

**UNO English Department Governance Document**  
**(Revised October 2000; April 2005)**

The Governance Document of the UNO Department of English provides governance and procedures within the department in accordance with the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska at Omaha chapter of the American Association of University Professors, the Bylaws of the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, and the Constitution of the College of Arts and Sciences.

I.     **Objectives of the Department.** Through its commitment to excellence in teaching and its service activities, the Department of English works to increase the general knowledge of literature and literary history, the writing competency, and the language awareness of a diverse body of UNO students as well as of the citizens of Omaha and its immediate surroundings. In addition, department faculty members seek to make contributions on regional and national levels through their research and creative activities. They do this by writing scholarly publications in the areas of literature, language, or composition studies; by editing and disseminating editions of literary works; and by writing and publishing original works of creative literature.

II.    **Department Administration.** The department shall have three part-time faculty administrators and one full-time Coordinator of Administration.

A.     **Department Chair.** Nominated by the dean after consultation with department faculty. Officially appointed by the Board of Regents. This is a half-time position, with 6 hours of administrative reassigned time per semester. The chair's performance is evaluated by the dean annually and by the department as part of the annual merit review. Duties:

1. To make recommendations to the dean and faculty of the college concerning the welfare of the department or its relations to other departments. (CAS Constitution)
2. To be the department's official representative in all matters except those designated to other members of the department. (CAS Constitution)
3. To serve as intermediary between the department and other individuals and units of the university. (CAS Constitution)
4. To be responsible to the dean for departmental administration. (CAS Constitution)

Some specifics:

- A. To coordinate as appropriate the activities of the department's faculty and staff, particularly (with the help of the Coordinator of Administration) teaching assignments.
- B. To lead the department toward the achievement of its strategic goals.
- C. To coordinate departmental recruitment of new faculty and new majors.
- D. To recruit members for various departmental committees and service positions.
  
- E. To oversee spending of the department's operating budget and other accounts.
- F. To make official recommendations on performance, annual merit, reappointment, promotion, and tenure.
- G. To write various department self-studies demanded by the university and the Postsecondary Coordinating Commission.
- H. To take the lead in resolving intra-departmental conflicts.

**B. Graduate Program Coordinator.** Elected annually by a majority vote of the members of the Graduate Program Committee for up to three terms of one year each. This is a quarter-time position, with 3 hours of administrative reassigned time per semester. Evaluated annually by the department as part of the annual merit review. Duties:

1. To serve as general administrator of the English graduate program and to implement the decisions of the Graduate Program Committee.
2. To preside at meetings of the Graduate Program Committee and to prepare schedules and agendas for such meetings.
3. To evaluate the applications of prospective graduate students in the department's M.A. program or other graduate certificate programs.
4. To handle routine communication with the office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, with individual graduate students, and with other concerned parties.
5. To submit to the Graduate Program Committee plans for advising, registration, comprehensive examinations, and other necessary procedures.
6. To make periodic recommendations to the Graduate Studies Committee concerning changes in curriculum, requirements, or procedures which would tend to improve or update the B.A., M.A., or graduate certificate programs.
7. To take the lead in recruiting new majors and teaching assistants.

C. **Writing Program Administrator.** After consultation with the department, the department chair appoints the WPA annually, normally for up to three terms of one year each. Minimal requirements for this position are three years of experience in teaching university-level first-year composition. A Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition is preferred.

This is a quarter-time position, with 3 hours of service reassigned time per semester. Evaluated annually by the department as part of the annual merit review. Duties:

3. To conduct ongoing assessments of students' writing abilities and their attitudes toward writing in order to determine program effectiveness.
4. With the help of the Coordinator of Administration, to review and evaluate the performance of adjunct instructors and graduate teaching assistants in the First-year Composition Program.
5. With the Coordinator of Administration, to assist the department chair in the ranking and hiring of candidates for adjunct faculty.
6. To teach a graduate course in composition pedagogy every fall semester for incoming T.A.s.
7. To conduct a training session for new adjunct instructors and T.A.s at the beginning of each fall semester.
8. To conduct regular meetings with experienced instructors in the First-year Composition Program.
9. To communicate with other writing teachers in local high schools and regional colleges and universities in order to promote awareness of one another's programs.

D. **Coordinator of Administration.** (Non-faculty) Hired full-time by the dean after consultation with the department chair and department. Supervised and evaluated annually by the department chair. Duties:

4. To generally assist the department chair in his or her administrative duties, but especially in course scheduling, keeping track of the budget, and hiring adjunct faculty.
5. To keep department records, archives, and web page.
6. To serve as an ex officio member of the First-year Writing Committee.
7. To supervise the department's secretarial workforce and generally keep the department's main offices orderly and welcoming.
8. To coordinate the placement exam process.

4. **Other Department Service Positions.** Normally the department chair shall appoint from among faculty volunteers the following departmental service positions annually: Honors Program Liaison, UNO Library Liaison (normally a graduate faculty member), an Undergraduate Scholarship Coordinator, Faculty Welfare Coordinator, Editor of the department newsletter, Moderator of Sigma Tau Delta and the English Club, the United Way Coordinator. Others may be added as different department needs arise.

5. **Standing Committees.** The English Department's standing committees will be as follows:

A. **Graduate Program Committee.** Charged with the oversight and maintenance of the department's B.A. and M.A. programs as well as any advanced certificate programs. Membership: All graduate faculty members of the department, any other department faculty voted onto the committee by the regular GPC membership, and one graduate student. The Graduate Program Coordinator chairs the committee. The committee is appointed annually by UNO's Dean of Graduate Studies.

B. **First-year Writing Committee.** Charged with the oversight and maintenance of the department's First-year Composition Program as well as any non-major writing courses. Membership: two full-time department faculty, at least two  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time faculty, and at least one part-time adjunct faculty. The department's Coordinator of Administration is an ex officio member. The Writing Program Administrator chairs the committee. All members of the committee may vote. This committee is nominated by the department chair and ratified by a written ballot of all department faculty. Duties:

1. To advise the Writing Program Administrator and Coordinator as needed on program policy.
2. To develop and review departmental syllabi for English 1150, 1154, 1160, and 1164 or their equivalents.
3. To recommend and review textbooks for 1150, 1154, 1160, and 1164 or their equivalents.
4. To advise the Writing Program Administrator and Coordinator as needed on placement and CLEP testing.

A. **Grade Appeals Committee.** Charged with adjudicating the department's formal grade appeals. Membership: five members, at least two of which must be full-time faculty, and one alternate. One of the department's graduate students may also serve. This committee is nominated by the department chair and ratified by a majority vote of all department faculty. When convened, the committee shall elect a chair and a secretary.

B. **The Committee of the Whole.** Charged with evaluating faculty personnel issues such as the annual merit review, promotion, reappointment, and tenure. Also reviews applications for Faculty Development Fellowships. May make recommendations to the chair, the dean, or the college faculty upon any matter affecting the welfare of the department or its members. Primary responsibility for up-dating the department's governance and merit documents. Membership: all full-time and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time department faculty. The chair of this committee is elected

annually in the early fall semester by a majority vote of all full- and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time members.

C. **Chairperson's Computer Advisory Committee.** Charged with advising the chairperson on the purchases of computer equipment for individual faculty members and the department's computer labs if monies for such purchases become available. The Coordinator of Administration is an ex officio member. The Manager of Computing for the Humanities may serve if willing. Other places on the committee will be filled by volunteers from the department's faculty. In their recommendations, the committee will be guided by the statement entitled "Recommendations to the Chair on Procurement and Use Policy" (1995). This document may be up-dated by the committee as necessary.

F. **Assessment Committee.** Charged with the creation, revision, oversight, and maintenance of assessment goals, objectives, and procedures for both the undergraduate (majors) and graduate programs. The committee will be guided by the department's strategic plan, which puts students at the center of the educational enterprise. The committee may make recommendations to the department or the chair regarding programs or curricula based on assessment results. Assessment plans and results will be reported to the department on an annual basis. The committee will coordinate assessment plans and procedures with the Writing Program Administrator, who oversees assessment of First-Year Writing. The committee is nominated by the department chair and ratified by a majority vote of all department faculty.

When feasible, each concentration should be represented on the committee.

The co-ordinator of administration may serve as an ex officio member.

1. **Other Committees.** Other committees, appointed by the department chair, may be added on an ad hoc basis depending on the department's needs. Examples might be hiring committees, curriculum review committees, etc.
2. **Department Faculty Voting Rights.** All full- and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time faculty have a vote in all motions proposed in department meetings or meetings of committees of which they are members as well as those brought before the department by written ballot. Three-quarter-time faculty, however, shall NOT have a vote on questions of merit ranking, promotion, and tenure of full-time department faculty.

3. **Quorum.** At department meetings, meetings of the Committee of the Whole, and meetings of other major departmental committees, the presence of 1/3 of the voting members shall constitute a quorum.
4. **Courtesy Faculty Appointments.** On the recommendation of the department and the dean, the Board of Regents may appoint faculty from other departments as Courtesy English Faculty. Full-time faculty from other departments who may regularly teach English classes would be the logical candidates for such positions. Courtesy faculty shall be kept up-to-date with news from the department. They shall not have a vote in departmental affairs.
5. **Part-time Adjunct Faculty.** In addition to tenured, tenure-track, and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time instructors, the department will normally hire part-time faculty to help meet its important service course obligations. These faculty are hired on a one semester basis, but may be rehired indefinitely. The department chairperson, the Writing Program Administrator, and the Coordinator of Administration shall keep the part-time faculty informed about relevant department matters. The Writing Program Administrator shall conduct regular meetings with the part-time faculty. The Writing Program Administrator shall evaluate the performance of part-time faculty on a regular basis.
6. **Grade Appeal Procedures.** The English Department appeals procedure has three parts:
  1. Consultation with the instructor,
  2. Mediation by the department chair,
  3. Hearing and recommendation by the department grade appeals committee (See section IV.C above).Specific guidelines on how these three steps are to be carried out are found in the Grade Appeal Procedures document of November 8, 1993.

1. **Summer School Teaching Policies.**
  - A. All full-time and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time faculty in the department will have the opportunity to express their interest in summer teaching and suggest courses for the summer term.
  - B. Except for faculty in their first or second years of teaching, those eligible will be only those faculty who have been rated "Satisfactory" in the annual merit review for two out of the three years immediately preceding the date when summer teaching assignments are made.
  - C. A schedule of classes will be developed which best meets the needs of students and the department within the limits imposed by the budget and by faculty availability.
  - D. Within the requirements of the schedule, assignments to first summer courses will be made according to a ranking of eligible full-time

faculty based upon the following criteria: (1) academic rank, (2) time in rank at UNO, (3) tenure, (4) date of tenure, (5) years of full-time academic or administrative service at the university level, (6) date of terminal degree.

E. Full-time faculty who wish to teach but who cannot teach due to lack of university funding in a given year will have top priority for a first course the following year.

F. After the first course assignments are given, second courses will normally be assigned to full-time faculty using the same ranking system.

G. After first and second courses are offered to full-time faculty,  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time faculty who so request will be offered courses to the extent that the budget allows in the order of seniority.

1. **Annual Performance and Merit Review Policies.** Faculty members are evaluated annually in accordance with the AAUP contract and the policies of the university. The Committee of the Whole makes recommendations to the chair and the chairperson, in turn, makes recommendations to the dean on whether a department member should be rated “Satisfactory” or “Unsatisfactory.” Unless individual faculty members choose not to stand for additional merit, the Committee of the Whole and then the chairperson make further recommendations as to whether a department member should be rated “Meritorious,” “Highly Meritorious,” or “Extraordinarily Meritorious.” A “Satisfactory” rating entitles full-time faculty members to the across-the-board raise negotiated in the current union contract. Ratings of “Meritorious” and above entitle full-time faculty members to additional raises from the “Exceptional Performance” salary pool. The raises of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time faculty are determined by the college dean. The Committee of the Whole advises the chairperson and the dean on the dollar increments between the various merit levels. The chairperson and the committee are guided by procedures and standards published in the department’s merit documents.
2. **Amending Departmental Governance Documents.** This document as well as the department’s Full-time and  $\frac{3}{4}$ -time Merit Documents may be amended by written ballot of the department. A  $\frac{2}{3}$  majority is required to amend.