Constitution of the Psychology Department Council (Revised Dec. 11, 2015)

Preamble

The Department of Psychology serves to further scholarship in psychology and its various subdisciplines, both by engaging in research and by teaching. Faculty members are drawn from many of the subdisciplines of the field, such as animal learning, clinical psychology, cognitive psychology, community psychology, developmental psychology, neuroscience, psychophysics, program evaluation, and social psychology. The department offers two doctoral programs, one in Behavior, Cognition, and Neuroscience, the other in Clinical Psychology. Reflecting the disciplinary variety of the field, any given faculty member might be affiliated with one of these doctoral programs, both, or neither. The department also offers BA and MA programs. This constitution provides guidelines by which the department will operate so as to further research and teaching. Guiding principles for this constitution are transparency, voice for all members, shared responsibility, and accountability.

The Department Council

The Department Council is the basic governing unit of the department. In accordance with University regulations, it has full dominion over all matters of policy and requirements regarding the academic programs offered by the department. The Council approves any changes in the administrative organization of the department, such as the creation of new committees and the re-allocation of duties among existing committees, and may set guidelines for the recruitment of new faculty, the conduct of courses and programs, and other matters of concern to the department as a whole.

The Department Council shall comply with the rules and operate within the spirit of all academic policies of the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and the University.

The Department Council shall be composed of the following members:

a) all members of the AU faculty who hold academic rank in the Department of Psychology and are employed full-time in the University,

b) all Affiliated Faculty or joint-appointed faculty whose affiliation agreement or joint appointment Memorandum of Agreement appoints them to the Department Council,

and in addition

c) the graduate student constituencies (M.A., Ph.D.) shall elect one student representative each to be members of the Department Council.

3. All members of the Department Council have a full vote, except as otherwise specified in this document.
4. Votes may be granted for a specific time interval to additional persons on an individual basis by a two-thirds vote of the department.

*The Department Council Meeting*

Department meetings will be conducted by Robert's Rules of Order. The rules in Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the department in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with the bylaws of the department.

*Council Voting:* A quorum shall be 60% of the Department Council eligible to vote, rounded to the nearest whole number. Faculty on leave or sabbatical shall not be considered in the calculation of a quorum. They shall, however, be allowed to vote if present. In order that the Department Council may consider important matters prior to a department meeting, every substantive motion which is to be voted on at a meeting must be distributed to the entire Department Council in writing at least seven days before a meeting, or must have been brought up at a previous meeting. In the latter case, the minutes of the previous meeting will be made available at least seven days before a meeting in order to serve as written notice of substantive matters to be considered. A two-thirds vote of those present and eligible to vote will be required to suspend this rule.

*Notice of Council Meetings and Guests:* Customarily, the Chair will announce the time of a departmental meeting at least seven days in advance of the meeting. The council may invite guests to attend as non-voting observers whose presences may be germane to the council’s proceedings.

*Minutes of Council Meetings:* Minutes of council meetings will be taken by a person selected by the Chair and will be distributed within two weeks of each council meeting, with corrections and additions formally noted at the next council meeting.

*Special Meetings:* Special meetings may be called by the Chair, and shall also be called upon the request of the majority of the council. At any special meeting, no business outside of the purpose of the meeting shall be conducted.

*The Department Chair*

The Chair is the academic leader of the department. The Chair coordinates all facets of departmental operation and oversees the administrative functioning of the department, including course scheduling. In addition to these and other responsibilities described in this Constitution, Chairs have responsibilities specified by College and University regulations and policy.

Subject to approval and appointment by the Dean of CAS, the Chair is selected by the means of the department's chair-search process. The chair-search process commences when the Department Council creates a Chair Search Committee in the first semester of the last year of a Chair's term in accordance with department guidelines for ad hoc committees and in accordance with University procedures.

The Chair shall be elected by a majority vote of the Department Council taken by secret ballot. The Chair’s term of office shall be for 3 years. Subject to approval and appointment by the Dean
of CAS, the Department Council may recommend that the Chair’s term of office be renewed for an additional three years. One person may not serve more than two consecutive terms. Under extraordinary circumstances, a Chair’s term can be terminated by a two-thirds vote of the Department Council.

The Chair reports to the Department Council and to the Dean of CAS. Although Chair work can be delegated, the Chair remains responsible for ensuring that all major departmental functions are carried out in such fashion that all interested parties are informed, that the obligations set by the office of the Dean of CAS are met punctually, and that University-stipulated procedures are followed.

The Chair makes recommendations to the Dean of CAS for faculty reappointment, for faculty tenure and promotion and for faculty salaries. In addition, the Chair forwards to the Dean of CAS recommendations of departmental committees for faculty hiring, tenure and promotion, for faculty salaries, and other matters.

The Chair is an *ex officio* member of most department committees, with exceptions specified below (e.g., Merit Committee, Rank and Tenure Committee). To avoid having a "double vote" on merit, the Chair will not sit on the Merit Committee. Except where prohibited by AU regulations (as with the Rank and Tenure Committee when it considers individual faculty actions), the Chair may choose to sit on other departmental committees, whether ad hoc or standing.

**Committees**

A. Most of the administrative work of the department will be carried out in committee.

B. Faculty membership on all committees shall be determined by the following procedure, except as specified elsewhere in this document. Early in the Fall semester the faculty members of the Department Council will, by majority vote, elect faculty members to the following committees. The vote shall be by secret ballot unless all voting members of the faculty who are present choose otherwise. Membership on committees shall be for a term of 12 months, ending as new members are elected to committees the following Fall.

*Replacement of committee members:* If a committee member vacates her or his position during the term of the committee, the Department Chair requests volunteers for replacement of that committee member. The Department Chair then can appoint an interim replacement. The Council will then vote on a replacement for the remainder of the committee term at its next meeting.

*Committee Chairs:* The committee shall elect its Chair by a majority vote of the committee with the exception of the Executive Committee, for which the Chair of the department will be committee Chair. Committee chairs should have deep knowledge of the department. Also, new faculty members should primarily devote their time to developing their courses and research programs. Therefore, Committee Chairs will either be tenured or they will be term faculty members who have been members of the Department Council for at least six years.
The following committees shall be standing committees for the department and shall have the functions described below.

**Graduate Curriculum Committee:**

The committee shall consist of (a) two graduate students, one each from the Ph.D. and M.A. constituencies and (b) not fewer than three faculty members, at least one of which is not an *ex officio* member of the Graduate Curriculum Committee. The graduate student members will be elected by the students enrolled in the graduate programs of the Department of Psychology. The coordinators or directors of graduate programs shall be *ex officio* members of the committee. The committee responsibilities shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- assessment and evaluation of the graduate curriculum, including certificate programs;
- maintenance of faculty-graduate student relations;
- interpretation of and approval of exceptions to departmental graduate degree requirements;
- annual evaluation of the progress of all graduate students in their degree programs;
- determination of which requirements are filled by new courses;
- recommendation to the Council's attention and consideration such legislation or other action as may pertain to graduate curriculum or graduate academic life in the department, including graduate student awards.

**Undergraduate Curriculum Committee:**

The committee shall consist of not fewer than three faculty members and one undergraduate student majoring in psychology (and elected by undergraduate students majoring in psychology). The coordinators or directors of undergraduate programs shall be *ex-officio* members of the committee.

The UCC responsibilities shall include, but are not limited to, the following:

- assessment, evaluation, and revision of the undergraduate curriculum;
- maintenance of faculty-undergraduate student relations;
- approval of petitions for exceptions to department curriculum requirements;
- designation of whether any courses outside the department shall be credited towards the related field requirement of the major;
- determination of interpretations and applications of department undergraduate requirements in specific cases;
- recommendation to the Council's attention and consideration such legislation or other action as may pertain to undergraduate curriculum or undergraduate academic life in the department, including General Education courses, Honors Program, undergraduate student awards, and Psi Chi matters.

The chair of the UCC shall oversee the process by which undergraduate majors fulfill requirements for graduation, coordinate undergraduate exit assessments, and maintain accurate undergraduate files and files pertaining to undergraduate education, internships, and other pertinent subjects.
**Executive Committee:**

The committee shall consist of three faculty members of the department and the Department Chair. These faculty members shall either be term faculty members who have been full time in the department for at least six consecutive years or tenured faculty members who have been full time in the department for at least two years. The Executive Committee shall make recommendations to the Dean of CAS as to when a new faculty position is to be filled and the area of psychology in which the new member should have expertise. A performance review of the Department Chair will take place at the mid-point of the Chair’s first term. The composition of the Chair Review Committee will be determined by the Executive Committee (meeting without the Department Chair). By the end of the semester in which the review takes place, the results of the review will be communicated to the Department Chair and the Executive Committee.

Unless an ad-hoc Space Committee is created, decisions regarding space (other than those involving negotiations for new faculty hires) also are made by the Executive Committee. Appeals regarding these decisions may, of course, be made to the Department Council.

The committee shall also decide upon requests for reconsideration of the Department Chair’s decisions on such faculty matters as student assistant support, initiation of recommendations for tenure and promotion, teaching assignments, departmental research funds, etc. Requests for reconsideration with supporting justification must be submitted in writing. When an appeal is made, the Executive Committee must meet (without the Department Chair present, though they may seek information from the Chair) to consider the appeal within two weeks during Fall or Spring semester, and within four weeks during breaks and the summer.

**Human Participant Pool Committee:**

The committee shall consist of at least one faculty member, one graduate student, and one undergraduate representative. All members must have experience conducting research with human participants. The committee shall organize the human participant pool. The committee shall also be responsible for recommending actions and amendments that pertain to the organization of the human participant pool to the Department Council.

**Merit Committee:**

The Merit committee will be composed of one graduate student, and three faculty members no two of whom hold the same rank. Any term faculty member whose contract extends into the academic year following the service on the Merit Committee is eligible to serve. The graduate students shall select the graduate student member of the committee. The faculty shall select the faculty members to serve on the committee by majority vote at a meeting held in the Fall term.

**Rank and Tenure Committee:**

As required by University regulations, the department Rank and Tenure (R&T) Committee consists of all tenured members of the department faculty, unless excluded by AU regulations. For actions involving promotions of term faculty, no less than one term faculty member shall be elected by term faculty to the Committee.
Faculty who have a separate vote in faculty actions, such as the Department Chair, or any faculty member serving as Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, are excluded from all R&T meetings that consider individual faculty actions. According to University Faculty Senate rules, faculty serving on the university-level Committee on Faculty Actions vote on faculty tenure and promotion in their departments and abstain from those votes on the Faculty Senate's Committee on Faculty Actions.

Using Department, College, and University criteria, the R&T committee makes recommendations to the Chair concerning the following: promotions, tenure decisions, tenure-track reappointments, and leaves of absence (including sabbaticals). The R&T committee also will make recommendations to the Chair regarding reappointment of term faculty, again using Department, College, and University criteria for these appointments.

Also as required by University regulations, voting on recommendations for promotion for term and tenure-line faculty is restricted to committee members whose rank exceeds that of the candidate for promotion.

Before the end of classes in the Spring semester of the academic year, the R&T Committee will elect a subcommittee of at least 5 faculty to draft detailed recommendations for the R&T Committee for actions during the next 12 months. This subcommittee may include representatives from the term or tenure-line rank from which the faculty member is being considered for promotion. It will include a graduate student representative from the Ph.D. programs.

Ad Hoc Committees

At the request of the Chair or under its own initiative, a simple majority of the Council may at any time create additional department committees on an ad hoc basis. Such committees are usually created to handle specific questions of immediate concern to the department. The Council may at any time alter the membership of (or disband) an ad hoc committee by simple majority vote.

Chair Search Committee

Following the rules for constituting ad hoc committees, the Department Council may create a Chair Search Committee. This committee will screen prospective candidates and report to the Department Council, which will then forward its collective recommendation to the Dean of CAS.

C. Virtual Committee Meetings. To facilitate productivity, flexibility, fulfillment of personal responsibilities, and energy conservation, a majority of committee members present can vote to allow faculty and students to participate in that meeting either in-person or via audio or audio+video link or other form of virtual participation. This includes meetings of the Department Council. Votes may be cast via virtual media, but only after virtual or real participation in most of the committee meeting in which the item being voted upon is considered. Faculty participating virtually are responsible for arranging information technology to make this possible, and for
assuring that most of their attention is focused on the meeting. Committee chairs are encouraged to aid faculty in this endeavor.

D. Committee reports that contain proposed actions shall be dated and distributed in writing to all Department Council members. When deemed necessary by the committee, confidentiality of faculty and student identities will be maintained. The proposed actions shall be automatically accepted as a departmental resolution unless a written objection is distributed to all Department Council members within seven days from the distribution of the proposal by a member of the Department Council. If such an objection is raised, the committee proposal specified by the objection (and only that proposal) shall not become a departmental resolution unless the proposal receives a majority vote of the Department Council.

E. All committees shall operate according to Robert’s Rules of Order. Every substantive motion that is to be voted on at a meeting must be distributed to the committee members in writing at least two days in advance of a meeting.

New Faculty Appointments

Subject to approval by the Provost, after the Executive Committee recommends a tenure-line or term appointment in a given area, the Department Council shall appoint an ad hoc committee of faculty to conduct a search. The graduate students of the department may choose one of their number to serve on the search committee as well. The search committee shall be responsible for recommending candidates for offers of faculty appointments. For searches for term faculty members, a body consisting of all faculty on the Department Council and also the graduate student who served on the search committee shall consider the search committee’s recommendations. For searches for tenure line faculty, a body consisting of all tenure-line faculty on the Department Council will consider the search committee’s recommendations. A majority vote of the body that considered the recommendations of the search committee will determine to whom and in what sequence offers of employment are to be made.

Library Liaison

One faculty member shall serve as a liaison between the Department and whatever member of the Library staff is in charge of the Psychology collection. The purpose of the liaison will be coordination of library acquisition policies and departmental faculty preferences.

Constitutional Amendments

Following the rules for constituting ad hoc committees, the Department Council may create a Bylaws Committee to consider proposed amendments to this Constitution. The Bylaws Committee will report to the Department Council on the proposed amendments and its recommendations. The Council will meet to consider this report and vote on the proposed amendments. A proposed amendment is accepted if a) at least a quorum (60%) of voting members of the Department Council is present, and at least five-sixths of the voting members present vote in favor, or b) two-thirds of total eligible voting members of the Department Council vote in favor. All computations will round to the nearest whole number.

There is no other method for altering or amending this Constitution.
This reflects changes through and including December 11, 2015.