appointments (Research Professor, Associate Research Professor, and Assistant Research Professor), Visiting Scholars, and others with at least a 50% appointment in the Department of Geological Engineering and Sciences are considered "Participating Faculty" and their involvement in departmental affairs is welcome. The Participating Faculty does not include Postdoctoral Associates, Graduate Research or Teaching Assistants or professional staff who do not have adjunct faculty positions.

B. Voting Faculty

The Voting Faculty shall consist of faculty holding tenure track academic appointments (Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor) with at least a 50% appointment in the Department of Geological Engineering and Sciences

C. Faculty Decisions

Certain items in this Charter call for votes of the "Voting Faculty" and others are not specified. It is the intention of this Charter to involve all "Participating Faculty" in matters of interest to them and to the Department as a whole. However, the "Voting Faculty" are those who have been selected to join the Department as the result of an open search following clear guidelines, and are affected by long-term changes to the Department. Therefore, voting is restricted to the "Voting Faculty" on matters of policy; an issue can be considered to be a matter of policy if two or more "Voting Faculty" members request that it be considered as such. For any given term, academic year, or calendar year, or on any given specific vote, the Voting Faculty may extend Voting-Faculty privileges to specific members of the Participating Faculty by a simple majority vote.

IV. Departmental Governance

A. *The Departmental Chairperson ("Chair")*

The Chair of the Department shall act to carry out the wishes and needs of the Department, as determined by the faculty in general and by specific committees as outlined below. The Chair shall have power to make day-to-day decisions as needed to ensure the smooth running of the Department, but should request the guidance of the relevant committee, or the faculty as a whole, on matters of policy or precedent. In the absence of the Chair (due to travel, illness, etc.), the duties of the Chair shall be carried out by the chairperson of the Executive Committee, as Acting Chair, or by any member of the Executive Committee designated by the chairperson for this purpose. In the event that any of the Committees described in this Charter do not perform their functions, the Department Chair may execute those functions.

1. **Supervisory Duties of the Chair**

a) *Promotion and Tenure*

The Department Chair is ultimately responsible for making recommendations concerning promotion and tenure, with the close guidance and advice of the Tenure, Promotion, and Re-Appointment Committee (herein referred to as the "Promotion Committee") and following University Procedures. Annual reviews are to be provided for each untenured faculty member in the Department; these reviews are to be conducted by the Chair, using a mock-up of the tenure "packet" as a basis for discussion and review, and using as additional input the recommendations provided by the Tenure, Promotion, and Re-Appointment Committee. The Chair also is responsible for final assembly of the tenure candidate's folder and transmittal of the Promotion Committee's recommendation. Further details on this procedure are found later in this Charter.

b) *Teaching Assignments and Discretionary Funds*

The Chair shall administer assignments of teaching loads and distribution of discretionary funds, taking into consideration the guidelines and recommendations made by the Graduate Committee for Graduate Teaching Assistant assignments, by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee for faculty teaching loads, and by the Executive Committee for discretionary fund expenditure. A summary of actions taken shall be provided to the Committees for their review, and for use by the faculty, if desired, in evaluating the degree to which the Chair is carrying out the desires of the Department.

c) *Office Staff*

The Chair shall also be the ultimate overseer for the conduct and promotion of the office staff.

2. **Selection of the Chair**

The Chair is appointed by the Dean of the College of Engineering from a field of one or more candidates proposed by the Department. These candidates are the selection of the Voting Faculty, following a search. The Dean, in consultation with the Provost and the departmental faculty, shall decide if the search will be internal or external. An ad hoc committee will lead the search; it will be chosen by the Voting Faculty, should be comprised of at least four members of the departmental faculty and one from outside the department and should contain faculty members of all ranks present in the Department at the time. It should also reflect the diversity of fields represented in the Department to the best extent possible. The Committee will solicit opinions from the faculty as a whole through the use of a written survey. The candidates must meet with approval of at least 50% of the Voting Faculty, and all Voting Faculty shall have the opportunity to vote, even by absentee ballot if necessary.

3. **Evaluating the Chair**

a) *For Possible Re-Appointment*

The Chair shall normally serve for an initial term of three years, with re-appointments of up to three years each possible. The performance of the Chair shall be evaluated annually by the Grievance Committee and reviewed in a private meeting between the Chairperson of that committee and the Department Chair. Near the end of each term of appointment, an internal posting for replacement should be made. If the Chair chooses to seek a re-appointment, a thorough evaluation shall take place; the findings of the Committee shall be shared with the Voting Faculty, and Voting Faculty can recommend re-appointment with a 50% vote, with all Voting Faculty being afforded an opportunity to cast their ballots. The final appointment decision rests with the Dean of Engineering.

b) *Vote of “No-Confidence”*

At any time, upon petition by at least 33% of the Voting Faculty members to the Grievance Committee, an otherwise-unscheduled review can take place, with the findings presented, within three weeks, to the entire Voting Faculty. The Voting Faculty can then, at its discretion, call for a vote of no-confidence or choose to table the matter for a period of up to two more weeks. For a vote of no-confidence to result in any action, it must have at least two-thirds majority of the Voting Faculty, with absentee votes permitted. If such a vote is carried, the Chairperson of the Executive Committee should carry the request to the Dean of the College of Engineering for the replacement of the Chair at the earliest possible time. Any individual faculty member may not be party to petitioning an unscheduled review more often than once each academic year.

B. *The Executive Committee*

The Executive Committee shall serve to advise the Chair on matters of Departmental concern, and shall establish guidelines for the Chair regarding matters of budget, travel, and the distribution of other departmental resources, such as space and facilities or secretarial support.

1. *Composition of the Executive Committee*

The Voting Faculty shall vote annually to select at least three of their members (other than the Chair) for the Executive Committee, reflecting the diversity of the department to the extent that this is practical. Nominations may be made by any faculty member, including the Departmental Chair or Participating Faculty, and faculty may nominate themselves. No member may serve for more than three consecutive years.

2. *General Method of Operation*

The Executive Committee shall elect its own Chairperson. Whenever practical, the Executive Committee is expected to conduct most of its activities openly, and to solicit the input of all affected faculty members, particularly junior faculty, on matters of policy. The meetings may be open or closed, as appropriate, in order to gather input, but votes shall only be cast, whether publicly or by secret ballot, by the members of the Executive Committee. The Department Chair may be invited to take part in discussions as the Committee deems appropriate, but shall never be a voting member of the Committee.

3. *Reporting to the Faculty*

The Executive Committee will report to the Faculty, stating the general criteria that it has recommended the Chair follow in making discretionary expenditures and other matters.

C. *The Curriculum and Instruction Committee (“C&I”)*

This Committee is charged with seeing that the overall curriculum keeps pace with the changing needs of students in the current and anticipated marketplace for our graduates. The Department should recognize that these needs are continually changing, and that modifications to the curriculum should be an ongoing part of the Department's function. This Committee should advise the Executive Committee on perceived priorities in allocation of discretionary funds, and advise the Department Chair on the allocation of teaching funds, such as assistantships; but a primary goal of this committee should be to continually determine the needs of the students and suggest how the Department can best address those needs.

1. *Composition of the C&I Committee*

The C&I Committee shall be elected annually by vote of the Voting Faculty. At least three members should be elected, which may not include the Department Chair. Nominations may be made by any faculty member, including the Departmental Chair or Participating Faculty, and faculty may nominate themselves.

2. *General Method of Operation*

The C&I Committee shall annually present a report to the entire faculty. This report shall contain recommendations for changes to curricula and reasons for those changes. In the event that prompt action is required, additional reports are to be presented as needed. In gathering information for its deliberations, the C&I Committee will form additional sub-committees for each curriculum, with members from the faculty at large within the University, in order to provide guidance and expertise for various specific disciplines. The committees responsible for the engineering curricula will be staffed according to ABET criteria. The Department Chair may be invited to participate in meetings and deliberations as the Committee sees fit. The Department Chair is expected to make use of the Committee's recommendations in designing teaching loads

and scheduling courses as necessary. The Department Chair may also request the Committee to address certain topics of a timely nature and to provide the Chair with recommendations for action.

3. Report of Long-Range Staffing Needs

A long-range plan, continually updated, for expansion or other staffing goals of the Department, should be included in the annual report. This long-range plan must be submitted to the entire Voting Faculty for their input and ultimate approval, following revisions if necessary, prior to the final submission of the complete report.

D. The Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee shall make decisions concerning acceptance or rejection of applications to the graduate program of our Department, and shall make recommendations to the Department Chair concerning the awarding of discretionary support to incoming students (Fellowships, Graduate Teaching Assistantships). They shall also assume general responsibility for the well-being of the overall graduate program.

1. Composition of the Graduate Committee

The Graduate Committee shall be elected annually by vote of the Voting Faculty. At least three members should be elected, which may not include the Department Chair. Nominations may be made by any faculty member, including the Departmental Chair or Participating Faculty, and faculty may nominate themselves.

2. General Method of Operation

The Graduate Committee shall review applications for the graduate program in our Department, and solicit and review faculty comments on the applicants. Using any way they see fit, including formal and informal polls, they shall try to evaluate the general level of satisfaction with the program by the graduate students, and shall make recommendations to the faculty and to the Executive Committee for changes to improve the program. Recommendations concerning discretionary graduate appointments shall be made in a timely manner to the Department Chair, and the actions taken by the Chair shall be reviewed by the Committee.

E. The Tenure, Promotion, and Re-Appointment Committee

This Committee (herein referred to as the "Promotion Committee") is expected to assist the Departmental Chair in assuring accurate and complete assessment of cases for promotion and tenure, and to provide guidance to the Chair concerning re-appointments and sabbatical leaves. It is also expected to guide the Chair and the faculty in advising new and untenured faculty and in providing fair and thorough feedback to members of the faculty as they attempt to advance through the ranks. In addition, this Committee shall maintain and update the guidelines for promotion and shall regularly communicate them to the Departmental faculty. The promotion procedures shall follow the University guidelines for this subject; this Charter provides conditions specific to the Department of Geological Engineering and Sciences.

1. Composition of the Promotion Committee

The Promotion Committee shall consist of at least four members, all with tenure. Each member serves for four years with staggered terms, and may not be immediately re-elected. Each year, the Department Chair shall nominate at least one candidate (to replace the member whose term has expired) for election by the Voting Faculty; the Voting Faculty may nominate additional candidates, and faculty members may nominate themselves. When the Committee is not at full strength, due to untimely departures of members, and in order to become initially established, members may be elected with periods of service less than four years, in order to maintain the regular turnover of membership. The Committee, once formed, shall annually elect their own Committee Chairperson, who must have the rank of Professor.

2. General Method of Operation

Of necessity, most of the Promotion Committee's deliberations must be in closed session. The Committee may choose whether or not to include the Departmental Chair in any particular set of deliberations, but only members of the Committee may have a vote. The Committee, either as a whole or through one designated member, should conduct annual briefings with each untenured faculty member to provide feedback and guidance. The Committee shall provide the Departmental Chair with a written summary of their views concerning each untenured tenure-track faculty member annually. When promotions are being considered for academic positions other than tenure track, this Committee will follow procedures similar to those described for tenure-track faculty.

3. For Decisions Regarding Tenure

When a faculty member is a candidate for tenure, the Promotion Committee Chairperson shall confer with the candidate and with the Department Chair, and arrange for the Department Chair to solicit external letters of evaluations (see section on Criteria for Tenure, Promotion, and Tenure, below). At least one member of the Committee shall work closely with the candidate and the Department Chair in assembling the candidate's folder, but the mechanics of soliciting letters and compiling the file shall be managed by the Department Chair. The Committee will make a recommendation concerning tenure, and their recommendation should be made known to the other tenured members of the Department in a closed meeting, where those faculty members (except the Department Chair) will vote to endorse or not endorse the recommendation. This recommendation and the result of the faculty vote will be included in the candidate's folder, and forwarded, unaltered, through the appropriate channels by the Department Chair, who makes an independent recommendation.

4. For Decisions Regarding Promotion to Full Professor

Only faculty members on the Committee with the rank of Professor shall deliberate or act on matters concerning promotion to Full Professor. If the number of such members on the Committee is less than two, a special election shall take place by the Voting Faculty, for a full Professor to temporarily sit on the Committee for these purposes. If there are not two full Professors in the Department, the Voting Faculty may choose which faculty members should sit on the Committee for these purposes. Otherwise, the process of soliciting letters, assembling a folder, making recommendations, and so on, shall be identical to the process involving tenure decisions, except that only the full Professors on the faculty shall have a vote. This same process will also apply for the case of a non-tenured full or Associate Professor (for example, somebody hired at that level) who is being considered for tenure.

5. Evaluation of the Office Staff

This Committee should also be involved with the recommendations made by the Chair concerning advancement of the office staff, and shall yearly provide the Department Chair with an evaluation and recommendations. The Department Chair may be invited to make the first draft of a set of evaluations for consideration by this Committee, if the Committee so desires, and simply provide their comments or suggested revisions.

F. The Grievance Committee

The University has established certain grievance policies which govern grievance procedures. This Committee is intended to provide one mechanism for settling grievances within those policies. It is also intended to provide a suitable mechanism for grievances by members of the Department Faculty who are not members of the Voting Faculty.

1. Collegial Communications

It is expected that most faculty complaints or concerns can be resolved informally, through discussion and debate. It is the intention of this Charter that the Grievance Committee would generally provide the second line of approach for grievances expressed by members of the Department. Any faculty member or staff member is expected to present his or her grievance to the Departmental Chair, in the hope that it can be resolved quickly and fairly. In the event that it is not resolved to satisfaction, or in the case that the Chair is not deemed appropriate for any reason whatsoever (and that reason need never be disclosed), the grievance can be brought to this Committee. The Committee shall then hear the complaint and try by any fair means possible to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

2. Formal Grievances

A formal grievance must be presented in a timely manner to the Department Chair, in writing. The Chair will pass the written materials on to the Grievance Committee for action. University policy determines the timing of events and conditions for appeal.

3. Composition of the Grievance Committee

The Participating Faculty shall annually elect a Grievance Committee of at least three members. This Committee shall then elect its own Chairperson. Members of the Grievance Committee may consist of any Participating Faculty member, but a majority of members must come from the Voting Faculty.

4. General Method of Operation

The Grievance Committee shall hear any and all complaints brought to them. They shall try to determine all the facts of the case, and to hear all sides. They will then make a recommendation for action which may be agreeable to all parties. It is important to retain extensive records of the deliberations and yet provide the utmost level of security and privacy for the parties involved. The Grievance Committee must establish a set of forms to be used to maintain records and ensure timeliness of the review; these forms may be initially approved by the Participating Faculty, and any changes to the forms must be subsequently approved by the Participating Faculty.

G. Ad Hoc Committees

The Department will, at its discretion, create certain ad hoc committees whenever they are needed. It is assumed that some of these will be created nearly annually, such as a Seminar Series Committee, but others may exist only for one specific function and never again. The Department has wide latitude in forming and staffing these committees, but is expected to equitably distribute responsibilities and duties as indicated in the paragraph below.

V. Criteria for Tenure, Promotion, and Re-Appointment

The University has established certain criteria for the various academic ranks. This Charter clarifies the relative significance to be given to various factors in making Department recommendations on tenure, promotion, and re-appointments.

A. Weighting of Factors

The same weighting of factors will be used both to establish tenure and to determine promotions. The factors to be considered include independent research, instructional quality (including supervision of student research), professional services to the University, professional services to the academic and research communities, and other professional services. The primary emphasis shall be on the first two criteria, independent research and instructional quality, weighted equally. Professional services may be considered as well, and certain services that enhance research or instruction in a demonstrable and tangible fashion should be included as a part of those two factors.

B. External Evaluations

External evaluations (letters of recommendation) shall be sought from at least four eminent scientists or researchers in the candidate's field for all promotions, including tenure. Preliminary contact with potential external evaluators may be made in order to ensure that they are willing and able to write a fair evaluation; however, the failure of any reviewer to respond with a written evaluation shall not be considered detrimental to the candidate. All written evaluations that have been solicited and received will become part of the candidate's file, although requests by the candidate that certain persons, if any, not be requested to send recommendations should be honored. The file should contain at least three letters from external reviewers.

VI. New Positions

The Department may discover needs for appointments in any of a number of ways. For example, the Curriculum and Instruction Committee may find that the teaching needs of a newly-evolved field of geological engineering and sciences are not being satisfactorily met by the current faculty; this should be reflected in their annual reports and long-range plans. Any member of the Participating Faculty may bring up the subject of staffing needs for discussion at faculty meetings. Although Principal Investigators hold the primary responsibility for staffing positions from their research funds, requests for appointments to any academic position other than post-doctoral associateships or graduate assistantships, but including non-tenure track or non-faculty (such as research professorships) with specific candidates must be submitted to the Voting Faculty for their approval with a simple majority vote.

VII. Amendments to the Charter

This Charter may be amended by a vote of at least two-thirds of the Voting Faculty. The proposed amendment must be put before the faculty in writing at least three weeks before it is put to a vote, in order to provide time for contemplation and fact-finding. All Voting Faculty must have the opportunity to vote,

even by absentee ballot. The three-week time period shall not include academic holiday time. Amendments must be approved by the University President.

VIII. Individual Responsibilities

The faculty of the Department of Geological Engineering and Sciences are expected to be leaders in many ways. They are expected to be technical leaders, finding and developing new ways to solve problems in their fields. They are expected to be innovative teachers, leading students to new knowledge and methods of discovery. And they are expected to participate in leading inter-institutional activities, whether through responsibilities in professional societies or directly with other organizations. The demands placed on each faculty member in attempting to meet these expectations, and in obtaining the funding necessary to meet them, are extreme. They fall on all faculty members alike, and yet the Departmental Governance activities described in the preceding section of this Charter must still be met. As a result, all faculty members are expected to participate in matters of Departmental governance. With increasing rank comes increasing responsibility for such activities, and it is expected that the higher-ranking members of the Department will assume higher degrees of activity within the various committees. The Department should strive to distribute various committee assignments among the faculty in a fair and equitable manner, recognizing that faculty interests and abilities should be fitted with Departmental needs to maintain a smoothly-operating group of satisfied professionals.