By-Laws

School of Information Sciences (SIS)

University of Pittsburgh

Revised: February 26, 2016
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Revised By-Laws for the School of Information Sciences
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The School of Information Sciences (SIS) of the University of Pittsburgh shall have jurisdiction over curricula and instructional programs, degree requirements, admissions, grading regulations, and other related academic matters pertaining to its constituent departments and programs.

In adopting these by-laws, SIS establishes a framework and general procedures for the participation of the faculty, staff, and students in the governance of the School. Detailed procedures for certain functions may be enumerated in other policy documents.

Under the rules of the University, operational authority within the School rests with the Dean. However, communal consensus processes produce better decisions, and a variety of specific procedures and academic traditions mandate extensive involvement of faculty, students, and staff in developing and executing policies. It is important to note that under the concept of shared governance, particular rights and responsibilities are positioned with the faculty in a number of areas, but in particular those areas that have an impact on the educational and research missions of the University. Consequently, it is necessary to have a functional structure within which the members of the SIS community can be represented and can develop recommendations for the operation of the School and the establishment of its policies.

Timeliness is an important factor in decision-making. Accommodating this factor whilst simultaneously allowing for thorough collegial consultation can be challenging. Similarly, we recognize the need to use the time and attention of the faculty and staff members as effectively as possible. The faculty and the Dean together commit to finding a balance between and a framework for seeking efficiency for shorter term and lower level operational decisions and collegial discussions and consultations for longer term and higher level ones.

1. Faculty
The faculty of SIS shall be comprised of all tenure and non-tenure stream full-time and regular part time faculty (with at least 50% appointment in SIS) employed by the school. The voting members of the faculty will not include visiting faculty and adjuncts, but individuals in such positions are welcome to all open meetings that involve the faculty of SIS. The faculty may, through a 67% majority vote allow voting privileges to faculty members who are not regular faculty members of the school.

To facilitate faculty involvement, a representative body, SIS Council, will be created to exercise the traditional academic responsibilities of the faculty concerning the maintenance of appropriate academic standards in instruction, the development of educational programs and degree requirements, and the recommendation of policies in such areas as resource allocation, faculty and staff development, student affairs, research and service programs, and the School of Information Sciences’ relations with local, regional, national, and international communities.

At least once per fall and spring terms, the faculty of the school shall meet. These meetings shall be chaired by the Chair of SIS council (see below). These meetings will take place to address any matters of school
wide concern put forward. These would include changes to the bylaws of the school. At one of these meetings, the faculty shall affirm the graduates of the school (annually, including prior degrees in that year). Beyond these regular meetings, a petition by 25% of the members of the faculty submitted to the Dean and the Chair of SIS Council may be made calling for a full School meeting to discuss and/or vote on a particular issue. When a meeting of the SIS Faculty is convened by a petition of the faculty, the meeting shall be announced at least two weeks prior to the meeting along with a statement of the reason for requesting the meeting.

2. **SIS Council**

The SIS Council shall act on behalf of the faculty of the School of Information Sciences in intervals between meetings of the full faculty. SIS Council actions shall take effect as soon as its actions are publicly announced, unless a petition of 25% of the members of the faculty is received by the Dean in the interim calling for a full School meeting to vote on the issue in question. The SIS Council exercises its governance functions in accordance with the guidelines and procedures set forth in these by-laws. SIS Council may delegate specified governance activities to SIS Council Committees.

   a. **Composition**

   The voting members of SIS Council consists of department chairs (or designee), an elected full-time faculty member from each department, and a chair and vice chair (also from the full-time faculty members) elected by a vote of all members of the full-time faculty of the School. The term of service for faculty elected by the department will be three years. The term of service for the Chair and Vice Chair shall be two years. Non-voting members include the Dean or his/her representative, the Associate Dean(s) (unless they are voting members by the above criteria), a staff member designated by the Dean, and the Chairs of the SIS Council Standing Committees.

   b. **Functions**

   The Council shall:
   - act for and represent the faculty in making recommendations to the Dean on major issues of the School; in doing so, it may review the actions of council committee and provide recommendations to the Dean;
   - review policies, guidelines, and procedures that support or affect scholarship, research, teaching, and service;
   - review policies, guidelines, and procedures in areas of governance, such as personnel, terms and conditions of employment, budget plans for the School, resources, and diversity enhancement; and establish committees as needed to develop and implement policies and procedures related to the above areas;
   - coordinate the activities of its various committees, receive the reports, and act upon the recommendations of those committees; and
   - consult with and advise the Dean and/or the representatives of the Dean regarding issues of concern to faculty, staff, and students.

   The Council will sometimes find that an issue requires extended effort by a smaller committee. In such cases, mindful of the need for a timely recommendation to the Dean, issues may be referred to committees or departments for final action. In addition, the Dean may request interim reports directly from such committees.

   c. **SIS Council Meetings and Procedures**

   Roberts Rules of Order will be followed during all meetings for all councils. A quorum for any Council
meetings shall consist of a majority of voting members.

- Regular meetings of the SIS Council shall be held as needed during the normal academic year and once during the Summer term.
- The Council shall draw up an agenda for the SIS Full Faculty Meeting each fall and spring term.
- The Council may call a SIS Full Faculty Meeting as and when deemed necessary. All such meetings require at least two week's advance notice.
- The Council may declare vacancies on the Council and its committees under circumstances that adversely affect governance (e.g., extended leave of a member; extensive absence from meetings).
- Recording and Reporting - The Council will keep a record of its activities. The Council will maintain a permanent indexed file of its records in the Dean's Office. The minutes of Council meetings will be recorded and circulated expeditiously to the School. In addition, the Council shall report its activities to the School in a written annual report.
- Each action of any SIS Council Committee, other than those on internal SIS Council matters, requires ratification by the SIS Council before its action is recommended to the Dean. Otherwise, committees will act expeditiously to assure timely and effective advice to the Dean in the operation of the School.
- The Dean's office shall provide archival storage for all documents produced by the SIS Council and its committees and shall provide clerical support for preparation and editing of minutes from Council and committee meetings. Announcements to members of the School Community, ballots, and similar paper or electronic documents will, at Council's discretion, be prepared, supported, and/or distributed by the Dean's office staff.

d. SIS Council Standing Committees
The work of the Council will be carried out in part through SIS Council Committees. The chairs of these committees will be appointed by the SIS Council. It is the responsibility of the SIS Council Chair and Vice Chair, in consultation with the Dean, to ensure that the standing committees are created. SIS Council shall maintain oversight of the standing committees.

*Academic Affairs Committee*

The Council shall appoint a subset of the SIS Council and additional members (for proper representation) to an Academic Affairs Committee. The Dean shall have the right to appoint additional representatives to this committee as deemed needed. This committee will provide oversight (as necessary) of the graduate and undergraduate programs in the school which may include:

- Review of all academic programmatic changes within the school
- Provide input and manage learning assessment of programs
- Be responsible for peer review of teaching

*Faculty Affairs Committee*

The Council shall appoint a subset of the SIS Council and additional members (for proper representation) to a Faculty Affairs Committee. The Dean shall have the right to appoint additional representatives to this committee as deemed needed. This committee will provide oversight of faculty affairs as necessary which may include:

- Promotion, tenure, third year review, and other faculty evaluations
- Appeals regarding sabbaticals, course release, and salary increases
Research and Infrastructure Committee

The Council shall appoint a subset of the SIS Council and additional members (for proper representation) to a Research and Infrastructure Committee. The Dean shall have the right to appoint additional representatives to this committee as deemed needed. This committee will provide oversight (as necessary) of research and infrastructure in the school. Such activities may include:

- Engaging in strategic planning directed at creating and sustaining a level of research activity appropriate to the size of the school;
- Improving the research environment/infrastructure and effectiveness of faculty research;
- Facilitating the development of new external research proposals

Planning and Budgeting Committee

The Council shall appoint a subset of the SIS Council and additional members (for proper representation) to a SIS Planning and Budgeting Committee. The Dean shall have the right to appoint additional representatives to this committee as deemed needed. The committee will meet the University mandate to handle the planning and budgeting process for the school. This committee shall meet as often as necessary to prepare School-level planning documents and provide recommendations on budgetary allocations to the Dean (and provide a report to the SIS Council).

3. Departments

Departments are the primary stable divisions within SIS and form the basic organizational unit of SIS, headed by a chair. The chairperson shall be a full-time faculty member in SIS with a primary appointment in the department. Departmental faculty members have a number of areas of primary responsibility, including curriculum design for degrees offered by the department, instructional practice, grading and consideration of faculty appointments. Chairs consult with faculty in their department and, when possible, develop a faculty consensus in carrying out particular responsibilities. Chairs also preside over faculty deliberations leading to the development of a faculty position on academic matters. Department chairpersons regularly evaluate faculty, make recommendations to the dean or provost regarding faculty salary increments and other faculty personnel issues. Departments will have their separate by-laws not in conflict with the school by-laws or university-wide policies.

Department chairs shall act in concert with their respective faculties. They shall seek the opinion and advice of their colleagues. Department chairs may make determinations contrary to such counsel; but, if they do so, there arises a duty to account for their reasons—both to the department and to administrative superiors. Where such contrary determinations are made, department chairs shall fully disclose the nature and extent of their disagreement with faculty opinion. In any case, department chairs serve as representatives of their respective departmental faculty to the administration and therefore their authority should be perceived as primarily derived from the faculty.

a. Departmental By-laws

Departments are required to maintain and translate into practice a set of by-laws consistent with SIS by-laws, University by-laws, and University Policies and Procedures that, at a minimum, address the functions listed below:

- Recommendations to the Dean regarding Chair appointments
- Conduct of Departmental business
• Determination and staffing of undergraduate and graduate curricula and requirements
• Departmental planning and its budgetary impacts
• Departmental procedures appropriate for faculty processes and actions
• Consultation on major issues

Faculty members shall be consulted on all academic issues involving the department, such as appointments, promotions, curriculum, departmental program requirements, academic priorities, general policies concerning course and committee structures and responsibilities, and budget policy. Full time faculty shall take the lead on curricular issues. Where appropriate, graduate students and undergraduate majors should be involved in issues which pertain to them. The department chair may appoint associates from within the faculty to assist with various departmental responsibilities.

b. Faculty appointments and promotions
The University by-laws state that the Dean "shall take into account the recommendations of the Chairmen of the Departments and the faculties concerned." In recommending faculty appointments and promotions, the department chair shall provide the Dean with evidence concerning the extent to which members of the department favor or oppose the prospective appointee. When the Dean has reasons to differ with the faculty regarding these matters, such reasoning shall be shared with those involved via a private meeting.

c. Accountability and term of office of chair
Since the faculty is accountable to the department chair and the Dean, in turn the department chair shall be accountable to the Dean and to the faculty of that department. Department chairs shall be appointed by the Dean for a specified maximum period of time not to exceed five years following consultation with the faculty. They are eligible for reappointment following an appropriate review. A secret ballot shall be used to determine the wishes of the faculty on matters of appointment and reappointment of department chairs; a full and complete report of the faculty recommendation shall be provided to the Dean, including any minority opinions of groups of faculty. The department faculty, normally through the department chair, are responsible for arranging for this and other expressions of opinion and the Dean shall take these expressions under advisement; open discussions of departmental directions and challenges is encouraged.

d. Meetings
Departmental faculty meetings should occur on a regular announced schedule but at least once each Fall and Spring Term. The department chair shall call meetings, set agendas, and prepare minutes. In announcing meetings, the Chair shall invite any member of the faculty to place items on the agenda.

4. Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

SIS will have a separate document explaining the process for promotion and tenure of faculty members. Departments are responsible for the first tier evaluation of faculty members with a report/recommendation that includes the vote of everyone (who participates) above the rank of the faculty member being evaluated. The Dean, in consultation with the chairs of the departments and the faculty affairs committee shall appoint a second tier committee to provide a recommendation regarding the promotion and tenure of a faculty member. The Dean shall take the departmental level recommendation and the second tier committee recommendation into account in making the final
recommendation to the provost for promotion and tenure.

5. Dean’s Office

The Dean may appoint Associate Dean(s) from within the full-time faculty to chair various councils in SIS or provide administrative leadership as needed or on a continuing basis.

6. Amendment to the By-Laws and Miscellaneous Considerations

Amendments may be proposed by the SIS Council, or by petition of 25% of the faculty members, and presented to the Dean. To take effect, an amendment must be moved, seconded, and debated in a meeting of the full SIS and voted.