

**Bylaws  
of the Faculty of the  
VOLGENAU SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING (VSE)  
George Mason University**

October 19, 2018

**Article I—Membership**

*Section 1.*

The faculty of the Volgenau School of Engineering (hereafter referred to as the Faculty) is comprised of all persons holding faculty rank (as defined in the George Mason University Faculty Handbook) in the School.

- a. The right to vote shall be held by all members of the Faculty in the school who either:
  1. have a tenured or tenure-track appointment; or
  2. are instructional faculty with a full-time, fixed-term appointment (excluding those whose appointments are funded predominantly from sources external to the University); or
  3. are members of the Graduate faculty as defined in Section 3 of this article; or
  4. have been approved as voting members of the Faculty by the VSE Promotion and Tenure committee and the Dean.

An exception to this will occur relative to recommendations concerning promotion and tenure in which case the vote will be restricted to tenured faculty. Voting membership in the Faculty during the summer shall be limited to persons holding voting membership in the preceding spring semester and who are anticipated to return as voting members in the following fall semester whether or not engaged in summer teaching or research duties. In addition, faculty members studying for a degree within the School are ineligible to vote.

*Section 2.*

- a. The Dean of the School, prior to the first faculty meeting of each semester, shall certify to the secretary of the Faculty the names of all persons holding academic rank and for each name shall indicate the classification of either voting member or of non-voting member, as shall be appropriate. Changes of individual status that affect eligibility to vote shall be similarly communicated to the secretary of the Faculty with the appropriate new classification.
- b. It shall be the duty of the secretary of the Faculty to keep and maintain a current list of faculty and to resolve challenges in this regard.

*Section 3.*

- a. The term “graduate faculty” is defined by the University. According to the 2018-2019 University Catalog, “The graduate faculty consists of all tenure and tenure-track faculty members and other faculty members appointed to the graduate faculty by the provost.”
- b. The term Graduate Faculty is used in these bylaws to designate all graduate faculty in the School.
- c. A member of the Faculty who is not tenured or tenure-track can be recommended to the provost for appointment to the Graduate Faculty if the faculty member
  - has a minimum of one year of full-time experience at the University, and

- is under a long-term contract with the University, i.e., a minimum of three years, with a balance no smaller than two years at the time of recommendation.

The procedure for recommendation to the provost is

1. The department's P&T committee and the department's chair submit a recommendation to VSE's Dean, who may consult with VSE's P&T committee.
2. The VSE's Dean submits a recommendation to the provost.

The appointment is for a period equal to the minimum between three years and the balance of the faculty member's contract with the School. The appointment may be renewed using the same process as in the case of first appointment. The reappointment is for a period equal to the minimum between three years and the balance of the faculty member's contract with the School.

- d. Members of the graduate faculty of other units on campus can also be recommended for appointment to the Graduate Faculty under the same criteria and following the same process described in item c above.
- e. Members of the Graduate Faculty have voting rights as well as the right to be the primary advisor for M.S. theses, and Ph.D. dissertations.

#### *Section 4.*

- a. A retired Emeritus Faculty member is not a member of VSE's Graduate Faculty. Such a faculty member may complete the direction of Ph.D. dissertations and M.S. theses under his/her supervision for students who have been advanced to candidacy or who have had their M.S. thesis approved before the Emeritus Faculty member's retirement. New students can only be taken if there is a co-director from the Graduate Faculty.

## **Article II—Officers**

#### *Section 1.*

- a. The Dean of the Volgenau School of Engineering shall be the Chair of the Faculty.
- b. The Faculty shall elect a secretary to serve for a term of 12 months commencing on September 1.

## **Article III—Responsibilities of the Faculty**

#### *Section 1.*

- a. The Faculty shall have, as its primary concern, the recommendation of general educational policies and processes for undergraduate and graduate degrees, certificates, and minors in the Volgenau School of Engineering.

#### *Section 2.*

It shall be within the province of the Faculty:

- a. To review and propose matters affecting the development of courses and curricula in the Volgenau School of Engineering.

- b. To review and propose academic requirements for degrees, certificates, and minors.
- c. To authorize conferral of those degrees, certificates, and minors upon students who have been certified by the registrar to have fulfilled the requirements set for them.
- d. To review and propose regulations governing evaluation and acceptance of credits transferred from other institutions.

*Section 3.*

It shall also be within the province of the Faculty to discuss and make recommendations concerning:

- a. Adoption of proposals for new degrees, certificates, and minors;
- b. Policies pertaining to standards of undergraduate and graduate student admission to the Volgenau School of Engineering;
- c. Organization of the school into academic divisions or departments;
- d. Operations of the University library;
- e. Selection of the President of the University, Deans, other administrative officers, and department chairs;
- f. Matters of faculty welfare such as: professional conduct, hiring, tenure, promotion, and grievance.

#### **Article IV—Meetings of the Faculty**

*Section 1.*

- a. Meetings of the Faculty shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order (revised) except as the rules and procedures described therein have been or shall be modified by adoption of these or of future bylaws or standing rules. The presiding officer of all meetings of the Faculty shall be the Dean as Chair of the faculty, or a member of the Faculty designated by the Dean.

*Section 2.*

- a. Meetings shall be open to all members of the Faculty as defined in Article I, Section 1, paragraph a.
- b. In addition, meetings shall be open to members of the public, who may attend as observers.

*Section 3.*

- a. Any person invited by the Dean 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, and to that end, debate shall not be monopolized by one or by a small group of participants.

*Section 4.*

- a. 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 Dean of the School shall prepare the agenda and the secretary of the Faculty will be expected to distribute it seven days before 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 shall be placed on the agenda by the secretary. However, non-voting members may submit only items for discussion, but motions on those subjects may be made by voting members.
- 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 5 a.

*Section 6.*

- a. As a general rule, meetings of the Faculty shall be convened at least once every fall and spring semester.
- 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.

*Section 7.*

- a. The Dean will call a meeting of the Faculty in response to a petition signed by twenty-five voting members of the Faculty and should normally call such a meeting within eight 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, and to all other persons specified by the Dean to the secretary of the Faculty, at least five 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. The quorum for the Faculty meetings shall consist of not fewer than 25 voting members of the Faculty as defined in Article I, Section 1, paragraph b.

*Section 9.*

- a. The normal order of business for the Faculty meeting shall be:
  1. Call to order
  2. Approval of minutes
  3. Announcements
  4. Old business
  5. New business
    - A. Committee reports
    - B. Other new business
  6. Address by the Dean on the state of the School
  7. Question & answer period with Dean
  8. Adjournment

*Section 10.*

- a. Ballots may be conducted at Faculty meetings or by mail or email.

- b. A ballot at a Faculty meeting shall be by voice vote upon a call by the presiding officer for "ayes" and "nays," or by standing vote upon a call from the floor for a division, except that any voting member upon request may cause a secret ballot to be taken. Absentee and proxy ballots shall not be counted in taking votes by any of the above methods. 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 the matter is not submitted to a mail ballot, then it will be approved if a majority of those present vote in favor of the measure.
- c. In the case of a mail ballot, it shall be the duty of the secretary of the Faculty to prepare and distribute ballots and to receive, count, and report the results of the balloting. If a mail ballot was authorized at a Faculty meeting, the ballot must be submitted to the Faculty within seven working days of the Faculty meeting. Faculty may be notified of the ballot by electronic or campus mail. For a mail ballot, the Faculty will be given the option of voting "abstain." Votes may be submitted either by electronic mail, campus mail, or by hand delivery to the secretary of the Faculty. There must 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 one week to submit their votes. Votes not received by the deadline will be ignored. A matter submitted to a mail ballot will be approved if there is a majority of valid votes in favor of the measure. The secretary of the Faculty will 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 be deemed lost that fails to be voted on by more than one-half of the total eligible voting membership.
- e. A mail ballot on a motion may also be initiated outside of a Faculty meeting by submitting a petition to the Dean signed by twenty-five voting members of the Faculty. The ballot will be submitted to the Faculty within seven working days of the petition being submitted, according to the rules and procedures described in paragraphs (c) and (d) above.

*Section 11.*

- a. 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, but disposition of any item introduced without prior notice and information may be carried over to the next *regular* meeting of the Faculty if 10 voting members 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 12.*

- a. The secretary of the Faculty shall prepare the minutes of all meetings of the Faculty. The minutes shall be prepared in a style that will convey the essence of discussion on each item of business considered. The minutes shall be distributed to the Faculty of the School, and appropriate officers of the University. At least one copy of the minutes of every meeting shall be preserved in a minute book as part of the permanent archives of the University. The minute book shall be kept in custody of the secretary of the Faculty and shall be open for inspection by any member of the academic community. The minutes may be distributed to faculty via electronic mail, or by notifying faculty of an online source for the minutes.

## Article V—Committees

### Section 1.

- a. "Standing committees" shall be those permanent committees whose faculty members, except for designated *ex-officio* members, are elected by the Faculty or appointed by Departments. The Dean is *ex-officio* members of all standing committees of the Faculty of the School. Generally, the term of the memberships on all School standing committees is three years and members may succeed themselves.
- b. "*Ad hoc* committees" shall be those established by the Faculty or the Dean, 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, generally in the same manner in which it was appointed.
- c. It shall be a duty of the secretary of the Faculty to prepare and maintain an accurate current list of all committees together with their charges and composition.

### Section 2.

- a. Only individuals who are full-time members of the Faculty at the Volgenau School of Engineering shall be eligible for membership on standing committees.

### Section 3.

- a. Appointments to standing committees shall be made by each Department, using procedures determined by the Department.
- b. A Department's appointments for the next academic year shall be transmitted by the Chair to the secretary of the Faculty in May of the preceding academic year.
- c. Committee vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the term by the appropriate Department, using the same procedures used for selecting the original appointee.
- d. The secretary of the Faculty shall establish a system of staggered appointment terms for members of committees with the goal that approximately one-third to one-half of the membership of each committee shall be newly appointed each year.
- e. A faculty member holding appointments in more than one Department may officially represent only one Department on any committee.

### Section 4.

- a. Unless otherwise specified, each faculty 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 from August 25 to May 24; however, all committees are authorized to function as necessary from July 1 to June 30.

### Section 5.

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

### Section 6.

- a. 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. (The report may be distributed in paper form, by electronic mail, or by

notifying faculty of an online source for the report.) Upon receipt of its report, the committee may be discharged of further responsibility for the matter by majority vote of the Faculty.

## **Article VI—Faculty Senate**

### *Section 1.*

- a. The Faculty of the Volgenau School of Engineering shall elect members to serve on the Faculty Senate.
- b. Eligibility of faculty to serve as senators shall be determined by the policies of the Faculty Senate.
- c. Procedures and policies for the election, term, and conduct of senators shall be determined by the policies of the Faculty Senate, supplemented as necessary by Article V, Section 3 of these bylaws.

## **Article VII—Other Standing Committees**

- a. *Promotion and Tenure Committee*—This is the School committee that receives the results of Department evaluation concerning promotion and tenure and arrives at a common recommendation, which is submitted to the Dean and Provost. The committee also reviews nominees for the Graduate Faculty and for voting membership in the Faculty if requested by the Dean, and makes recommendations to the Dean. This Advisory Committee on Promotion and Tenure will consist of two tenured professors from each department in the School, with one full professor from each to vote on dossiers presented for promoting associate professors and for granting tenure to full professors. In the absence of a full professor in a particular department, faculty from other departments may be asked to represent the department in question. Department chairs and associate deans are not eligible to serve on this committee.
- b. *Graduate Studies Committee*—There are a number of masters, doctoral, and certificate programs in the School. There exists the need for coordination among these programs and review of graduate course proposals. Another principal task of this committee is coordination and recommendations concerning the School-level Information Technology doctoral program. The Graduate Coordinator of each department (or suitable substitute) will be named to serve as a voting member on this committee. Each school-wide interdisciplinary graduate program shall also have a representative. The Associate Dean for Graduate Programs acts as chair of this committee. Members of this committee must be eligible to teach graduate courses in the School.
- c. *Undergraduate Studies Committee*—One representative from each department will serve as a voting member on the undergraduate studies committee. The primary tasks of this committee will include school review of existing and proposed courses and curricula. Each school-wide interdisciplinary undergraduate program shall also have a representative. The Associate Dean for Undergraduate Studies is a member of this committee. The committee elects one of its members to serve as chair. The Undergraduate Studies Committee may extend voting or non-voting membership to other appropriate faculty or program representatives.
- d. *Administrative Council*—This committee is responsible for strategic planning and

leadership in the School. The committee consists of the department chairs and faculty level administrators in the office of the Dean. Senior faculty may be appointed to this committee, which is advisory to the Dean, and *ad hoc* planning committees may be appointed for specific purposes. The Dean chairs the committee.

- e. *Academic Appeals Committee*—When a student is dissatisfied with an established policy and wishes to see it not applied, the student should first appeal in writing to the department chair or program director, as appropriate. When a student is dissatisfied with the judgment of an individual faculty member, the students should first seek to explain the reason for the discordance to the individual faculty member in the hope of achieving satisfaction. If the matter is not resolved through the above mechanisms, the student may appeal to the relevant Associate Dean. Students may submit a written petition to the academic appeals committee when matters are not resolved to the satisfaction through the above mechanisms. One faculty member is appointed to this committee from each department.
- f. *Grievance Committee*—The purpose of this committee is to hear faculty concerns and issues. This is a committee both of the Faculty and an advisory committee to the Dean, as appropriate in a particular instance. It will be comprised of one tenured full professor selected from each department. A faculty member who wishes to have the grievance committee examine an issue will ask the Dean to convene the committee. Generally a faculty member should request this as soon as possible after informal efforts to remedy the presumed violation have failed. Normally this will be within 10 days. Should unusual circumstances necessitate a delay longer than 10 days, the burden will be on the faculty member to justify the excessive delay.
- g. *Bylaws Committee*—This committee observes the operation under a given set of bylaws and makes recommendations to the Dean and the Faculty for change. This committee will consist of one faculty member from each department of the school. The Associate Dean for Administration and Faculty Affairs chairs this committee.
- h. *Research Council*—This is a committee that serves as an advisory board to the Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Studies on research-related issues. This committee will consist of one faculty member from each department of the school and each research center.

## **Article VIII—Effective Date and Amendment**

### *Section 1.*

- a. This revision of the bylaws shall become effective if approved by a two-thirds majority vote carried out in accordance with the rules and procedures described in Article IV, Section 10 of this document.

### *Section 2.*

- a. All motions to amend these bylaws shall be read and discussed at regular meetings of the faculty. Amendments to the bylaws shall become effective if approved by a two-thirds majority vote carried out in accordance with the rules and procedures described in Article IV, Section 10 of this document.