

Some notes regarding bylaws:

Department of Mathematics and Statistics
University of Maryland Baltimore County

TI Seidman: 8/31/'09

1 Objectives

We do note that most of the rules which govern us are general university policies (e.g., as in the Faculty Handbook) or Administration decisions (salaries, furlough days, Departmental budget, final decisions on appointments and P&T, etc.). Guiding the situations in which we do make decisions or recommendations, we will take as underlying objectives of the Departmental Bylaws that:

- Departmental procedures should be consistent with general UMBC rules.
- Departmental procedures should be clear and immediately available to all the faculty.
- Departmental procedures should be stable, yet adapt flexibly to changing circumstances.
- Departmental procedures should be fair and should afford adequate opportunity for debate and for influence on policy.
- Departmental procedures should contribute to the effective operation of the Department.

Since we do not want to spend all of our time in Faculty Meetings, it is clear that some care must be exercised in balancing the last two of these objectives.

2 What is our situation now? (9/'09)

At present the Department has the following sets of bylaws, related to specific items, given here with approval dates:

1. Election of Chair [1991; amended 1993]
2. Policy and Procedure on Annual Review/ Comprehensive Review [1993]
3. Policy on Faculty Responsibilities [1996]
4. Qualification for Emeritus Status [2004]
5. Policy and Procedures for the Graduate Program [2004]
(It is not clear whether this should be included among the bylaws as the document is not addressed to faculty.)
6. Workload Policy [2005] (interpretation of UMBC policy)
7. Procedures on Promotion and Tenure [2007]
(Material on Standards and Mentoring was added with this; altogether, I am not quite sure as to just what has been officially approved here.)

In addition, there exist some documents along related lines (e.g., job descriptions for various staff positions), but again these are not addressed to faculty and are not included here among the bylaws.

3 What is missing?

The most egregiously missing items from these bylaws would seem to be the following:

1. Procedures for Faculty Recruitment. – We have here a quite well understood set of procedures, but these seem not (yet) to have been made explicit and approved.
2. Procedural rules for Faculty Meetings. – Some variety of “Robert’s Rules”.

This includes procedures for proposing, authorizing, or amending bylaws and responsibility for maintaining records, especially motions passed (or failed?).

3. Bylaws related to the structure of the Department, particularly as regards internal governance (e.g., standing committees, with mission statements and authority, as well as the UG and Grad Program Directors).

This includes specification of duties and authority: what is to be reported to the faculty, what actions do (or do not) require approval. This also includes procedures for establishing *ad hoc* committees or responsibilities as needed on a temporary basis.

4. The aspects related to the 2004 document, "Policy and Procedures for the Graduate Program" which should be formulated as bylaws.

4 Voting: faculty approval

We note the following areas in which we have generally required approval by the general Faculty:

1. Faculty recruitment (and approval of adjunct faculty)
2. Election of a Chair
3. Election of representatives (to the Senate, Graduate Council, etc.)
4. Major changes in degree programs or catalog copy
5. Changes in the approved Bylaws

In general, the work of authorized committees should not require separate approval unless there is substantial disagreement within the committee.

In general, we ask for Departmental approval for decisions which affect a substantial part of the Department or its future, but some of this is marginal or unclear. For example:

We *did* have a vote on the new Calculus text.

We *did not* vote on the selection of forthcoming course offerings.

[Of course we also have voting on Promotion and Tenure cases, but that is restricted to the appropriate P&T Committee, rather than the general faculty.]

5 Recommendations