

Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications (ALEC) Bylaws

Revised August 16, 2021

PREAMBLE

0.1.¹ The Mission of the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications is to serve Tennesseans, our nation, and the world by: equipping current and future generations of educators, leaders, and communicators through agriculture; establishing strategic partnerships with communities and industry; seeking solutions through scholarship; and developing and delivering innovative outreach and Extension programs that deliver Real. Life. Solutions.

ARTICLE I: PURPOSE

1.1. The purpose of the bylaws of ALEC is to promote the orderly conduct of business of the department. These bylaws address faculty governance in which the opinions, advice or consent of faculty members are required or essential. These bylaws supplement policies of the Board of Trustees and The University of Tennessee as described in the *UT Faculty Handbook* and *Bylaws of the Herbert College of Agriculture (Herbert College)*, *UT AgResearch*, and *UT Extension*. If these bylaws conflict with University policies, University policies will prevail.

ARTICLE II: MEMBERSHIP

2.1. ALEC Department Members

All faculty and honorary faculty members, exempt, non-exempt employees and student employees are considered members of the ALEC Department.

2.2. ALEC Faculty Members

For the purpose of these bylaws, membership includes all tenured, tenure-track, and non-tenure-track faculty in the ALEC department. Unless otherwise noted, the term “regular faculty” will refer to voting members of the faculty as defined in Section 2.3.

This definition applies to all mentions of “Faculty” in these bylaws, unless otherwise stated.

2.3. Voting Members

The various faculty ranks are defined in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapters 3 and 4). The voting faculty, for faculty meetings, includes all tenured or tenure-track faculty

¹ Paragraph numbering: In the numbering sequence, the first number signifies the Article, the second number signifies the Section, the third number is the paragraph, and the fourth number is the subparagraph.

members whose appointment is in the Department. Faculty members of equal or higher rank and tenure status are eligible to vote on business pertaining to ranks equal to or below their faculty rank. Voting rights may be granted for specific business to other non-voting faculty within the Department with two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the entire body (not quorum) of previously defined voting members. Departmental meeting voting will include all faculty and staff in the ALEC Department.

2.4. Honorary Faculty Members

Honorary faculty members include those persons designated as visiting professors, professors emeriti, adjunct faculty, and faculty on temporary or part-time appointments in ALEC and are subject to policies outlined in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapters 3 and 4). Emeritus faculty can be selected according to the procedure in Section 2.1.2 in the *Bylaws of the Faculty of the Herbert College of Agriculture, UT AgResearch, and UT Extension*. Honorary faculty members serve in an advisory capacity and do not have a formal vote on departmental matters.

ARTICLE III: GOVERNANCE AND FUNCTION

3.1. Department Head

The department is administered by the department head with advisory input from faculty and departmental committees. The department head is answerable directly to the Dean of UT Extension, Dean of AgResearch, and the Dean of the Herbert College of Agriculture. The department head serves as the primary link between the department and the administration.

3.1.1. Responsibilities

The head is a member of the faculty and is the executive officer of the Department of ALEC. The head is required to uphold policies and procedures of the Board of Trustees, UT and UTIA. The department head conducts regular faculty and departmental meetings and facilitates the work of departmental committees as outlined in the bylaws. It is the responsibility of the head to arrange for the continuous administration of the department when physically absent from the office or when unable to function. One or more faculty in ALEC should be identified to have signatory authority to carry out ongoing responsibilities. Responsibilities include recruiting faculty and staff; working with faculty to plan, execute, and review program direction and priorities; enhancing the visibility of the department by promoting the creative achievements and advocating departmental expertise for new and collaborative opportunities; organizing departmental administrative and support structure; managing of ALEC physical facilities and planning for space and equipment needs; enhancing resources; preparing, presenting, and managing the ALEC budget; authorizing all expenditures from the ALEC budget; retaining, motivating and strengthening faculty and staff through active engagement, mentoring, and professional development programs; representing the department within the University system and external constituencies; creating an environment that fosters diversity, collegiality, teamwork, and the ability to work in multi-cultural and multi-

disciplinary settings; assigning a tenured faculty mentor to each tenure-track faculty member; and planning annual performance review of faculty and staff. The head will meet annually with each faculty member to conduct a performance review and write an evaluation, in accordance with ALEC bylaws, the *UT Faculty Handbook*, and the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.

3.1.2. Selection

Selection of the department head will follow the requirements of the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 1, Section 1.6.4). For internal and external searches, the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor will appoint the chair of the search committee from outside ALEC. Tenure-track and tenured faculty members will collectively recommend a slate of ALEC faculty for the search committee, from which the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor selects ALEC representatives on the search committee. The search committee may include representation from tenure-track faculty members, non-tenure-track faculty members, staff and (or) faculty members from outside ALEC. Diversity of committee membership shall follow UT procedures and/or guidelines. After interviews with all candidates have been conducted, ALEC personnel will meet to discuss their preferences. While all ALEC constituencies have input into the discussion, only the voting members conduct an anonymous vote for their choice. A summary of the faculty discussion and a record of the faculty vote will become part of the narrative that the search committee submits to the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor with the recommendation of the committee about candidates. Normally, the vote of the faculty guides the decision of the search committee. Similarly, the vote of the faculty and the recommendation of the search committee guide the decision of the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor. If the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor's choice of candidate for the head disagrees with the vote of the faculty and search committee, the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor will provide reasons in writing to the ALEC faculty and offer the faculty as a group the opportunity to discuss the decision.

3.1.3. Evaluation

As outlined in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 1, Section 1.6.5) ALEC faculty will provide annual objective and systematic evaluation of the head to the Dean of UT Extension, Dean of AgResearch, and the Dean of the Herbert College. The deans will meet with the head annually to discuss job performance and will provide a summary assessment, including goals established for the coming year, which is available for inspection by departmental faculty.

3.1.4. Strategic Plan

The ALEC department will maintain a strategic plan that addresses the needs, goals and aspirations of the department, UTIA, and UT. The strategic plan will be used to provide guidance to the head and the faculty to achieve departmental objectives. Working

together, the department head and the faculty will re-evaluate the strategic plan as necessary.

3.1.5. Role of Faculty in Setting Departmental Budget

With the strategic plan providing vision regarding the mission of ALEC, the faculty will work with the head to establish program priorities. Judgments about these programs have significant bearing on the budget, and budgetary decisions affect the shape of these programs.

3.2. Department Meetings

For the purpose of these bylaws, two distinct types of regular department meetings will be defined. Departmental meetings will refer to meetings where all faculty and staff are eligible to vote. Faculty meetings will refer to meetings where tenured and tenure-track faculty are eligible to vote. The department head will develop the agenda for department meetings and will consider business items submitted in writing at least three business days prior to the meeting.

3.2.1. Function

It is the responsibility of faculty to collectively assist the department head in planning and developing Extension, AgResearch, and Herbert College programmatic activities needed to fulfill the departmental mission. An effective departmental program requires that sufficient communications occur to keep faculty and staff attuned to program developments and requirements of The University of Tennessee, the Institute of Agriculture; Herbert College; AgResearch; and UT Extension. Departmental faculty meetings are an important step in these communication processes and should be scheduled regularly.

3.2.2. Participation

All departmental and faculty meetings are open meetings with faculty, staff, and other employees welcome to attend. Executive sessions will be held when necessary for business such as promotion and tenure discussions, following a motion and majority approval to move to a closed session. Closed (executive) sessions will be limited to those members of the voting faculty appropriate to the subject as determined by department head or their designate. For example, only tenured, full professors would meet to discuss a candidate's promotion to full professor, while all tenured faculty at the associate professor rank would meet to discuss a candidate's promotion to associate professor with tenure. All tenured and tenure-track faculty will review appointments and promotions of non-tenure track and honorary faculty appointments.

3.2.3. Scheduling

Departmental meetings should be scheduled regularly as to month and day, but the schedule may need to be changed to facilitate attendance. Faculty meetings should strive

to occur once a quarter. An agenda is prepared and distributed before the scheduled meeting. The department head presides at all meetings. If the department head cannot attend all or part of a meeting, the department head may appoint a faculty member to preside during their absence. Occasional special meetings may be necessary to avoid major conflicts or to handle special business. Additional meetings may be called by the head or designate or by petition to the dean(s) of at least 50 percent of faculty. Meetings involving faculty personnel decisions shall be announced at least one week in advance and the announcement must include the nature of the topic(s) to be considered.

3.2.4. Procedural Format

The rules contained in the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Revised* will govern all faculty and departmental meetings in all cases in which they are applicable and not inconsistent with these bylaws. The head or designate may appoint a parliamentarian at their discretion.

3.2.4.1. Quorum

A quorum will consist of one more than one-half of departmental members eligible to vote. Absentee ballots will be allowed for department programs and faculty personnel decisions to be arranged by the department head.

3.2.4.2. Voting

Voting is normally by voice vote. However, any voting member in attendance may ask for a show of hands or a blind, paper ballot or other methods. Electronic voting may be conducted only by those individuals present at the meeting, and voting must be conducted at the same time as the rest of the votes.

3.2.4.3. Reporting

Minutes of department meetings will be delivered electronically to all members of the department within five business days of the meeting. Minutes of past meetings will be archived in a manner so that they are accessible to all departmental members.

ARTICLE IV: CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT, RESPONSIBILITIES, EVALUATION, PROMOTION, TENURE, AND REVIEW FOR ALL TENURE-TRACK AND TENURED FACULTY

4.1. Process for Appointment of New Faculty to Tenure-Track Positions

The *UT Faculty Handbook* serves as the general guide for the process of appointment, evaluation, promotion, tenure, and review for all tenure-track and tenured faculty (Chapter 3).

4.1.1. Representation of Search Committee

When permission has been obtained to search for one or more tenure-track faculty positions, a faculty meeting of tenured and tenure-track faculty will be held to advise the department head in the selection of a search committee. The search committee follows the process in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3.1).

4.2. Faculty Review and Evaluation

All tenure-track and tenured faculty members will be reviewed annually in accordance with the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation* and the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3, Section 3.8).

4.2.1. Procedures

The department head will schedule a date for annual review with the faculty member. The faculty is responsible for completing all required forms and submitting them via appropriate channels to the department head in advance of the scheduled meeting. The review process will result in a narrative and evaluation signed by the department head and the faculty member. The faculty member's signature indicates that they have read their evaluation, but the signature does not imply agreement with its findings. The faculty member has the right to make a written response to this evaluation. A written response must be received by the department head within two weeks of the review meeting and will be included in the evaluation packet forwarded to the dean(s). Both the narrative and the evaluation are forwarded to the Dean of Extension, Dean of AgResearch, and/or Dean of Herbert College as required.

4.2.2. Criteria

Tenure-track and tenured faculty will be responsible for meeting the following expectations:

Professors, consistent with their assigned responsibilities, are expected to 1. hold the doctorate or other terminal degree of the discipline, or present equivalent training and experience appropriate to the particular appointment 2. be accomplished teachers 3. have achieved and to maintain a nationally recognized record in disciplinary research / scholarship / creative activity / engaged scholarship 4. have achieved and to maintain a record of significant institutional, disciplinary, and/or professional service or outreach engagement 5. serve as mentors to junior colleagues 6. have normally served as an associate professor for at least five years 7. have shown beyond doubt that they work well with colleagues and students in performing their university responsibilities.

Associate professors, consistent with their assigned responsibilities, are expected to 1. hold the doctorate or other terminal degree of the discipline, or to present equivalent training and experience as appropriate to the particular appointment 2. be good teachers 3. have achieved and to maintain a recognized record in disciplinary research / scholarship / creative activity / engaged scholarship 4. have achieved and to maintain a record of institutional, disciplinary, and/or professional service 5. have normally served as an assistant professor for at least five years 6. have demonstrated that they work well with colleagues and students in performing their university responsibilities.

Assistant professors, consistent with their assigned responsibilities, are expected to 1. hold the doctorate or other terminal degree of the discipline, or to present equivalent training and experience as appropriate to the particular appointment 2. show promise as teachers 3. show promise of developing a program in disciplinary research / scholarship / creative activity that is gaining external recognition 4. have a developing record of institutional, disciplinary, and/or professional service 5. show evidence that they work well with colleagues and students in performing their university responsibilities.

In all of these ranks, concerned and effective advising and responsible service to the university are understood to be part of the normal task of a university faculty member. It is incumbent upon faculty and administrators to engage in professional development activities. Such activities lead to continual improvement in performance and enhance the ability of all to contribute at the leading edge of the discipline and/or in leadership roles.

4.2.3. Ratings

Faculty ratings will be consistent with definitions contained in the *UTIA Guidelines for Annual Performance Review*.

4.3. Annual Retention Review for all Tenure-track Faculty Members

All tenure-track faculty members receive an annual retention review in addition to the annual evaluation.

4.3.1. Procedures

The department head will establish a timeline and request from each tenure-track faculty member a retention dossier in the same format as outlined in sections A, B, C, and D of Appendix II in the *Faculty Handbook*. These sections contain:

- Educational and employment history
- Statement of Responsibilities
- Criteria statements as listed in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3, Section 3.2)
- Research, scholarship, and creative achievement
- Institutional, disciplinary, and/or professional service

These materials will be made available to the department's tenured faculty at least two weeks prior to a called meeting of the tenured faculty. The faculty committee chair will

report his/her assessment of the respective tenure-track person's professional activities. At the end of faculty discussion, a formal ballot vote will be taken by all tenured faculty. The chair of the committee will provide to the department head a written summary of the faculty discussion and the vote, which comprises the recommendation of the faculty to the head. When a tenure-track faculty member has not received a unanimous committee vote, the summary must include a discussion of the reasons for the divergent opinions.

The department head will make an independent retention review, taking into consideration the input of the faculty in making a recommendation. After making an independent judgment, the department head will make a written recommendation to the Dean of Extension, Dean of AgResearch, and/or Dean of Herbert College as to retention or non-retention. The narrative prepared by the tenured faculty and the faculty member and the retention vote will be included in the materials submitted to the dean(s). Copies of all materials submitted to the dean(s) will be provided to the faculty members. The dean(s) will make an independent decision for retention or non-retention, taking into consideration all of the information provided and will forward their recommendation to the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor. The UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor has the final decision on retention. Procedures following positive or negative retention votes are described in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3, Section 3.11.4.5).

4.4 Tenure Review

The department will follow the procedures for awarding tenure found in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3, Section 3.11.5, and Section 3.11.6). Tenure resides in the University of Tennessee Institute for Agriculture (UTIA).

4.4.1. Procedures

The department head will appoint a departmental review committee and chair, and the department head will oversee the procedures and rules outlined in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3, Sections 3.11.6 and 3.11.6.1, Part E).

4.5. Promotion Review

The procedure for consideration of candidates for promotion is given in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3, Sections 3.10 and 3.10.1). The department head will oversee this process and appoint a departmental committee and chair.

4.5.1. Procedures

The process begins with submission of materials by the candidate and departmental solicitation of external letters assessing the record of scholarship and/or creative activity. Departmental faculty at or above the rank to which promotion is sought review these materials and vote on promotion. The department head reviews the material and faculty vote and then makes an independent recommendation to the dean(s) and UTIA committee. The UTIA committee reviews the file and makes an independent recommendation to the

dean(s), who reviews the file and makes a recommendation to the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor. The UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor makes the final decision regarding promotion (*UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 3, Section 3.10)).

ARTICLE V: CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT, RESPONSIBILITIES, EVALUATION AND APPEALS FOR NON-TENURE-TRACK FACULTY

5.1. Definition of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

Non-tenure-track faculty are hired on limited, but typically renewable, appointments to fill specific needs related to each hiring unit's particular mission and to the mission of the university as a whole. Non-tenure-track faculty appointments can be categorized by their primary academic responsibilities as teaching, research, clinical, practice, and extension positions, or as adjunct, visiting, or joint appointments (*UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 4)).

5.1.1. Appointment of Faculty to Non-Tenure-Track Positions

All appointments to non-tenure-track exempt positions including part-time appointments and temporary appointments will be made in accordance with departmental policy as directed by the department head and following protocol as directed in the *UT Faculty Handbook*. These policies may include formation of search committees to provide guidance in candidate selection or may involve an accelerated decision by the department head if appropriate. Unless otherwise noted, tenured and tenure-track faculty, or a committee of tenured and tenure-track faculty, will evaluate credentials and make recommendations to the department head regarding non-tenure-track appointments.

5.1.2. Responsibilities of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

The responsibilities of non-tenure-track faculty are defined in the *UT Faculty Handbook*. Any additional responsibilities will be included in the official letter of appointment.

5.1.3. Evaluation and Promotion of Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

Non-tenure-track faculty members are subject to annual performance reviews appropriate to the positions. Evaluation and promotion of non-tenure-track faculty by the department head shall follow guidelines described in the *UT Faculty Handbook* (Chapter 4, Sections 4.3 and 4.5).

5.2. Appointment of Emeritus Faculty

At the discretion of the UTIA Senior Vice President/Senior Vice Chancellor and dean and upon the recommendation of the department head and departmental faculty, a faculty member who is a professor at the time of retirement may be awarded the rank of

emeritus. Emeriti faculty members are not subject to annual performance review.

ARTICLE VI: COMMITTEES

6.1. Departmental committees and their chairs may be created and appointed by the department head. The composition and size of each committee is determined by the department head with advice from the departmental faculty, committee chairs, and the probable needs of the committee. Prior to appointment of committees, the department head will discuss appointments with prospective members to determine if their workload is compatible with committee service. All activities related to the committee should be considered departmental business and all committee members should be afforded the appropriate opportunity to participate. A list of membership in standing committees and ad hoc committees will be updated annually and will be maintained on the department web page. All committees will report on a regularly scheduled basis, as appropriate.

6.2. Standing Committees

Chairs and members of standing committees shall be appointed and serve at the discretion of the department head for a term not to exceed three years and may be appointed to consecutive terms. These committees will report periodically to the faculty/department at regular meetings.

6.2.1. Promotion and Tenure Committee

6.2.1.1. Purpose

Review and discuss the tenure-track or promotional candidate's dossier and, when deemed necessary, make suggestions to the candidate on how to strengthen the dossier.

6.2.1.2. Vote

Vote on retention and/or promotion of the tenure-track faculty.

6.2.1.3. Membership

Members of the committee will follow guidelines in the *UT Faculty Handbook*.

6.2.1.4. Chair

The chair will be selected by the department head. The function of the chair is described in the *UT Faculty Handbook*.

6.2.1.5. Procedures

The committee will hold meetings as needed to complete the responsibilities of the

committee.

6.2.2. Human Subjects Committee

6.2.2.1. Purpose

Review faculty human subjects applications to ensure compliance to the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board guidelines.

6.2.2.2. Membership

Members of the committee will consist of three (3) regular faculty members. A rotation should be determined to allow all members of the faculty to participate, with one member rotating off and one member rotating on each year.

6.2.2.3. Chair

The chair will be selected by the department and serve a one-year term.

6.2.2.4. Procedures

The committee will hold meetings as needed to complete the responsibilities of the committee.

6.2.3. Awards and Recognition Committee

6.2.3.1. Purpose

Maintain a list of awards and due dates applicable to the activities of the faculty and staff. Solicit nominations from faculty and staff, hold elections and tally votes received from departmental members, if necessary. Submit award nominations for faculty and staff, if appropriate.

6.2.3.2. Membership

Members of the committee will consist of three (3) regular faculty members. A rotation should be determined to allow all members of the faculty to participate, with one member rotating off and one member rotating on each year.

6.2.3.3. Chair

The chair will be selected by the department and serve a one-year term.

6.2.3.4. Procedures

The committee will hold meetings as needed to complete the responsibilities of the committee.

6.2.4. Bylaws Committee

6.2.4.1. Purpose

Review ALEC bylaws at least annually and make recommendations for change to the faculty. Ensure that ALEC bylaws are in compliance with *UTIA College Bylaws* and *UT Faculty Handbook*.

6.2.4.2. Membership

Members of the committee will consist of two faculty members. A rotation should be determined to allow all members of the faculty to participate, with one member rotating off and one member rotating on each year.

6.2.5. Peer-Review of Teaching Committee

6.2.5.1. Purpose

To facilitate the evaluation of faculty's teaching ability and effectiveness.

6.2.5.2. Membership

Committee membership consists of at least two regular faculty members from ALEC and one faculty from outside of the department. Terms are for two years. A rotation should be determined to allow all members of the faculty to participate, with one member rotating off and one member rotating on each year.

6.2.5.3. Chair

The faculty member in their second year on the committee will serve as chair.

6.2.5.4. Procedure

When peer review of teaching is needed, the committee will follow the procedures in the *Manual for Faculty Evaluation*.

6.3. Ad hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees are intended to respond to a short-term need or concern. The charge should be narrow and the time frame explicit.

6.3.1. Membership

The number of members and specific members of the committee will be determined by the department head, based upon the committee's charge. If appropriate, a rotation should

be determined to allow all members of the faculty and staff to participate.

6.3.2. Chair

The chair will be selected by the department head and serve a one-year term.

6.3.3. Procedures

The committee will meet as needed to complete the responsibilities of the committee.

ARTICLE VII: APPROVAL OF AND AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

7.1. Approval

Bylaws will become effective upon a majority vote of faculty attending the department meeting at which they are proposed.

7.2. Amendment

Faculty members have the authority to make, amend and rescind the bylaws by a blind, ballot vote. Amendments require a two-thirds majority of those members present at the department meeting, provided the amendment was submitted in writing or by electronic transmission to all faculty members at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

7.2.1. The office of the ALEC Department Head is authorized to make changes only to reflect approved name changes of UT Extension/AgResearch/Herbert College departments and programs.

7.2.2. The office of the UT Dean of Extension, Dean of AgResearch, and the Dean of the Herbert College, or designate is authorized to renumber paragraphs of the bylaws after revision of the bylaws.