

University of North Texas
College of Information
BYLAWS
Adopted October 1, 2023

Preamble

The College of Information (COI) at the University of North Texas (UNT) was founded on October 1, 2008 by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The College situates itself at the intersection of people, technology, and information. The College comprises faculty, staff, and students who invest in innovative research, collaborative partnerships, and learner-centered education to serve a global information society.

Article I Purpose and Mission

Section 1.1 Purpose

The College of Information (COI) exists to enable its constituents to access, organize, manage, create, and apply information. The College empowers individuals and organizations to create optimal learning environments and instructional systems for sharing knowledge and improving performance.

Section 1.2 Mission

Our mission is to generate, integrate, and disseminate knowledge in a learner-centered environment. We advance domains of knowledge on relationships between information, people, institutions and agencies, language, and technology, evolved from specialized programs in information science, library science, linguistics, computing and technology systems, sciences of learning and cognition, instructional design research, and human performance.

Article II College

Section 2.1 Structure

- 2.1.1 The College is organized into autonomous departments. Each department has its own bylaws by which it establishes and manages:
- its own policies, procedures, standards, and criteria in matters relating to faculty selection and evaluation
 - curriculum development and processing
 - student admission, retention, and exit standards
 - department administration and budgeting
- 2.1.2 The College and departments have centers and labs for research, teaching and development. Each unit that is formally approved by UNT or by the College must have a published statement of mission, goals, and objectives.

2.1.3 The College and departments have business and operations offices. Each has clearly stated purposes and reporting structures to the Dean or Department Chair.

2.1.4 Bylaws, missions, policies, procedures, and standards of all organizational units within the College do not contravene those established by the University.

Section 2.2 Dean

2.2.1 Responsibilities

- a. The Dean is the chief executive officer of the College. He or she reports to the UNT Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (hereafter "Provost"). The authority of the Dean is exercised with assistance from the Assistant Deans, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs, as well as consultation with the faculty. The Dean is responsible for administrative, educational, research, personnel, budgetary, development, and student affairs of the College, subject to University and College policies.
- b. The Dean's conduct of the office is consistent with the spirit and letter of the *UNT Policy Manual*. The Dean enforces the spirit and letter of these Bylaws, assuming leadership in developing policies and programs that are consistent with the commitment of the faculty to teaching, scholarship, and service.

2.2.2 Authority to Make Appointments

The Dean is authorized to make appointments to the following administrative staff positions:

- Assistant Deans
- Associate Deans
- An Associate Dean to serve as Acting Dean in the absence of the Dean
- Department Chairs
- Other administrative appointments as necessary to conduct the business of the College

Section 2.3 Assistant Deans and Associate Deans

Assistant Deans and Associate Deans assist the Dean by assuming specific areas of responsibility assigned by the Dean in which they represent and support the college faculty in their commitment to teaching, scholarship, and service. The Dean publishes the specific responsibilities assigned to each Assistant Dean and Associate Dean and notifies of any changes at the beginning of each academic year.

Section 2.4 Department Chairs

Department Chairs assist the Dean by assuming specific areas of responsibility assigned to them by the Dean and according to the roles and responsibilities required by the University. Guided by the department bylaws, they represent and support their department faculty in their commitment to teaching, scholarship, and service.

Section 2.5 Administrative Appointments

2.5.1 Dean

Selection of the Dean conforms with University guidelines that apply to selection of all deans. However, it is the philosophy of this document that College faculty and staff participate in this process and that the final choice is acceptable to a majority of the College.

In the temporary absence of the Dean, the Dean designates an Acting Dean with the Provost's approval. If a Dean's position is vacant, the Provost appoints an Interim Dean. The term of each appointment is set by the Provost in consultation with the appointee.

2.5.2 Dean's Appointees

Assistant Deans, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs are selected as follows:

- a. A search committee of elected representatives of the faculty and staff is established.
- b. For an external search, at least one search committee member should be from a different UNT college for an Assistant/Associate Dean or different COI department for a Chair.
- c. For an internal search, the committee recommends to the Dean at least one nominee chosen from the full-time tenured faculty. Each nominee must be accepted by a majority of faculty members in the Department for a Chair, or by a majority of the search committee vote for Assistant/Associate Dean, prior to being sent to the Dean.
- d. The Dean appoints an individual from the list of nominees recommended by the search committee for an initial term of up to four years. This appointment is renewable by the Dean, who takes into consideration the recommendation of the faculty.
- e. A Dean's appointee serves at the pleasure of the Dean and faculty. The faculty may submit a recommendation to the Dean to remove a Dean's appointee, based on a two-thirds vote of the faculty.
- f. In the temporary absence of a Dean's appointee, the Dean appoints an interim replacement. The term of each appointment is set by the Dean in consultation with the appointee.

Section 2.6 Administrative Evaluations

- 2.6.1 The Dean and Department Chairs receive annual evaluations by the faculty through the process stated in the UNT Policy Manual.

- 2.6.2 Assistant Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and other college-level Dean's administrative appointees receive annual evaluations by the Dean and the faculty through an internal college process.

Section 2.7 Faculty

- 2.7.1 The College faculty includes all full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members, and full-time professional faculty, i.e., lecturers (all ranks), research professors (all ranks), and clinical professors (all ranks).
- 2.7.2 Faculty members are appointed by the Dean, who considers a minimum of three nominees from the departmental search. In exceptional situations, the number of nominees may vary with prior approval from the Dean.
- 2.7.3 These Bylaws recognize non-faculty members are contributors to the intellectual life of the College, i.e., research scientists, post-doctorate researchers, teaching adjuncts, and other professional personnel.

Section 2.8 Governance

These Bylaws recognize that faculty, administrators, staff, and students all play important roles in the functioning and success of the College. College governance is conducted by the following:

- Dean
- Associate Deans
- Department Chairs
- Faculty
- Committees:
 - Executive
 - Scholarship Committee
 - Graduate Curriculum Committee
 - Undergraduate Curriculum Committee
 - Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure
 - Staff Operations
 - Ad Hoc

Article III Meetings

Section 3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 Regular meetings of the staff and the faculty are scheduled in alternate months during the academic year. Called meetings of the staff and the faculty may be held at the request of the Dean, the Executive Committee, or a written petition from at least twenty percent of the faculty and staff.
- 3.1.2 Staff and faculty meetings are open to all faculty, staff, and students, unless designated as executive sessions.

- 3.1.3 The Dean's office invites agenda items for the staff and faculty meetings at least seven business days in advance of the meeting. Notification of staff and faculty meetings is then sent from the Dean's office to all staff and faculty members at least five business days in advance of the meeting. Notification includes the meeting's agenda with action items for vote indicated and any supporting documents attached.

Section 3.2 Officers

- 3.2.1 The Dean chairs staff and faculty meetings. In the absence of the Dean, the Dean designates a chair.
- 3.2.2 The Dean designates a Recorder to
- Compose minutes of all meetings
 - Serve as official custodian of minutes and other official records of staff and faculty meetings
 - Tally votes

Section 3.3 Procedures

The following procedures apply to meetings of the staff and faculty as a whole and to meetings of college committees and subcommittees unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws.

- 3.3.1 Voting
- a. Voting members are identified as "faculty" and the Dean, Associate Deans, and Department Chairs as "administrators", and staff as permitted by committees.
 - b. A quorum consisting of a majority of voting members must be present in order to conduct an official action vote.
 - c. Votes are decided by the majority of those present for voting, with the exception of votes specifically noted otherwise in these Bylaws. Proxy voting is not permitted.
 - d. Voting may be conducted by secret ballot if requested by a motion with a second by any member.
 - e. The Recorder tallies votes and may request another disinterested person to assist.

3.3.2 Minutes

The Recorder takes minutes for all staff and faculty meetings and retains approved minutes for the College record. The unapproved minutes are distributed within three weeks of the meeting. They are approved in the next meeting, and then made accessible to all members.

3.3.3 Parliamentary Procedure

Roberts' Rules of Order (most recent edition) applies to all parliamentary questions.

Article IV Committees

Section 4.1 Overview

4.1.1 Members

The following parameters apply to all college-level committees unless otherwise specified in University policy or in these Bylaws:

- a. Committee membership is described in each committee section below. In addition to faculty members, committee members may be administrators and other internal constituents (e.g., full-time center directors, research personnel, and support staff).
- b. Any committee may elect or appoint subcommittees or task forces composed of individuals eligible for regular committees, plus nonvoting members such as students and external constituents (e.g., alumni, professionals, consultants).
- c. Elected members serve for two years in staggered terms, for a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- d. In case of a member missing two consecutive meetings without approval from the committee chair, the member would be assumed to have resigned from the committee. A special election will be held to replace the non-participating member.

4.1.2 Elections

- a. Elections for committee members are conducted by the faculty during the Spring semester and supervised by the Recorder.
- b. A list of eligible nominees, together with a nominating ballot, is distributed to the faculty. Eligible nominees are members who meet the following conditions:
 - i. May not serve more than two consecutive terms, partial or full, on the same committee
 - ii. May not serve concurrently on more than one elected committee unless concurrent membership is approved by a majority vote of the faculty
 - iii. May not serve on parallel committees at both college and department levels
 - iv. May not be unavailable to serve if elected (e.g., not on leave)
- c. The election ballot includes up to three nominees (or more in case of a tie) who received the highest number of nominations for each committee.
- d. Ties are broken by runoff elections.

- e. Additional elections are conducted as necessary during the academic year to fill midterm vacancies or add newly hired faculty members.

4.1.3 Officers

A Chair, Vice Chair, and Recorder are elected annually by each committee unless officers are otherwise designated by these Bylaws.

- a. The Chair sets the agenda, convenes, and presides over the meetings.
- b. The Vice Chair presides over meetings in the temporary absence of the Chair or in the event that the position of Chair is vacant.
- c. The Recorder composes and distributes minutes of all meetings to the faculty and retains approved minutes for the College record.

4.1.4 Meetings

- a. Committees must meet at least once at the beginning of the academic year to elect officers. Subsequent meetings are conducted as business requires.
- b. Any recommendations or official actions by committees are forwarded to the Dean, faculty, and other appropriate committees. Each committee summarizes its academic year activities in a year-end report.
- c. Meeting procedures for committees and subcommittees are the same as for general faculty meetings (Section 3.3) unless otherwise stated in these Bylaws.

Section 4.2 Executive Committee

4.2.1 Responsibilities

- a. The Executive Committee advises the Dean in all matters pertaining to staff and faculty participation as appropriate set forth by UNT policy and procedures.
- b. The Committee provides coordination in all matters as appropriate when not provided by other college committees.

4.2.2 Members

- a. Members are the Dean, Assistant Deans, Associate Deans, Department Chairs, and Unit Heads.
- b. The Dean serves as Executive Committee Chair and appoints one Associate Dean to serve as Vice Chair. The Vice Chair presides over meetings in the temporary absence of the Dean or in the event that the position of Dean is vacant.

4.2.3 Actions

The Committee acts on behalf of the College, Dean, and faculty as follows:

- a. Appoints members to committees that are not formed by elections.
- b. Consults with and makes recommendations to the Dean on matters concerning administrative action, budget and financial affairs, and academic planning and implementation.
- c. Plans and implements, with the advice and counsel of the faculty, all College activities not otherwise provided for in these Bylaws.
- d. Acts on behalf of the faculty in the event of a crisis situation or pressing deadline when faculty and committees are unavailable (e.g., during summer).

Section 4.3 Scholarship Committee

4.3.1 Responsibilities

- a. The Scholarship Committee is responsible for college-level scholarships, policies, procedures, and other concerns related to student scholarship matters.
- b. The committee activities are in compliance with the current university guidelines for student scholarships.

4.3.2 Members

- a. The faculty elects one faculty member from each department.
 - i. Administrators are ineligible.
 - ii. The at-large positions will not be from the same department.
- b. The Dean appoints one Associate Dean (or designee) to serve as a nonvoting ex-officio member.
- c. Members meet in closed executive session when conferring about individuals such as students, but otherwise meet in open session.

4.3.3 Actions

The Committee acts on behalf of the College to:

- a. Publicize scholarship opportunities.
- b. Screen scholarship applications following a published procedure.
- c. Make scholarship decisions in a timely manner following a published schedule.
- d. Develop and institute a procedure and forms for application and appeals.
- e. Maintain records for auditing purposes.

- f. Ensures compliance with university, state, and federal scholarship procedures and regulations.

Section 4.4 Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

4.4.1 Responsibilities

- a. The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee reviews proposed changes and additions to the undergraduate curriculum such as new courses, proposals for new programs, and new minors.
- b. The committee addresses questions and issues referred by department committees or initiated by individuals.
- c. The committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Dean.

4.4.2 Members

- a. The faculty elects one faculty member from each department (administrators are ineligible). The Dean appoints one Associate Dean (or designee) to serve as a nonvoting ex-officio member and one at-large voting member.
- b. Members meet in closed executive session when conferring about individuals such as students, but otherwise meet in open session.

4.4.3 Actions

The Committee acts on behalf of the faculty as follows:

- a. Meets on a monthly basis following a published calendar.
- b. Approves proposed undergraduate-level course and program changes for submission to UNT curriculum committees.
- c. Recommends solutions for questions and issues referred by department committees or initiated by individuals.
- d. Engages in planning for the continuous improvement and development of the curricula, including making recommendations for changes.

4.5. Graduate Curriculum Committee

4.5.1 Responsibilities

- a. The Graduate Curriculum Committee reviews proposed changes and additions to the graduate curriculum such as new courses, proposals for new programs and new minors.

- b. The committee addresses questions and issues referred to by department committees or initiated by individuals.
- c. The committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Dean.

4.5.2 Members

- a. The faculty elects one faculty member from each department (administrators are ineligible). The Dean appoints one Associate Dean (or designee) to serve as a nonvoting ex-officio member and one at-large voting member.
- b. Members meet in closed executive session when conferring about individuals such as students, but otherwise meet in open session

4.5.3 Actions

The Committee acts on behalf of the faculty as follows:

- a. Meets on a monthly basis following a published calendar.
- b. Approves proposed graduate-level course and program changes for submission to university-level committees.
- c. Recommends solutions for questions and issues referred by department committees or initiated by individuals.
- d. Provides oversight for COI graduate research and teaching assistantships.
- e. Provides oversight of the committee organizing the yearly COI interdisciplinary conference.
- f. Engages in planning for the continuous improvement and development of the curricula, including making recommendations for changes.
- g. Engages in continuous improvement and development of Doctoral and Master's level curricula and college policies and procedures related to graduate curriculum and programs.

Section 4.6 Personnel Affairs Committee

4.6.1 Committee Responsibilities

- a. This committee reviews departmental decisions and recommendations and advises the Dean and/or Department Chair regarding the alignment of the decision with departmental, college, and university policy.
- b. The Personnel Affairs Committee (PAC) reviews annual peer evaluations, faculty appointments, terminations, and departmental recommendations on merit.

4.6.1.1 Committee Scope

The PAC will advise the Dean and make recommendations regarding:

- a. The Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPTC) sub-committee (Section 4.6.2.) reviews recommendations of faculty appointment, promotion, granting of tenure, and termination of appointments.
- b. Uniform and equitable procedures in assessing faculty merit and salary recommendations.
- c. The implementation of adequate procedures for all faculty appeals.
- d. Other personnel decisions.

4.6.1.2 PAC Membership

- a. The membership of the Personnel Affairs Committee consists of seven tenured faculty elected by each department. Two are elected by each department, with one elected at large by the whole college faculty.
- b. From the membership of the Reappointment Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Personnel Affairs Committee elects an individual who will serve as Chair of both committees.
- c. Associate Deans and Department Chairs are not eligible for the Personnel Affairs Committee or the Reappointment Promotion and Tenure Subcommittee.
- d. One member from each department elected to PAC must be a full professor.
- e. Members cannot serve concurrently on a COI department RPTC and the COI RPTC if the concerned COI Department happened to have a faculty member being considered for promotion and/or tenure in the same academic year. However, members of the departmental PAC can serve on the COI RPTC if they are not members of the departmental RPTC.

4.6.1.3 Actions

4.6.1.3.1 Yearly evaluations

- a. All college full-time faculty are reviewed annually in their unit based on the university procedure, such as the Flowchart defined by the Faculty Information System, according to the UNT Faculty Annual Review Policy (06.007).

- b. In cases of yearly evaluation for faculty members who also hold an administrative appointment, such faculty members will submit to the department PAC their documentation of teaching, research, and service specific to their academic load during the evaluation period. The evaluation is conducted through the normal peer review process by each department and College PAC.
- c. The Dean will make the final decision about merit and related outcomes.

4.6.1.3.2 Personnel Cases

- a. The grievance cases for the College of Information are handled by a separate committee as per UNT policy. The grievance cases follow a separate College of Information Grievance Procedure.
- b. The committee also reviews other types of personnel cases at the request of the Dean, when presented in writing by a faculty member.

4.6.2 Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Subcommittee

4.6.2.1 Subcommittee scope

In accordance with University of North Texas Policy 06.004 and 06.005, the Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Committee (RPTC) is responsible for college-level policies, procedures, and concerns related to faculty evaluation, reappointment, promotion, tenure, and other grievances. In this context, it:

- a. Reviews recommendations from department RPTCs and Chairs regarding faculty under review.
- b. Provides guidance and support for faculty who are preparing portfolios for review.
- c. Addresses questions and issues referred by department committees or initiated by individual faculty after recourse with the appropriate departmental level committee has been exhausted.
- d. Provides recommendations to the Dean and faculty on matters related to faculty reappointment, promotion, tenure, and grievances.
- e. Serves faculty advancement interests in an advisory capacity to the Dean.

The Committee recognizes that faculty evaluation is a peer responsibility initiated at the department level. In this context, the committee will:

- a. Ensure that College and department policies and procedures are in accordance with the *UNT Policy Manual*.
- b. Ensure that department RPTCs adhere to their policies, procedures, and faculty performance criteria.

4.6.2.2 Members

- a. The RPTC must consist of no fewer than five members. It is constituted by the entire College PAC, except assistant professors.
 - i. If someone is considered for promotion to full professor, the committee will consist only of the full professors currently serving on the college PAC.
 - ii. In cases where the college has fewer than the required five full professors on the college PAC for review of dossiers for promotion to full professor, the full professors on the RPTC and the COI Dean will determine the appointment of additional full professors. These may be selected from other colleges at the University of North Texas to replace any elected members.
- b. Administrators are ineligible as they often review dossiers or committee reports at other steps in the process.
- c. Members meet in closed executive session only during personnel reviews and otherwise meet in open session.
- d. Tenure and/or promotion candidates may submit a request and specific reasons to the Dean to exclude individuals from serving as reviewers if they believe them unable to give an unbiased assessment. In consultation with the committee, the Dean will make the final decision regarding such an exclusion.

4.6.2.3 RPTC Subcommittee Responsibilities

The Committee addresses referred College of Information faculty personnel matters by:

- a. Developing and evaluating College of Information policies and procedures for evaluations, reappointment, promotion, tenure, and other personnel matters.
- b. Reviewing department policies and procedures in these areas.
- c. Determining whether departments follow their own policies, procedures, and criteria.
- d. Providing recommendations to the Dean and faculty on matters related to faculty reappointment, and promotion and tenure.

4.6.2.4 Policies and Procedures

4.6.2.4.1 Promotion and Tenure Reviews

- a. The College of Information RPTC reviews department RPTC and Chair recommendations for reappointment, promotion, and tenure.
- b. It then makes its own recommendations to the Dean based on whether it concurs with department and chair recommendations in terms of their adherence to their own policies, procedures, and criteria.
- c. In this process, it also examines the extent to which the candidate meets the criteria and makes its own assessment.
- d. When the College of Information RPTC evaluates the dossiers of faculty up for promotion and/or tenure, the committee follows the procedure as defined by the UNT Faculty Reappointment, Tenure, and Promotion Policy (06.004) and UNT Professional Faculty Reappointment and Promotion (06.005).
- e. The Dean will then review the dossier, including letters from the College of Information and department RPTCs.
 - i. After reviewing the dossier and recommendations, the Dean must notify the candidate if he or she is writing a negative recommendation.
 - ii. The candidate shall be allowed to meet with the Dean within five (5) calendar business days of this notification.
- f. In the event that the Dean does not agree with the College and/or department RPTC recommendations, his or her reasons must be stated in writing.
 - i. Based on the dossier and any further documentation requested from the department committee chairs, the Dean then makes a written recommendation to the Provost.
 - ii. The Dean's recommendation is sent to the Provost, the department chair, and the candidate. In the event of a negative recommendation, an explanation will be included with sufficient detail to justify the decision.
- g. In any instance of a negative recommendation, the candidate may add a letter disputing such recommendation prior to the dossier's transmission to the Provost. This must be provided to the Dean within three (3) calendar business days of being notified of a negative recommendation.

Section 4.7 Staff Operations Committee

4.7.1 Responsibilities

- a. The Staff Operations Committee is responsible for policies, procedures, and concerns related to institutional operations, including staff development, technology services, student services, enrollment management, external affairs, funding development, and statistics and records management.
- b. In this context, it serves in an advisory capacity to the Dean.

4.7.2 Members

- a. The Committee's members are
 - i. All Regular Staff Members as defined by UNT Policy 01.001
 - ii. One Assistant/Associate Dean (or designee) appointed by the Dean to serve as a nonvoting ex-officio member
- b. All Regular Staff Members are eligible to vote and serve as officers.

4.7.3 Actions

The Committee acts on behalf of the staff as follows:

- a. Recommends solutions to questions and issues referred by other committees or initiated by individuals within the college.
- b. Reviews and recommends revisions policies, procedures, and standards to ensure consistency and adherence across all units within the college.
- c. Develops and recommends new policies, procedures, and standards as requested or needed.

Section 4.8 Ad Hoc Committees

Other committees may be appointed by the Dean as need arises. Members may be administrators, faculty, staff, students, or external constituents who are appropriate to the committee's charge.

Article V Bylaws Amendment and Adoption

Section 5.1 Changes

These bylaws are amended when changes are made to one or more items. These Bylaws are adopted as a whole when large-scale changes are made. The following apply:

- 5.1.1 Amendments and larger changes may be proposed by administrators, faculty, staff, students, or committees at any time. The entire Bylaws are reviewed at the end of every three years by an ad-hoc committee and presented to faculty and staff for renewal. The ad-hoc committee must be composed of members of faculty, staff, and college administrators.
- 5.1.2 A chronological list of amendments, adoptions, and reviews that result in no change is given at the end of these Bylaws. Each approved version of these Bylaws becomes part of the College record.

Section 5.2 Procedure

Amendments to and adoption of these Bylaws are made as follows:

- a. The proposed changes and ballot are distributed to the faculty. Ballots are due ten business days from the date of distribution.
- b. Amendment or adoption becomes official when approved by two-thirds of the votes cast.

Adopted December 5, 2008;
Amended May 7, 2009;
Amended September 17, 2009;
Adopted May 3, 2012.
Amended May 5, 2015;
Adopted March 3, 2017.
Amended January 22, 2021;
Adopted October 4, 2021.
Amended September 26, 2022;
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Adopted October 1, 2023.