

Bylaws and Governance Structure School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh

Approved as of December 17, 2018

The following statement sets a tone of inclusivity and engagement at our University, generally, and within our School of Education, particularly: “The University of Pittsburgh is an institution of higher learning and research in which policy is shaped with the involvement of trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, and students. An environment of collegiality permits individuals and groups to share information and express views in an open and responsive manner. Consultation and consensus building are important means for approaching decisions, especially in academic matters” (<https://www.hr.pitt.edu/handbook>). Our work, as members of the School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh, is guided by and grounded in our unwavering commitment to sustain academic excellence and engagement with regards to curricula, instructional programs, degree requirements, admissions, grading procedures, and research initiatives, among other related academic matters. To sustain our academic excellence and engagement, effective participation in governance, decision-making, and planning and budgeting is necessary by faculty, staff, students, and administrators.

By **shared governance**, we focus on the overall well-being of our School, knowing that its success depends on the commitment of faculty, staff, students, and administrators to collaboratively accomplish shared goals within a transparent governance structure. Thus, our governance structure operates within the framework of University policies. By **equity**, we focus on sustaining a governance structure that affords a voice to all members of our community (faculty, staff, students, and administrators), and that also recognizes, encourages, and responds to the voices and perspectives of historically marginalized and underrepresented people, including the indigenous people and first nations on whose land the University of Pittsburgh and our School of Education now stand.

By **transparency**, we focus on making decisions that are relevant and fair, and that honor, even if they differ from, the perspectives of members of our School. In order for members of our School to participate in decision-making processes, we will engage in transparent practices. By **representation**, we focus on always being accountable to the members of our School and ensuring that structures for communication are made available to all. By **efficiency**, we focus on the ways in which our governance structure must be timely in its decisions and must respect the time of those members of our School who are charged with carrying out its processes.

The prior bylaws, last updated in 2012, were intended to foster a more democratic governance system that was “transparent, accountable, efficient, equitable, community-oriented, and adequate.”¹ In implementation, however, we have come to recognize that our prior bylaws did not move us far enough toward these goals. Therefore, to engage in continual improvement of our governance structure and process, and to ensure heightened levels of engagement, transparency, accountability, efficiency, equity, community, and adequacy, our School of

¹ “SOE Governance Model and Bylaws, April 2012” document

Education community spent fifteen months (July 2017-September 2018) considering data as well as listening to and thinking with others about strategic goals, expectations, future directions, and next steps. Thus, these updated bylaws have been carefully informed by:

- School-wide faculty and staff *climate surveys*.
- An inclusive *strategic planning process* focused on educational excellence; working in and with communities; research-practice partnerships; recruiting highly effective faculty, staff, and students; and building foundational educational strengths.
- *Listening sessions* between the Dean and specific groups, including alumni, community partners, foundation funders, staff, faculty, students, and the Dean’s advisory groups—the Board of Visitors, Executive Committee, and School Council Steering Committee.
- The selection and examination of enrollment trends, programs, degree options, strategic plans, bylaws, and governance structures at *six aspirant AAU schools/colleges of education*, including three publics (University of Virginia, University of Michigan, and Michigan State University), and three privates (Teachers College, University of Pennsylvania, and Northwestern University).
- A review of current bylaws and governance structures of *other Schools at the University of Pittsburgh* (Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences; School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences; School of Pharmacy; School of Nursing; School of Social Work; Swanson School of Engineering; School of Public and International Affairs).

Also, it is important to note the intended meanings of certain terms that are frequently used in the bylaws. The term “**Department**,” when used to refer to faculty members, represents any entity in our school where SOE faculty members can have their official and primary appointment. When used to refer to staff members, the term “**Department**” represents any unit, institute, center, or department where SOE staff have their full-time affiliation. “**Faculty**” represents full-time faculty with appointments in the Tenure-Stream and full-time Non-Tenure Stream faculty with appointments as Professors of Practice or Clinical Instructors. “**Staff**” represents staff members with full-time appointments in our School. The term “**At Large**” represents full-time staff and faculty from any SOE department, center, unit, or institute. For additional definitions, see the appendix at the end of this document.

I. Advisory Groups

The School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh has three official advisory groups:

- Board of Visitors
- Executive Committee
- School of Education Council/Planning and Budget Committee

Board of Visitors

Charge: The Board of Visitors provides the Dean with valuable advice and external perspective on ways to improve the overall quality of our students’ educational experiences. The Board serves as ambassadors for the School; connects students to job and internship placements; and

supports fundraising efforts. Additionally, the Board provides advice on new education trends and strategic initiatives, alumni relations and engagement, fundraising, marketing and communications, and specific ways to better align the School's mission and vision with key education priorities regionally, nationally, and globally. The Board meets at least twice per year.

Membership: Chaired by the Dean and an Alumnus or Alumna of our School of Education, the Board includes members approved by the Chancellor and the Provost and then invited by the Dean to serve an initial 3-year term.

Executive Committee

Charge: The Executive Committee serves as the primary liaison between the Dean and the School's departments, centers, units, and laboratory school. Committee members serve as the official representative for their respective faculty, staff, and students regarding all academic matters. Members assist with the coordination and implementation of the mission, vision, cultural drivers, and strategic goals and priorities that impact every academic area of the School. The Committee convenes at least monthly.

Membership: Chaired by the Dean, the Executive Committee members include Associate and Assistant Deans, Department Chairs, Executive Director of Administration, and the Directors of major centers and/or units in the School. These have included the Center for Urban Education, Office of Child Development, and Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School. However, membership on the Executive Committee may potentially include representatives from other centers, units, and/or departments in the School as needed and determined by the Dean.

School of Education Council/Planning and Budget Committee

Charge: The School of Education Council, which also serves as our School's University-mandated Planning and Budget Committee (PBC), is an elected body of faculty, staff, and students who advises the Dean regarding strategic planning, capital improvements, spatial renovations, and major budgetary matters. Council runs elections for membership on the Council and on the School's Standing Committees, and ensures that any concerns of faculty, staff, and students are both heard and considered in important decision-making processes. Council also advises the Dean on overall strategies to enhance the professional culture and functionality of the School and to increase engagement among faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The Council and Planning and Budget Committee convenes monthly throughout the entire year, or as needed.

Membership: Chaired by a faculty member elected by Council to serve as Chair for two years and as Past Chair for one additional year, the Council is composed of one elected faculty member from each department, two staff members elected at large, and two students elected at large (graduate and/or undergraduate). Members are elected to three-year terms (1 year for student members).

Elections: By the first of March of each year, Council announces committee vacancies and solicits nominations from across the School. Council prepares and distributes election slates to all eligible voting faculty, staff, and student representatives in the School. Balloting may be

either electronic or in paper form, provided that individual votes are not identified with individual voters. The Council Chair and a designated representative from the Dean's Office will count the votes and publish the results (except if those persons are candidates for election on the current ballot). If they are, then they will not participate in the counting of the ballots and the Dean will appoint someone.

II. Standing Committees

The School of Education has the following six Standing Committees:

- Academic Programs
- Equity and Justice
- Promotion and Tenure
- Research, Teaching, and Mentoring
- Staff Engagement
- Student Engagement

Standing Committees are composed of elected members who serve two-year terms (except student members, who serve one year terms). In the event that an elected member cannot serve a full term (e.g., leaving the university, medical leave, sabbatical, etc.), the Dean will appoint a replacement to serve out the remaining term.

With the exception of Promotion and Tenure, committees are chaired by an Associate Dean, Assistant Dean, or Executive Director from the Dean's Office. Among other duties, the chairs of standing committees are responsible for setting the agenda, facilitating meetings, and ensuring that minutes are posted and action items are completed by respective committee members.

Committees have standing charges (see below), but can also, with Dean's consent and in tandem with the Committees, launch ad hoc committees² to address specific needs and opportunities as they arise. In this case, ad hoc committees are usually composed of a subset of committee members and may include additional faculty, staff, and/or students appointed by the committee chair.

Academic Programs Committee

Charge: Develop, implement, and monitor effective policies and procedures related to academic programs and curricula, including approving new programs and courses, approving major modifications to existing programs and courses, and creating and/or approving academic program policies for the catalog. The committee works with Department Chairs and School-wide Program Coordinators (this includes the Ed.D. Coordinator but can also include the Ph.D. Coordinator) to develop, maintain, and disseminate a "map" of curriculum offerings across the School, tracking what and when courses and other academic experiences may be offered for the next three years. The committee coordinates evaluation and accountability processes in order to

² Ad hoc committees are temporary, short-term committees that are formed to complete a specific objective or task.

assure program quality. Among other related duties, the committee is also charged with expanding opportunities for members of our School to participate in conversations about academic programs and curricula that center learning, collaboration, equity, justice, and innovation. In accordance with the SOE Academy Integrity Policy, members of the Academic Programs Committee may be called upon to serve as members of the Academic Integrity Hearing Board.

Membership: Chaired by the Associate Dean for Academic Programs, the committee includes one elected and voting faculty member from each department, the Executive Director of Administration or her/his appointed staff who is a non-voting member, and two students elected at large (graduate and/or undergraduate) who are voting members.

Equity and Justice Committee

Charge: Provide a transformative vision for our School community to come together around our explicit commitments to equity and justice and to make our work more collaborative, anti-racist, decolonial, and humanizing. Among other related duties, the committee is charged with the following: Creating space for dialogue and innovation on topics of equity and justice in education; partnering with faculty, staff, students, alumni, and community partners to examine ways to support and account for the various experiences of children, families, and communities; and initiating programs across the School and within multiple communities that advance equity and justice in education and that enhance the School's efforts to recruit and retain historically diverse populations of faculty, staff, and students. The committee monitors the School's compliance with the University policy around equal opportunity, diversity, and equity. The committee chair convenes an ad hoc committee each year to review applications and make selections of nominees and candidates for Equity and Justice graduate fellowships. The members of this particular ad hoc committee are chosen by the Associate Dean for Equity and Justice and include one faculty member from each department and one graduate student.

Membership: Chaired by the Associate Dean for Equity and Justice, the committee includes four voting faculty members elected at large from full-time faculty, one elected and voting staff, one appointed and voting staff from the Office of Admissions and Enrollment Services and/or the Office of Student and Career Services, and two students (graduate and/or undergraduate) who are voting members and elected at large.

Promotion and Tenure Committee

Charge: Develop and implement effective, fair, and equitable procedures regarding faculty promotion and tenure. The committee communicates with faculty to make the tenure and promotion process as clear and transparent as possible. All promotion and tenure policies and procedures must be in compliance with guidelines established by the Chancellor and Provost of the University. After a department has voted and made a recommendation, this committee reviews the case in the School of Education and makes an independent recommendation to the Dean, thus serving as a second-tier review on all faculty tenure and promotion cases.

Membership: The committee consists of five tenured full professors, four tenured associate professors, and one professor of practice (associate or full) elected at large. Each year, the committee chooses one of the tenured full professors to be the Chair. The Associate Dean for Research and Faculty participates as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

Research, Teaching, and Mentoring Committee

Charge: Encourage, promote, and sustain a strong, active, collaborative, and highly-engaged research, teaching, and mentoring culture in the School of Education. The committee works with Department Chairs and/or Associate Department Chairs to implement and oversee consistent processes for evaluation of teaching and yearly evaluation of faculty. The committee develops and oversees School-wide strategies to foster research-practice partnerships and other forms of community-engaged research, as well as cultivates a strong culture of mentoring for faculty and for students. Each year, the committee will appoint and oversee an ad hoc committee of faculty and students to solicit and review grant proposals for internal seed funding (this includes the Faculty-Student Research Grants program).

Membership: Chaired by the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty, the committee includes one elected and voting faculty member from each department and two students (graduate and/or undergraduate) who are voting members and elected at large.

Staff Engagement Committee

Charge: Serve as advocate for the School of Education staff and act as liaison for staff to the School's administration and with the University's Staff Council. The committee is charged with proposing, developing, and monitoring effective practices and procedures in the areas of staff performance review, professional development and mentoring, professional learning, and staff satisfaction. The chair works with committee members and the Dean to devise and execute a transformative charge and agenda for the committee that aligns with the School's strategic plan and priorities.

Membership: The committee is chaired by the Executive Director of Administration and includes one elected and voting staff member from each department and two voting staff members elected at large.

Student Engagement Committee

Charge: Serve as an advocate for all students in the School of Education and identify collaborative student-led projects that contribute to the mission and vision of the School. The committee is charged with identifying and addressing issues of concern among students in relation to student recruitment, admissions, retention, diversity, equity, advising, mentoring, and wellness.

Membership: Chaired by the Associate or Assistant Dean for Students, the committee includes presidents or representatives of student organizations in the School of Education that have faculty advisors and are recognized by the Student Organization Resource Center and/or the

Dean (these include the Council of Graduate Students in Education, Kappa Delta Pi, Exercise Science Organization, Future Educators of America, and among possible others, Alliance of Urban Scholars). The committee also includes four students elected at-large from the student body, each representing students across our undergraduate, master's/certification, Ph.D., and Ed.D. areas. Faculty advisors of SOE student organizations are members of this committee in an ex-officio, non-voting capacity.



III. Governance Cycle

The Governance Cycle begins when the university's classes are back in full session, which is usually at the end of August. At the beginning of the new academic year, a School-wide meeting (now referred to as "Summit") is facilitated by the Dean and the Associate and/or Assistant Deans, who will present strategic initiatives, goals, and priorities for the current year. They will also report progress made during the last year. Members of standing committees will be announced, and the committees' charges will be shared. Summits occur at least once a semester, with the possibility of additional Summits occurring throughout any given semester as needed.

Advisory groups, standing committees, the graduate student council (CGSE), and an undergraduate student council (CUSE) will establish their meeting schedules and, for transparency, will share these dates with the School community at the beginning of each new academic semester. To ensure that committee work is recognized and that new policies and/or developments are initiated, a progress report will be made available to members of the School of Education near the end of the academic year (generally, by April 30th). The Governance Cycle can be summarized as follows:

1. School of Education's Fall Summit (September)
 - Discussion of any progress on strategic initiatives made during the last year
 - Overview of strategic initiatives, goals, and priorities for the current year
 - Announcement of new members of Advisory Groups and Standing Committees
2. Advisory Groups and Committee Work (Advisory Groups: all year; Committees: September-May, with the strong possibility of year-round when/if the need arises)
 - Regular meetings of Advisory Groups and Standing Committees to ensure goals, charges, and priorities align with the School's strategic plan and are being met
 - Ad Hoc Committees formed and appointed as needed and on a temporary basis for a specific objective or task
3. School of Education's Spring Summit (January or February)
 - Discussion of progress on current strategic initiatives, goals, and priorities
 - Overview/discussion of additional strategic work that needs to be accomplished
 - Announcement of any committee vacancies that need to be filled for the next year
4. Advisory Groups and Standing Committees' Summaries (April)
 - Summaries or progress reports are made available to the School community
 - Discussion of next steps and/or changes to consider for the following year

IV. Amending the Bylaws

Proposals to amend the bylaws must be presented to the Dean and then shared with the School's faculty, staff, administrators, CGSE and, if applicable, CUSE Executive Committees. Within a one-week period following circulation of the proposal, faculty, staff, administrators, and the CGSE and/or CUSE Executive Committee may submit written amendments and/or editing

suggestions to the Dean or designated representative. The proposed amendments and edited sections of the bylaws will be circulated to faculty, staff, administrators, and the student executive committee(s). During a School-wide meeting, the new proposal must be moved, seconded, and discussed, and a ballot for voting distributed or emailed. The voting period will follow for no more than four working days. A decision to amend or replace the bylaws will be determined by a simple majority of those who have voted from our eligible faculty, staff, and representatives of our student executive committee(s).

Appendix: Community Members of the School of Education

The governance structure is designed to represent and serve faculty, staff, and students in our School. The following describes each of these groups.

Faculty

Tenure-Stream Faculty: Tenure is intended to assure the University that there will be continuity in its faculty and in the functions for which they are responsible. The primary responsibilities of tenure-stream faculty are effective teaching, impactful research, and strong advising/mentoring of students. These full-time positions (following a University-prescribed process for appointment, promotion, and tenure) are represented under these Bylaws.

Professors of Practice: Professors of practice, generally referred to as “non-tenure-stream faculty” at the University, are full-time faculty who have as their primary responsibilities innovative teaching and/or supervision of students. Additional responsibilities can include scholarly connections of research to practice, presentations, and engaged academic, clinical, and/or field-based activities that are determined by contract. These full-time positions are represented under these Bylaws.

Clinical Instructors: Faculty whose primary responsibility is teaching. These full-time positions are represented under these Bylaws.

Visiting Faculty: Faculty whose appointments are on a temporary basis, usually for not more than one academic year. Visiting faculty do not serve on School committees and are not considered full-time faculty for the purposes of these Bylaws.

Faculty with Secondary Appointments in the School of Education: Faculty with a secondary appointment in the School who already hold a current and primary faculty appointment in another school at the University. Faculty with secondary appointments in the School of Education are not considered full-time faculty for the purposes of these Bylaws.

Part-Time Faculty, to include Adjunct Faculty: Faculty who do not hold yearly positions, but who are contracted on a limited basis to fulfill duties that full-time faculty in the School are unable to fulfill (e.g., innovative teaching, supervision of students, etc.). They do not serve on School committees and are not considered full-time faculty for the purposes of these Bylaws.

Emeritus Faculty: Faculty with emeritus status³ continue to be valued members of our School community, but do not serve on School committees and are not considered full-time faculty for the purposes of these Bylaws.

Falk School Faculty: Faculty members whose primary duties are to teach at the Fanny Edel Falk Laboratory School. Falk School Faculty are distinct from full-time School of Education faculty. They do not serve on School committees and are not considered full-time faculty for the purposes of these Bylaws.

Research Associates: Typically, Research Associates have full-time appointments in support of research and/or scholarship and they work under the supervision of a faculty member. They are not considered faculty members by the university.

Students

Students enrolled in our programs are part of our School of Education community. Historically, this has only included the Council of Graduate Students in Education (CGSE), representing students enrolled in our School's graduate programs. The CGSE Bylaws determine the process by which student representatives are selected for participation in the governance process. Our increasing population of undergraduate students allows for the formation of a Council of Undergraduate Students in Education (CUSE), representing students enrolled in our School's undergraduate programs. The designated executive committee members of both CGSE and CUSE are eligible to vote on behalf of students.

Staff

Staff members in the School of Education include the Executive Director of Administration, the Directors of Financial Operations, Marketing Communications, Admissions and Enrollment, Student and Career Services, and IT/Technology, as well as all full-time administrators, managers, associates, assistants, and staff support specialists in our departments, units, centers, and institutes.

³ For more information, see https://www.provost.pitt.edu/faculty-handbook/ch2_app_emeritus_pol.