Pattern of Administration

Department of Geography

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This Pattern of Administration for the Department of Geography is divided into two major sections. Section I (this document) addresses General Aspects; Section II (companion document) addresses matters related to Appointment, Annual, Fourth-Year, Promotion, and Tenure Reviews. University rules and guidelines of the Office of Academic Affairs supersede this Pattern of Administration in any instance where there is a conflict.

A. Department Mission

The Department of Geography contributes to The Ohio State University's mission of attainment of international distinction in education, scholarship, and public service. Geography provides a highly regarded research and educational environment for increased understanding of: (1) Urban and Regional Systems [URS]; (2) Spatial Analytic Methods [SAM]; (3) Atmospheric and Climatic Studies [ACS]; and (4) People, Society, and Environment [PSE]. The Department maintains expertise in these four areas.

The Department is nationally and internationally recognized as a leading research and instructional unit. In the most recent NRC Study (1993), the Geography Department at The Ohio State University ranked in the top five nationally. This ranking is based on the scholarly quality of the program's faculty.

The Department serves undergraduate and graduate students by teaching a spectrum of courses in Geographical knowledge. It serves the national and international research community by carrying out and reporting original research in the major areas of focus listed above (URS, SAM, ACS, and PSE). The Department participates in national, state and local service through a broad range of editorial, administrative, and scientific activities. The teaching mission involves diverse courses including: (1) large sections of undergraduate courses required as part of basic educational and capstone experiences; (2) comprehensive, in-depth courses for upper-level undergraduate and beginning graduate students; and (3) advanced graduate courses which are critical in the diffusion of new research and theories. Our graduate program consistently ranks as one of the most productive PhD granting programs in the country. Excellence in teaching, research and service by faculty are critical for maintaining our mission. The primary emphasis in the Department is scholarly excellence; the creation of new knowledge is the paramount aim. Thus, faculty are expected to be active in publishing and research. Outstanding teaching, quality instruction, and conduct of innovative, exploratory, state-of-the-art seminars are also expected of our faculty. At the senior ranks, quality service also is expected.
The goal of the Department over the next several years is to increase its already high ranking and stature. To attain this, the Department expects productivity and excellence from all its members. The department has articulated a set of mechanisms to achieve this objective, which are embodied within our criteria for appointments, promotion, and tenure, merit salary increases, and other recognitions.

B. Governance Procedures

The Department of Geography follows Faculty Rule 3335-3-35 in its Pattern of Administration. An elaboration of that rule as it applies to Geography follows:

i. There will be at least one faculty meeting per quarter. Meetings are called by the Chair of Geography or at the request of 50% of the faculty. Faculty meetings, except in special circumstances, will be held on Tuesdays from 3:30-5:00 pm; teaching schedules are arranged to keep that time period open. A quorum is defined as a majority [more than half] of the regular Columbus campus voting faculty.

ii. Minutes of each faculty meeting are kept by Geography’s Administrative Assistant or a surrogate, archived in the Department office, and except under exceptional circumstances, distributed within a week to each faculty member or by 24 hours before the next faculty meeting, whichever is sooner.

iii. Relevant policy matters relating to the Department will be brought to the faculty as a whole, under the general principle that the more important the matter to be decided, the more broad-based agreement is needed. Hence, matters of most general importance typically are dealt with first in committee; then by the full faculty. Matters of lesser importance or of a more specific nature may be decided by a committee and/or the Department Chair.

iv. In principle, faculty majority rule is presumed on all matters covered by the pattern of administration. In the event that majority faculty rule is not followed, the Chair shall explain reasons for the departure. Normally, this statement of reasons will be provided before the departure is acted on. Such explanation will outline the majority decision, decision of the Chair, and reason that these decisions differ. This explanation will be communicated to the faculty in writing, where reasonable, and/or at a faculty meeting, with an opportunity for faculty comment.

All tenure-track members of the Geography faculty are eligible to vote (even if Geography is not the TID or the geography fraction of appointment is <50%). This excludes members in administrative positions when conflicts of interest arise, courtesy and auxiliary appointments. Promotion and Tenure cases are

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considered by eligible members of the faculty, as defined by Promotion and Tenure Guidelines (see accompanying APT Document).

Voting will be by an anonymous ballot at a faculty meeting. A teller will be appointed to count the votes and to announce the results at the meeting. The faculty may by a majority vote suspend the normal procedure and specify an alternate voting procedure.

v. An appointment recommendation for new faculty on a Regional campus is made jointly by the Columbus- and Regional-campus.

vi. Procedures concerning the review of faculty members for continuation, promotion, and tenure are delineated in the accompanying APT Document (formerly section II of the POA).

C. Committees

1. Personnel Committee

i. The Personnel Committee advises on matters of faculty personnel such as new appointments, Annual and Fourth-Year Reviews of faculty with probationary status, Promotion, and Tenure.

ii. Membership of the Personnel Committee is 6 Columbus-campus faculty. The committee is supplemented with a regional campus colleague chosen by the chair; this member serves at meetings involving regional campus appointments. The committee Chair is chosen by the Geography Chair, with a term that normally will correspond with that of the Department Chair. Other members -- 3 Full Professors, 1 Associate Professor, and 1 Assistant Professor -- are elected by Columbus-campus faculty under an anonymous ballot procedure. Each elected member serves a three-year term, rotating and staggered for the Full Professor component of the Committee. In the case when an elected member leaves the Committee before completing a full term, a substitute will be elected to fill out the remainder of the term. Faculty who have completed their term are not eligible for re-election until the one year after the formal date at which their term is completed.

iii. Should there be no eligible Associate or Assistant Professors from whom to elect a Personnel Committee member, that position will be vacant.
2. Graduate Studies Committee

i. The Graduate Studies Committee advises on matters concerning the graduate program. This includes graduate student appointments and awards, initiating proceedings to obtain appropriate Graduate School status for new faculty (related to service on MA, MS, and PhD committees), reviewing, and modifying the Graduate Manual.

ii. Membership of the Graduate Studies Committee is 3 Columbus-campus members and a Chair, each chosen by the Chair of Geography. The tenure of the Graduate Committee Chair normally will correspond with that of the Department Chair. Committee members normally serve a three-year, rotating and staggered term. The chair of the Atmospheric Science Graduate Committee participates in funding meetings.

3. Undergraduate Committee

i. The Undergraduate Committee advises on undergraduate matters, new courses, changes in existing courses, other curriculum matters, reviewing, and modifying the Undergraduate Manual.

ii. Undergraduate Committee membership is comprised of representatives of the four major specializations within the department’s instructional mission, the Undergraduate Advisor, and an Undergraduate Committee Chair. All are chosen by the Department Chair and, normally, serve a term that corresponds with that of the Department Chair.

4. Infrastructure Committee

i. The Infrastructure Committee advises on equipment, laboratory, and other matters relating to the Department’s technical services and infrastructure.

ii. Infrastructure Committee membership is comprised of the Department Technician and three faculty members who represent users of technology and infrastructure provided by the Department, College, and/or University. All members are chosen by the Department Chair.

5. Ad Hoc Committees

A number of ad hoc committees will exist, depending on need, with members appointed by the Department Chair. Examples of such committees include...
Diversity; Grievance; Library, to handle book orders and other matters related to library services; Newsletter, to collect information for and edit the GeoSpectrum Newsletter; and Visiting Speakers, which is responsible for the Taaffe and Robinson Colloquia and other aspects of the occasional speakers program.

6. Graduate Student Membership

All committees have a graduate student member, except when disallowed under University rules or deemed inadvisable by the Department Chair. This representative is chosen by the graduate students. A graduate student representative also will be appointed to attend faculty meetings. Normally, graduate student representatives will not vote and presence of a graduate student member will be at the discretion of the Committee, or Department Chair.

D. Differential Workload: Faculty Duties and Responsibilities

All faculty are expected to perform over the full range of instruction, research and service. Typically, formal course assignments will vary to reflect different levels of research and service activity, but merit and other rewards give primary weighting to research productivity and scholarship. The university's policy with respect to faculty teaching load and with respect to faculty duties and responsibilities is set forth in the Office of Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Handbook, http://oaa.osu.edu/OAAP_PHandbook.php. The information provided below supplements these policies.

1. Instruction

The formal course load for a faculty member engaged in modest scholarly research is five per year, but this will vary depending on research productivity and administrative duties within Geography. Annual course loads normally include at least one lower level GEC and one graduate-level seminar. In addition to formal classroom teaching, supervision of graduate students, individual studies, and service on examination committees also constitutes instructional activity. Faculty must post office hours and maintain these times for student consultation.

Exceptions, above or below the norm, are set by, or negotiated with, the Chair. Examples include the following. Chairs of the Graduate Studies, Personnel, and Undergraduate Committees receive a one course reduction. The normal assignment for new faculty is three courses per year for the first three years after receiving their appointment. High research productivity normally leads to an assignment below the “five-course” norm, or an Enhanced Research Assignment; low research productivity normally leads to an assignment above the “five-course” norm, or an Enhanced
Teaching Assignment. To encourage research productivity, a temporary course reduction may be requested by a faculty member and/or suggested by the Chair (SRA assignment). Course reduction also occurs under released-time arrangements for grants, contracts, or administrative positions outside Geography, whereby additional funds allow temporary replacement of the faculty member.

2. Research

All faculty are expected to conduct scholarly research, present findings at professional meetings, and publish. Research findings should appear in leading refereed journals, books, and/or monographs.

All faculty are expected to obtain research funding, but it is recognized this is more readily available in some specialties than others.

An integral element of research (also of instruction as stated in 1.) is advising students, typically ones at the graduate level.

3. Service

Within the Department, service assignments are made by the Chair, except for the five elected members of the Personnel Committee. To the degree possible, probationary faculty are given a lesser level of committee assignments.

All faculty are expected to participate in broader University and professional activities, referee journal articles, evaluate research proposals, and the like.

4. Balance among Instruction, Research, and Service

The Department strives for an equitable distribution of faculty responsibilities by balancing the involvement of each in instruction, research, and service. Generally, this is evaluated by considering the record over time, primarily using a three-year window. It would be impossible to develop a set of rules, or formula, to determine an equitable distribution of faculty duties and responsibilities. Ultimately, then, in implementing a differential workload policy, the Chair must make discretionary judgments within guidelines such as those articulated in this section, and be held accountable accordingly.

5. Birth and Adoption Policy
The university provides a number of benefits to its faculty who are new parents, including exclusion of time from the probationary period to reflect the caregiving responsibilities associated with the birth or adoption of a child and setting aside pre-tax dollars for child care expenses in a flexible spending account. The University Parental Leave Policy (Policy 6.27b) allows for a specified period of paid leave for faculty following the birth or adoption of a child. The college's birth and adoption policy is offered as an alternative to the University Parental Leave Policy; faculty receiving leave benefits from the University Parental Leave Policy are ineligible to participate in the college's policy.

Please refer to the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Birth & Adoption Policy at the SBS Web site.

The policy enumerated in this section applies only to faculty on the Columbus campus. It does not constitute a contractual obligation. Fluctuation in demands and resources in the Department or College, and individual circumstances of faculty members, may warrant temporary deviations from the policy.

E. Additional Rules and Policies

A number of important rules and policies are emphasized by incorporation in the following sections. These sections additionally direct attention to university's policies as set forth in the Office of Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Handbook.


The information provided below supplements these policies.

1. Course offerings and teaching schedules

The department chair will annually develop a schedule of course offerings and teaching schedules in consultation with the faculty, both collectively and individually. While every effort will be made to accommodate the individual preferences of faculty, the department's first obligation is to offer the courses needed by students at times most likely to meet student needs. To assure classroom availability, reasonable efforts must be made to distribute course offerings across the day and week. To meet student needs reasonable efforts must be made to assure that course offerings match student demand and that timing conflicts with other courses students are known to take in tandem are avoided. A scheduled course that does not attract the minimum number of students required by Faculty Rule 3335-8-17, will normally be cancelled and the faculty member scheduled to teach that course will be assigned to another course for that or a subsequent quarter.
2. Allocation of Department Resources

The chair is responsible for the fiscal and academic health of the department and for assuring that all resources—fiscal, human, and physical—are allocated in a manner that will optimize achievement of department goals. The chair will discuss the department budget at least annually with the faculty and attempt to achieve consensus regarding the use of funds across general categories. However, final decisions on budgetary matters rest with the chair.

Research space shall be allocated on the basis of research productivity including external funding and will be reallocated periodically as these faculty-specific variables change. The allocation of office space will include considerations such as achieving proximity of faculty in subdisciplines and productivity and grouping staff functions to maximize efficiency. The allocation of salary funds is discussed in the Appointments, Promotion and Tenure document. The department supports faculty and graduate student travel according to established practices.

3. Leaves and Absences


The information provided below supplements these policies.

i. Discretionary Absence

Faculty are expected to complete an Application for Leave form well in advance of a planned absence (for attendance at a professional meeting or to engage in consulting) to provide time for its consideration and approval and time to assure that instructional and other commitments are covered. Discretionary absence from duty is not a right and the chair retains the authority to disapprove a proposed absence when it will interfere with instructional or other comparable commitments. Such an occurrence is most likely when the number of absences in a particular quarter is substantial. Rules of the University Faculty require that the Office of Academic Affairs approve any discretionary absence of ten or more days.

ii. Absence for Medical Reasons

When absences for medical reasons are anticipated, faculty members are expected to complete an Application for Leave form as early as possible. When such absences are unexpected, the faculty member, or someone speaking for the faculty member, should let the chair know promptly so that instructional and other commitments can be managed. Faculty members are always expected to use sick leave for any absence covered by sick leave (personal illness, illness of family members, medical appointments). Forms and details are available from office staff.
iii. Unpaid Leaves of Absence


iv. Special Research Assignments


v. Faculty Professional Leave

Information on special research assignments is presented in Book 2 of the Office of Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Handbook, http://oaa.osu.edu/OAAP_PHandbook.php. The information provided below supplements these policies. The chair's recommendation to the dean regarding an FPL proposal will be based on the quality of the proposal and its potential benefit to the department and to the faculty member as well as the ability of the department to accommodate the leave at the time requested.

4. Supplemental compensation and paid external consulting activity


This department adheres to these policies in every respect. In particular, this department expects faculty members to carry out the duties associated with their primary appointment with the university at a high level of competence before seeking other income-enhancing opportunities. All activities providing supplemental compensation must be approved by the department chair regardless of the source of compensation. External consulting must also be approved. Approval will be contingent on the extent to which a faculty member is carrying out regular duties at an acceptable level, the extent to which the extra income activity appears likely to interfere with regular duties, and the academic value of the proposed consulting activity to the department. In addition, it is university policy that faculty may not spend more than one business day per week on supplementally compensated activities and external consulting combined. Faculty who fail to adhere to the university's policies on these matters, including seeking approval for external consulting, will be subject to disciplinary action.

5. Financial conflicts of interest


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Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Handbook. A conflict of interest exists if financial interests or other opportunities for tangible personal benefit may exert a substantial and improper influence upon a faculty member or administrator's professional judgment in exercising any university duty or responsibility, including designing, conducting or reporting research. Faculty members are required to file conflict of interest screening forms annually and more often if prospective new activities pose the possibility of financial conflicts of interest. Faculty who fail to file such forms or to cooperate with university officials in the avoidance or management of potential conflicts will be subject to disciplinary action.

6. Grievance procedures

Members of the department with grievances should discuss them with the chair who will review the matter as appropriate and either seek resolution or explain why resolution is not possible.

i. Salary Grievances

A faculty or staff member who believes that his or her salary is inappropriately low should discuss the matter with the chair. The faculty or staff member should provide documentation to support the complaint. Faculty members who are not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion with the chair and wish to pursue the matter may be eligible to file a more formal salary appeal following College procedures. (See SBS Web Site and also the Office of Academic Affairs Policies and Procedures Handbook.) Staff members who are not satisfied with the outcome of the discussion with the chair and wish to pursue the matter should contact Consulting Services in the Office of Human Resources (www.hr.osu.edu/).

ii. Faculty Misconduct

Complaints alleging faculty misconduct or incompetence should follow the procedures set forth in Faculty Rule 3335-5-04, www.trustees.osu.edu/ChapIndex/index.php.

iii. Faculty Promotion and Tenure Appeals

Promotion and tenure appeals procedures are set forth in Faculty Rule 3335-5-05, www.trustees.osu.edu/ChapIndex/index.php.

iv. Sexual Harassment

The university's policy and procedures related to sexual harassment are set forth in OHR Policy 1.15, www.hr.osu.edu/policy/index.aspx. The chair provides an annual reminder to the department with regard to this policy.

v. Student complaints
Normally student complaints about courses, grades, and related matters are brought to the attention of individual faculty members. In receiving such complaints, faculty should treat students with respect regardless of the apparent merit of the complaint and provide a considered response. When students bring complaints about courses and instructors to the department chair, the chair will first ascertain whether or not the students require confidentiality. If confidentiality is not required, the chair will investigate the matter as fully and fairly as possible and provide a response to both the students and any affected faculty. If confidentiality is required, the chair will explain that it is not possible to fully investigate a complaint in such circumstances and will advise the student(s) on options to pursue without prejudice as to whether the complaint is valid or not. Faculty complaints regarding students must always be handled strictly in accordance with university rules and policies. Faculty should seek the advice and assistance of the chair and others with appropriate knowledge of policies and procedures when problematic situations arise. In particular, evidence of academic misconduct must be brought to the attention of the Committee on Academic Misconduct (see www.oaa.osu.edu/coam/home.html and www.senate.osu.edu/COAMDuties.pdf).