

**Guidelines
for Developing Departmental Governance Documents
and Promoting Shared Governance at the Departmental Level**

A Report Prepared for
the University of South Florida
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Many departments at the University of South Florida may already have written governance documents with which the administration and the departmental faculty and staff are fully satisfied. In that case, those departments may not find these guidelines as helpful as those departments that have decided to draft new documents or revise existing ones. As such, these guidelines are intended to outline the issues and questions for USF departments to consider when drafting or amending their governance documents. In the interest of departmental shared governance, we strongly recommend that departments create committees to draft their governance document, selecting members of these governance document committees in a democratic manner to represent different constituencies within the department as a whole. The process of drafting departmental governance documents should be open and transparent, and the committee should invite input from all faculty members in the department. Indeed, departmental governance meetings are considered to be public meetings, as described in Florida sunshine and public documents laws. The final draft document should be submitted to all faculty for ratification using procedures that are deliberative and consistent with the department's focus and culture. The departmental governance documents should also describe procedures for amending, abolishing, or replacing the departmental governance documents. Departments may consider devising a charter that expires after a set term, thus stimulating periodic review of governance documents.

These departmental governance guidelines described in this document are not intended to impose any specific policies or procedures on departments. Each department will design documents that fit its specific needs, culture, and mission. These guidelines and principles are descriptive enough to assist departments wishing to create or review existing departmental governance documents. However, these guidelines are general enough to address diverse needs, cultures, and missions across the wide array of departments at the University of South Florida.

These guidelines address eleven issues that are essential to creating policies, procedures, and written documents.

1) Articulation

Governance documents need to pay attention to articulation. In other words, all policies, procedures stated in governance documents must conform to the policies, procedures and rules of the respective colleges in which they reside, other rules and regulations of the University, relevant Collective Bargaining Agreements, and state and federal laws. In fact, we recommend that governance documents contain specific language alluding to the issue of articulation. An example of such a statement is:

It is recognized that this document may not contravene the constitutions and laws of the state of Florida; rules, regulations, and policies of the Florida Board of Governors; rules, regulations, and policies of the University of South Florida; and any applicable collective bargaining agreement or legislatively-mandated management right. The foregoing authorities will govern in the event that any provision of a local governance document is inconsistent with or in conflict with them.

Although articulation rules already require governance documents to adhere to anti-discrimination laws, departments should include anti-discrimination and equal opportunity statements in their documents.

Articulation is especially important because Colleges will need to approve departmental governance documents in order for them to be valid. Colleges should recommend changes, and Colleges' approval of the document indicates their willingness to honor it.

2) Defining the Faculty

Departmental Governance documents should describe the membership of the department. This could include the various categories of university employees and faculty involved in the operations of the missions of the department. This includes descriptions of each category of employee or faculty and the differences (if they exist) in their participation across the range of operational or governance decisions within the department. This should be done for each category of employee or faculty member designated to exist and participating in the operations of the department. At a minimum, governance documents of each academic department should define and describe the requirements and roles or limitations for participation in governance decisions of ranked faculty. We also recommend that these documents include roles, responsibilities, and opportunities for participation in the various types of departmental governance decisions for lecturers, researchers, adjuncts, instructors, visiting assistant professors, courtesy faculty appointments, and any other category of departmental faculty member that exists in the department and participates in governance decisions.

In short, departments should be aware that there is a wide variety of positions existing at the University of South Florida, and they are subject to change. Departments should periodically update and refine their definition of faculty as necessary.

Departments should use *Appendix A of the Collective Bargaining Agreement* for guidance.

3) Hiring

The governance documents should specify procedures for requesting faculty lines and hiring departmental faculty members. The written documents should consider the procedures for requesting new faculty lines. The documents may also address the search process itself. Will there be a search committee, and if so, then what is its composition and role? Additionally, what is the role of the faculty at large in the selection and interview process; and what is the role of the chair in each of the above tasks?

The document can also specify plans to deal with departures from the regular hiring process, such as the possibility of higher-level administration presenting a candidate, spousal hires, the recruitment of highly sought academics from another university, administrators seeking a home in the department, and special faculty lines created for extraordinary or time-limited purposes.

Documents should comply with *Article 8 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement*

4) Faculty Assignments, Evaluation, and Compensation

These three issues are related because they focus on the assessment of faculty performance; consequently, it is essential for departmental governance documents to describe how the department will conduct assignments, evaluation, and compensation.

Departmental governance documents should address the ways in which faculty duties are assigned, how faculty members are evaluated (e.g., by the chair or departmental faculty committee or combination, etc.), and how issues related to compensation (e.g., initial salary offers to new faculty as well as special or annual pay increases) are settled

Assignments:

Departments will create a clear system of load assignment that is fair, reasonable, and flexible enough to adjust for individual circumstances. This process must also conform to established law and regulations. Faculty may grieve if the disagreement is viewed as a disciplinary issue. The documents can encourage the development of a system that takes circumstances into account, e.g., potential differences between graduate and undergraduate teaching, the nature of the course (i.e., is it innovative, interdisciplinary, or does it use new technology), etc.

Usually, chairs or program directors make assignments, but governance documents should explicitly state this. The documents could also address the degree to which faculty members have input into their assignment of duties.

Documents should comply with *Article 9 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement*

Evaluation:

The governance document should explicitly spell out the process of determining criteria for performance evaluation and the performance evaluation process itself. Will the department have a committee to evaluate faculty? If so, how will the committee be composed? Will it be elected by faculty members or appointed by the chair? If elected, then how will the committee be apportioned among sub-units in the department? Additionally, the documents should address the relationship between the committee and the chair in evaluating faculty members.

Documents should comply with *Article 10 and Article 11 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement*

Compensation:

In addition to the description of the evaluation procedure, which produces the primary data for merit raises, the documents should address the role of the chair in giving discretionary raises and clarify the open system of merit raise.

Documents should comply with *Article 23 and Article 24 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement*

5) Conflict Resolution and Grievances

Departmental governance documents should describe the procedures for resolving conflicts that arise in the course of research, teaching, and service. There are three types of conflicts that can affect the operation of the department: 1) between the chair and faculty, 2) between faculty and students, and 3) between two or more faculty members. The governance documents should delineate the procedures for the different types of grievances that may arise. Departments should also define the term “grievance,” because there are differences between USF rules and the Collective Bargaining Agreement. In making these decisions departments should be aware that a “grievance” is usually taken to mean a violation of an extant rule or procedure.

Additionally, departments should decide whether to establish their own procedures for resolving grievances or to refer cases to other entities. If the department elects to establish its own process, then it must decide on the personnel who would hear the grievance. Will it be a committee? If so, would the authority fall to a standing committee or an ad hoc committee to rule on that issue? Moreover, the document should establish the composition of the committee.

Documents should comply with *Article 20 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement*

6) Allocation of Resources

A fundamental task of departmental governance concerns the allocation of resource. Clearly, resources allocation issues vary by discipline, but all departments should contemplate how office space and travel money are allocated. Additionally, departments with graduate students will need to reflect on the allocation of teaching assistants and graduate assistants. Many departments may also need to consider how to allocate laboratory space. The governance documents should describe the procedures for allocating resources and define any ground rules that the department may wish to adopt.

Documents should comply with *Article 21 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement*

7) Tenure and Promotion

Since the department is the first step in the tenure and promotion process, this issue is extremely important for governance documents. Departments may decide to construct a separate document to address tenure and promotion procedures. This option is acceptable if the two documents articulate with each other and reflect the democratic will of the department and the rules of USF.

The document should outline the role of departmental committees, if there are any, in evaluating tenure and promotion cases. What are the roles of the committee and the roles of the chair? How will the committee be selected, and how will it be apportioned among departmental sub-units? How are the faculty involved (or are they involved as a body, or are they merely represented by these various organs)?

Governance documents should delineate the tenure and promotion requirements in teaching, research, and service. Although the tenure and promotion requirements must conform to university and college standards, departments still have considerable discretion. The department will need to decide how broad or detailed their requirements will be.

Governance documents should address time-frames for the tenure process. Will the department define standards for allowing assistant professors to apply early for tenure? To what extent will department policy address crediting time for tenure track faculty who taught at a previous institution? Will the department create a policy for granting immediate tenure to senior faculty hired from another institution?

Finally, departmental governance documents should discuss the procedures for mid-tenure review.

Documents should comply with *Article 14 and Article 15 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement*

8) Governance Structure

Departmental governance documents should describe the governance infrastructure of the department. Because shared departmental governance is such an important goal, governance documents should explain how power is divided within the department.

The documents should specify the distribution of authority and power between the chair and the faculty. Although documents cannot anticipate all contingencies, this section should be specific.

The governance documents should outline the departmental committees and officers in addition to the chair (e.g., vice-chair, associate chair, and program director). The documents should discuss the role of each committee, its structure, how members are chosen, how it is apportioned among subunits in the department, and its relationship with the chair. The documents should discuss the role of each officer and how they are selected (chair appointment, committee appointment, or faculty election).

The governance documents should also address dates of elections, dates that terms starts and end, duration of terms, and whether officers can serve consecutive terms.

9) The Chair

Departmental governance documents should enumerate the powers of the chair. Specific areas that should be addressed are described below.

A chair serves at the pleasure of the dean, but a department has a right to be consulted and to make recommendations concerning the hiring and removal of its chair. Therefore, it is essential that departmental governance documents explain the procedures the department intends to follow when making these decisions. How will the department recommend hiring decisions? Who conducts the search? Is it a standing committee or an ad hoc committee? How are reports and recommendations made and forwarded?

Do chairs have set terms of office? Will the department create procedures to allow the departmental faculty to recommend removal of a chair? If so, the governance document should specify reasons such an action could be taken. How would a recommendation for removal of a chair take place? For example, would it require a simple majority or a supermajority? If it is supermajority, then what will the vote threshold be? How would the interim chair be selected in case of removal (or voluntary resignation) of a chair?

Can the faculty overrule the decisions of a chair? If so, then under what circumstances can the overruling take place? What would the process be? Would it require a simple majority or a supermajority?

Shared governance necessitates faculty communication with the college administration; therefore, the department should provide feedback to the dean on the chair's performance. The governance documents should define the procedures by which the faculty will evaluate the chair. One option is to conduct an anonymous survey among faculty members. Another option is to have a committee prepare a formal and extensive evaluation. If so, will this committee exist solely for this purpose, or would another permanent departmental committee handle this matter?

9) Meetings

Departmental governance documents should describe the ways in which formal or informal meetings are held within the department. Since departmental meetings are the most participatory mechanism of making departmental decisions, they are essential for shared departmental governance. Will meetings be regular or ad hoc? If they are ad hoc, then by what procedures can a meeting be called? What constitutes a quorum? What kinds of issues are decided by majorities versus supermajorities? If a supermajority, then what will the threshold be: three-fifths, two-thirds, or three-fourths. What are the rules of order (e.g., *Roberts Rule of Order*)? How will voting take place, and what kind of procedures are in place for proxy voting?

There is a legal requirement that minutes should be kept and approved, but there is no specification as to what manner or form they must take. The governance documents should consider the nature of the minutes.

10) Departmental Mission

Departmental governance documents should describe the mission, values, and goals that are used to maintain or establish direction the department. This portion of the governance document will usually be included as the introductory section of the larger document. It should set the tone and vision for the remainder of the document as well as tie in with the published mission and goals of the college and the university as a whole. A mission statement can help to define the department and its membership, and it can serve as the launching pad for developing long range plans and funding goals.