

Bylaws of the Faculty of The School of Physics, Astronomy, and Computational Sciences George Mason University

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This document is subsidiary to the George Mason [Faculty Handbook](#) and to the [Bylaws of the College of Science](#) of George Mason University

Article I - Membership and Organization

Section 1 - Definitions

The faculty of the School of Physics, Astronomy, and Computational Sciences (hereafter referred to as the Faculty) comprises all faculty who have full-time instructional tenured or tenure-track appointments, or who have instructional or research appointments (as defined in the George Mason University Faculty Handbook, hereafter referred to as the Faculty Handbook) in the School of Physics, Astronomy, and Computational Sciences (hereafter referred to as the School). The College of Science is hereafter referred to as the College, and George Mason University is referred to as the University.

Section 2 - Director

The Director of the School (hereafter referred to as the Director) is appointed by the Dean of the College on the recommendation of the Faculty in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the Faculty Handbook for appointment of department chairs.

The Director shall have the authority to appoint one or more Associate Directors with the approval of the Dean.

Section 3 - Rights to Vote

The right to vote at the School level shall be held by all members of the Faculty, as defined above, subject to the restrictions enumerated below:

- a.** The right to vote on issues concerning tenure shall be restricted to tenured faculty with academic rank equal to or exceeding the candidate's current rank.
- b.** The right to vote on issues concerning promotion shall be restricted to tenured faculty with academic rank equal to or exceeding that proposed for the candidate.
- c.** The right to vote on issues concerning the hiring of tenure-track faculty shall be restricted to tenured and tenure-track faculty. Term faculty may take part in the interview and discussion process.
- d.** Affiliate faculty do not have voting rights unless specifically granted by a vote of the Faculty.
- e.** Faculty members enrolled in a degree program within the School are ineligible to vote.

f. Postdoctoral fellows, postdoctoral associates, and visiting faculty do not have voting rights.

The Director of the School, prior to the first faculty meeting of each year, shall certify to the Faculty in a written form the names of all persons holding academic rank and their level of voting rights, if any.

Article II - Faculty Meetings and Voting Procedures

Section 1.

The presiding officer at all meetings of the Faculty shall be the Director, or such member of the Faculty as designated by the Director. If requested by a voting faculty member, meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (revised), to the extent that these rules do not contradict the rules and procedures described in these or future Bylaws or Standing Rules.

Section 2.

a. Meetings shall be open to all members of the Faculty as defined in Article I, Section 1.

b. Discussions and votes involving tenure shall be restricted to those tenured faculty members with academic rank equal to or exceeding the candidate's current rank.

c. Discussions and votes involving promotion shall be restricted to those faculty members with academic rank equal to or exceeding that proposed for the candidate.

d. The quorum for the faculty meetings shall consist of not fewer than 33% of the voting members of the Faculty as defined in Article I, Section 3.

Section 3.

a. Any person invited by the Director to meet with the Faculty may participate in the discussion of any item of business brought forth upon the floor.

b. All members of standing and ad hoc committees may be present at the meeting(s) of the Faculty during consideration of a report from their respective committee(s) and may participate in such consideration.

c. Freedom of discussion shall be the rule.

Section 4.

The Faculty may go into closed session by majority vote. Only members of the Faculty may be present during a closed session.

Section 5.

- a.** The Director shall prepare the agenda and shall distribute it in a timely manner (generally at least 48 hours prior to the meeting) to all members of the Faculty, and appropriate administrative officers of the University.
- b.** Any member of the Faculty may submit items of business for inclusion on the agenda. All items submitted at least five normal business days prior to the meeting shall be placed on the agenda.
- c.** Explanatory or background information on all agenda items shall be prepared by the sponsor of the item and shall be attached to the agenda. Agenda items submitted for faculty actions shall be in writing and accompanied by the text of all principal motions to be put on substantive matters and shall be circulated with the agenda in accordance with Section 5a.

Section 6.

- a.** Meetings of the Faculty will be convened at least once every fall and spring semester. The Director shall announce meetings at least two weeks in advance.
- b.** When the agenda of a scheduled meeting is not completed on the scheduled date, the meeting shall be recessed or adjourned and shall be reconvened as agreed upon and the agenda should be completed at the next meeting.

Section 7.

- a.** The Director shall call a meeting of the Faculty in response to a petition signed by at least 25% of the voting members of the Faculty and should normally call such a meeting within eight normal business days of receiving the petition.
- b.** The written call to the meeting shall include a statement of the purpose of the meeting and shall be distributed to all members of the Faculty at least seven normal business days before the meeting.
- c.** Only that business stipulated in the call to the meeting may be transacted at such a special meeting.

Section 8.

- a.** Ballots may be conducted at faculty meetings or by mail. In all ballots, voting members have the option to abstain from voting. In a faculty meeting, upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members present and voting, any matter may be submitted to a vote by mail ballot. If a mail ballot is authorized at a faculty meeting, the ballot must be submitted to the Faculty within seven normal business days of the faculty meeting. Faculty may be notified of the ballot by electronic or campus mail.

b. A ballot at a faculty meeting shall be by voice vote, a show of hands, or by secret ballot. Any voting member upon request may cause a secret ballot to be taken. Voting on tenure, promotion and evaluation of the Director shall always be by secret ballot. An absentee vote may be counted only in cases when a motion has been stated prior to the meeting and the motion comes before the meeting substantially unchanged. Absentee votes do not count for purposes of establishing a quorum for the meeting. Proxy ballots are not allowed. Except for motions that concern the Bylaws, a motion at a faculty meeting shall be approved if the majority of votes, both by voting members present and absentee votes by voting members, are in favor of the measure. If the number of votes in favor of the measure exceeds the number of votes against the measure, but does not constitute a majority of all votes including abstentions, the motion shall be tabled until the next meeting, unless there is an affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members present and voting, to submit the motion to a vote by mail ballot.

c. For a mail ballot, votes may be submitted either by electronic mail, campus mail, or by hand delivery to the office of the Director. There shall be a mechanism that allows individuals to vote in secret. A deadline for voting must be imposed, but faculty must be given a period of at least five normal business days to submit their votes. Votes not received by the deadline will be ignored. The Director shall report the results of the balloting within one week of the deadline for voting; this report may be distributed orally at a faculty meeting, or in writing by electronic or campus mail.

d. For a mail ballot, a motion shall fail to pass if less than one-half of the eligible voting members vote, or if the number voting against the motion exceeds the number voting in favor of the motion.

e. A mail ballot on a motion may also be initiated outside of a faculty meeting by submitting a petition to the Director signed by at least 25% of the voting members of the Faculty. The ballot shall be submitted to the Faculty within seven normal business days of the petition being submitted, according to the rules and procedures described in paragraphs c and d above.

Section 9.

Items of new business not appearing on the agenda may be introduced from the floor by any member of the Faculty after consideration of all agenda items has been completed. Disposition of any item introduced without prior notice and information may be carried over to the next regular meeting of the Faculty if at least 33% of the voting members present support a motion to carry it over. A motion carried over under this provision shall appear on the agenda of the next regular meeting as an item of old business and shall be supported by background information as provided in Section 5 of this Article.

Section 10.

Minutes of all meetings of the Faculty shall be prepared in a style that will convey the essence of discussion on each item of business considered. Discussions concerning

promotion and tenure of specific members of the Faculty will not be included in the minutes. At least one copy of the minutes of every meeting shall be preserved in a minutes book as part of the permanent archives of the University. The minutes book shall be kept in the office of the Director. The minutes will be distributed to the Faculty via electronic mail, or by notifying the Faculty of an online source for the minutes.

Article III - Committees

Section 1.

a. "Standing committees" shall be those permanent committees whose members are elected by the Faculty or else appointed by the Director. Generally, the term of the memberships on all School standing committees is three years and members may succeed themselves. New standing committees can be established at any time according to the procedures set forth in the Standing Rules. The initial curriculum committee structure specified in the Standing Rules can be modified by simple majority vote of the Faculty after a period of 2 academic years from the effective date of the Bylaws, as specified in Article IV, Section 1.

b. "Ad hoc committees" shall be established by the Faculty or the Director, as appropriate, for consideration of special or transient issues. If no term is specified, the committee is deemed to serve until it issues a final report or until the committee is dissolved. Ad hoc committees can be established at any time according to the procedures set forth in the Standing Rules.

Section 2.

a. Unless otherwise specified, each committee shall elect its chair from among its own membership. Each committee shall establish a quorum for its own function. Each committee may determine procedures for maintaining appropriate records of its activities.

b. Committees shall normally serve during the academic year; however, all committees are authorized to function as necessary during the entire calendar year.

Section 3.

The Faculty may authorize student representation on any committee. The Faculty, the Director, or the Dean, may authorize this in the case of ad hoc committees.

Section 4.

Any faculty committee may be required by majority vote of the Faculty to report to it at a specified later meeting any matter referred by action of the Faculty to the charge of that committee. Upon receipt of its report, the committee may be discharged of further responsibility for the matter by majority vote of the Faculty.

Article IV - Effective Date and Amendment

Section 1.

The Effective Date of these Bylaws and Standing Rules shall be the date of approval of these Bylaws by a vote of the Faculty, or the date of establishment of the School, whichever comes later.

Section 2.

Revisions of the Bylaws shall become effective if approved by a two-thirds majority of the Faculty in a vote carried out in accordance with the rules and procedures described in Article II, Section 8.

Section 3.

All motions to amend these Bylaws shall be read and discussed at regular meetings of the Faculty. Amendments to the Bylaws shall become effective only after discussion at two consecutive meetings of the Faculty and if approved by a two-thirds majority of the Faculty via a vote carried out in accordance with the rules and procedures described in Article II, Section 8.

Section 4.

All motions to amend the Standing Rules shall be read and discussed at regular meetings of the Faculty. Amendments to the Standing Rules shall become effective only after discussion at two consecutive meetings of the Faculty and if approved by a majority of the Faculty via a vote carried out in accordance with the rules and procedures described in Article II, Section 8.

Standing Rules of the Faculty of The School of Physics, Astronomy, and Computational Sciences George Mason University

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Article I - Committees

a. Standing Committees

Standing committees shall be established via a majority vote of the Faculty. Unless otherwise specified, members of Standing Committees are elected by the Faculty.

At a minimum, the following Standing Committees will be established:

i) Curriculum Committees. In order to ensure the smooth operation of the different degree programs offered by the School, there shall be three separate curriculum committees as follows:

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee. This is a single committee that oversees all undergraduate programs and courses for all disciplines in the School.

Graduate Curriculum Committee for Physics and Astronomy. This committee will oversee faculty recommendations for possible changes in courses and degree requirements involving Physics and Astronomy courses and programs, including the introduction or removal of courses, standards of admission, and other related matters.

Graduate Curriculum Committee for Computational and Data Sciences. This committee will oversee faculty recommendations for possible changes in courses and degree requirements involving Computational and Data Sciences courses and programs, including the introduction or removal of courses, standards of admission, and other related matters.

Note: All actions taken by any curriculum committee are subject to approval by a vote of the Faculty.

ii) Admissions Committee. The principal task of this committee is to review applications of potential students to the various degree programs. The representation on this committee will reflect the broad program core areas, and the committee may solicit input from other members of the Faculty regarding the suitability of a candidate.

iii) Grievance Committee. This committee will consist of at least three (3) members of the tenured Faculty of the School. The purpose of this committee is to hear faculty grievances concerning alleged violations of academic freedom; other conditions of employment, such as work assignments, salaries, facilities, and support services, and charges of unprofessional or unethical conduct brought by one faculty member against another. These committees are particularly charged to be alert to instances of inequitable treatment.

iv) Facilities Committee. This committee, appointed by the Director, will evaluate needs of the Faculty and ensure that advance plans are made to meet those needs to the extent reasonable.

v) Laboratory Committee. This committee, appointed by the Director, will evaluate the instructional laboratory needs in regards to equipment, procedures, staffing, and safety policy.

b. "Ad Hoc" Committees

Ad hoc committees shall be those established by the Faculty or the Director, as appropriate, for consideration of special or transient issues. If no term is specified, the committee is deemed to serve until it issues a final report or until the committee is dissolved.

i) Promotion and Tenure Committee. This committee will have a membership selected by the Director that is chosen for a specific candidate. Its membership will be composed, to the extent possible, of members of the Faculty whose research area is close to that of the candidate.

Article II - Advisory Councils

a. Physics & Astronomy Advisory Council

The Physics & Astronomy Advisory Council is composed of three faculty members selected by the Director. The Council advises the Director on all issues of relevance to Physics & Astronomy research and educational programs, including but not limited to educational and research resource allocation, management and creation of academic programs and courses, and development of course schedules and teaching assignments.

b. Computational and Data Sciences Advisory Council

The Computational and Data Sciences Advisory Council is composed of three faculty members selected by the Director. The Council advises the Director on all issues of relevance to Computational and Data Sciences research and educational programs, including but not limited to educational and research resource allocation, management and creation of academic programs and courses, and development of course schedules and teaching assignments.