

Bylaws of the Department of
Marine Earth and Atmospheric Sciences (MEAS)
North Carolina State University
Adopted April 28, 2014
Amended November 17, 2014
Amended May 4, 2015

Article 1. Departmental Vision

The vision of the Department of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Sciences (MEAS) at NCSU is to be an internationally recognized hub of excellence in geoscience research and education, to the lasting benefit of our scientific disciplines, our graduates, and all humankind.

Article 2. Departmental Mission Statement

Our domain, the geosciences, encompasses the dynamics and history of the solid Earth, its natural sediment, soil, water systems, its oceans and atmosphere, and its global biodiversity. Our mission, as a large interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary geosciences department at a major research-oriented Land-Grant university, is:

- to conduct innovative fundamental and applied research in the geosciences in order to open up new understanding of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, geosphere, and biosphere, and the processes that connect them
- to educate students who will become leaders in government and industry, and pioneers in the advancement of geoscience knowledge in academia
- to teach introductory courses that reach hundreds of NCSU non-geoscience majors every year, thereby promoting among NCSU students a broader understanding of processes and critical issues regarding the Earth, oceans, atmosphere, and biosphere
- to offer guidance, founded in our scientific expertise, on pressing societal issues related to the geosciences (for example, natural hazards, environmental quality, water resources, etc.).

The research challenges and societal importance of the geosciences have never been greater. Research and teaching in MEAS address some of the most complex and important geoscience issues facing North Carolina and the world, including hurricanes, floods, climate change, water and air pollution, coastal erosion, the sustainability of fisheries, environmental cycles of critical elements (e.g., carbon and nitrogen), and the history of life itself. There is an urgent need for an informed citizenry and competent leaders to make sound choices concerning many of these issues. MEAS graduates are well prepared to apply geoscience knowledge to important problems with societal, economic, environmental, and scientific relevance, in a variety of professional career paths in the atmospheric sciences, oceanography, and Earth sciences.

Article 3 Faculty, Staff, and Graduate Students

3.1 Faculty

For purposes of this document, *faculty* are those members of the department who hold the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, Professor, or Lecturer and who are full-time employees of the University.

Members of the *department voting faculty* (DVF) participate actively in departmental affairs and long-range planning through departmental committees and faculty meetings, and vote on major issues. Two definitions of DVF are used; in each case, the faculty members referred to must have a majority appointment (51% or more) in MEAS:

- University definition, used in faculty promotion and tenure: For votes on faculty promotion and/or tenure, the university defines the DVF to be the tenured faculty members of rank equal to or higher than the rank sought by the candidate for promotion/tenure.
- MEAS definition, used in general departmental business (not promotion and tenure votes): All tenured and tenure-track (TTT) faculty members are automatically members of the DVF for all departmental business (except as noted above, for votes on promotion and/or tenure). In addition, the DVF may by majority vote grant DVF status to non-tenure-track (NTT) faculty members who have been in MEAS at least one year and work full-time on-campus, teach in MEAS, and actively engage in faculty meetings and/or committees. DVF status for NTT faculty members may change if their roles or appointments change over time.

Other members of the general faculty as defined by the university, emeritus MEAS faculty, members of the departmental staff, and graduate students are also critical to the success of the department and their input is sought on major issues but they are not members of the DVF.

3.2 Department staff and graduate students

Staff and graduate students are important stakeholders in the department. For the purposes of this document, staff are defined as all department personnel, administrative and/or research (including post-doctoral), who are not otherwise defined as students or faculty. The MEAS graduate students and staff are encouraged to participate actively in department activities by each sending a representative to key department committees not designated as faculty only (Article 5). Graduate student and staff representatives are voting members on the department committees on which they serve. The MEAS graduate students and staff will follow their own internally determined procedures for selecting representatives to serve on committees. Participation of individual staff members as staff representatives in committees and meetings is subject to approval by their direct supervisor. Graduate students and staff are excluded from specific committee discussions and votes related to confidential personnel matters such as job performance and academic admission and progress. Upon request, the chair of the committee shall provide a well-articulated reason for excluding the student and/or staff representative from a meeting. The representative may file a written appeal to the head of the department, whose ruling is final.

Article 4. Departmental Faculty Administrative Positions

There are three principal departmental faculty administrative positions: department head, director of graduate programs (DGP), and director of undergraduate programs (DUP). Other faculty administrative positions (e.g., associate department head) may at times be utilized in the department as needed.

Department Head: Background and Charge

The department head will be a full professor of MEAS. While a complete list of all the head's responsibilities is not feasible, outlined here are some general departmental expectations followed by a partial list of some of the main responsibilities of major interest to the faculty.

The head's primary objective is to ensure the department functions so that all involved (faculty, students, staff) have the best opportunity to reach their full potential while collectively meeting the department mission with high quality. In this context, the head works to ensure:

- that the department's mission makes sense, all parties understand it and their roles in delivering it, and all work together to achieve it
- that the mission and methods used to achieve it are supported by reasonable resources; achieving the mission is expected to require hard work, but not quasi-permanent extraordinary efforts that cannot be sustained and over time may degrade morale and call into question the head's judgment
- that wise use of resources (human, capital, other) allows the mission to be achieved with the highest quality and greatest impact per unit of investment.

Faculty, students, staff make major personal professional investments in the university, and in return the head has primary responsibility for establishing a departmental work environment that respects those investments and makes the most of them.

The head occupies a middle ground between an "autocrat" (making all major decisions alone) and simply "leading by survey" (asking the group what it wants and then implementing the median answer). Thus, the head takes an active role in creating a reasonably organized collaborative environment and promoting the faculty's efforts to assume strong collective ownership of academic affairs. The head is prepared to offer and accept new ideas and suggestions to promote this environment and to facilitate the faculty coming together around the best ideas, whatever their source. The head works to engage the faculty in critical academic decisions while shielding them, where possible, from tedious administrative or other tasks. The head has ultimate responsibility for ensuring the department meets its obligations to its students.

Important to creating this collaborative environment are the highest standards for honesty, fairness, transparency, curiosity, quality, and collegiality. The head models these qualities and expects them of others in the department.

Some (not all) of the head's responsibilities of major interest to the faculty are:

- constituting the standing and *ad hoc* committees of the department, by working with/through the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC)
- calling and presiding over regular faculty meetings
- regularly explaining the status of the departmental budget to the faculty

- working with the dean to ensure that the department budget is adequate to meeting the department mission and leading an effective response when this condition is threatened
- working with the faculty and staff to implement initiatives that have been favorably voted on by the faculty
- making and overseeing teaching assignments
- managing the financial affairs and space and other resources of the department
- supervising department staff to ensure the best use of staff resources in meeting the department mission
- mentoring faculty, and evaluating performance of faculty members
- representing the department effectively within and outside the university
- facilitating and in some cases leading efforts to solicit funds for scholarships, fellowships, research equipment, other infrastructure improvements, and other activities designed to develop the department
- leading the recruitment and hiring of new members of the faculty and staff and negotiating for such positions with the dean
- coordinating faculty involvement in long-range planning.

The department head remains informed regarding the workload of each faculty member in the department, through the use of annual faculty activities reports and other communications with faculty members. The head balances the workload among faculty members, to the extent practicable, recognizing that such balancing requires qualitative insight that goes beyond simple quantitative indices.

Some factors to consider in balancing workloads include:

- teaching assignment (number of different courses taught, class contact hours, number of students in a class, etc.)
- advising assignments (number of undergraduate and graduate advisees, etc.)
- research activities and obligations
- service, including professional society activities, special administrative assignments, outreach, committee assignments (university, college, department), etc.

Other factors include making the best use of faculty resources through differential assignments (e.g., assigning faculty members greater roles in areas of individual strength and interest, where the interests of the department and the individual will often coincide), the need to maintain high quality in all work activities, and recognition of personal or family circumstances that may temporarily affect the ability of a faculty member to contribute to the department.

Department Head: Selection

To begin selection of a new department head, the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC- Article 6)) invites nominations for department head from the faculty and staff of the department. This invitation is initiated 12-16 months before the end of the current head's term. Nominations (including self-nominations) come to the FAC by e-mail, and the FAC contacts each person receiving two or more nominations to determine that person's willingness to be considered as a candidate.

Each candidate is asked to submit to the FAC a brief written statement (2-page limit) concerning his/her approach to the department head position. The FAC distributes the written statements to the full faculty, full staff, and the graduate students by e-mail. Within 10 business days each faculty member (Article 3) e-mails the FAC with his/her top three choices among the candidates (ranked 3-2-1 from first choice to third choice). The three candidates receiving the highest overall scores among the faculty are each invited to make an individual interview-style presentation to the department faculty and the dean (roughly 30-40 minutes presentation followed by questions), further outlining his/her approach to the head's position. If there are three or fewer candidates from the nominations, the FAC receives and distributes the candidates' written statements and proceeds directly to schedule a presentation by each candidate. Graduate students and staff are encouraged to attend these presentations, to ask questions, and to provide feedback to the FAC. Candidates do not attend each other's presentations. Following the last presentation, each faculty member has 5 business days to provide their input to the FAC stating his/her ranking of the candidates and providing optional comments. This input may be provided either via email or by anonymous ballot method.

The FAC compiles the votes and information received, and meets with the dean to convey this information. Members of the department may also provide additional comments on the top three candidates by writing directly to the dean. The dean then contacts each candidate and negotiates a final selection.

An alternative to the internal selection process described above is selection of a new department head through a nationally advertised external search. If the FAC, dean, or department faculty feel it would be beneficial to consider this alternative, the FAC facilitates discussion among these three parties on this point. This may occur at any time during the internal selection process outlined above. A strong preference on the part of the dean and/or faculty for an external search may trigger such a search and terminate the internal selection process, even if that process is underway.

The department head is appointed for a 4-year term and serves in an at-will capacity to the dean. The head is eligible to serve a second consecutive term, and the normal selection procedure is followed (i.e., a current head must be nominated in the same way as any other candidate, and the process continues from there). The head is eligible to serve a third consecutive term only if 60% or more of the faculty list him/her as their first choice in the balloting among the top three candidates. No head serves more than three consecutive terms. Past heads become eligible for re-appointment as head after having been out of the head position for 4 years.

Selection of the new head is completed at least 4 months prior to the end of the current head's term. In the event of a premature termination/resignation of the serving head, the selection process is initiated as quickly as possible and no later than one month following the announcement of the current head's termination/resignation.

In alternate years, before the end of the spring semester, the FAC conducts an anonymous survey of the faculty and staff concerning the department administration (head, DPG, and DUP, and any other defined administrative positions held by faculty members). Further details are in Article 6 (Faculty Affairs Committee).

The department head has oversight and authority for the DGP and DUP positions and for other administrative positions, such as associate head, deemed necessary. While the text below lays out general expectations for these positions, the department head may utilize exceptions with the support of the majority of the faculty.

Director or Co-directors of Graduate Programs (DGP)

This position is (these positions are) filled by senior faculty in MEAS with a strong interest in facilitating graduate studies/research. The DGP works (co-DGPs work) with the departmental Graduate Program Committee to implement and maintain procedures for the effective operation of the graduate program.

Director or Co-directors of Undergraduate Programs (DUP)

This position is (these positions are) filled by faculty in MEAS with a strong interest in undergraduate education. The DUP works (co-DUPs work) with the departmental Undergraduate Curriculum & Programs Committee to implement and maintain procedures for the effective operation of the undergraduate programs.

Selection of faculty filling departmental administrative positions

The selection process for faculty filling administrative position, the 4-year term, and term limits are generally the same as for the department head, with the exception that the “hiring official” is the department head (not the dean), i.e., the FAC conveys the vote count and comments on the top (up to) 3 candidates to the department head, and the head then contacts the candidates to negotiate a final appointment. Graduate students and staff are encouraged to provide feedback to the FAC regarding candidates for the DGP and DUP positions. These positions report to the department head, and appointments to these positions may be terminated by the department head.

The duties of the DGP and DUP may be divided, as needed and with the approval of the DVF, among more than one person. The selection process and terms of service for co-DGPs and/or co-DUPs are as given in the previous paragraph.

Article 5. Committees

Service on departmental committees is an important aspect of faculty governance and is expected of all faculty members. MEAS maintains standing committees charged with different aspects of department governance and/or service, among which are:

- Awards
- Computing and Network Facilities
- ETF
- Faculty Affairs (faculty only)
- Graduate Program
- Lab Safety
- Library
- Peer Review of Teaching (faculty only)
- Seminar
- Social
- Space and Moveable Equipment (faculty only)
- Undergraduate Curriculum and Programs
- Web
- Search Committees (non-standing committee)

Also, MEAS faculty members represent the department on college committees listed on the web site of the College of Sciences.

In general (with the exception of the Faculty Affairs Committee), the department head is responsible for making faculty assignments to departmental committees, and assigning MEAS faculty representatives to college committees. In practice, responsibility for assignment to departmental committees is generally delegated to the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC). Once per year the FAC asks all department faculty members to name the departmental committee(s) on which they would like to serve in the coming academic year. The FAC then makes committee assignments, attempting to match faculty members with the committees in which they have an interest while achieving reasonable balance among disciplines, seniority, and other relevant factors in committee membership.

Each committee operates with a chair. The department head may appoint the chair, or allow the committee to select a chair at its first meeting of the academic year. The department head is not a member of any departmental committee but may meet with committees at their request. Each committee is expected to report to the full faculty on its activities at least once per year, either in writing or verbally at a faculty meeting. All committees that allocate departmental resources greater than \$25,000 a year, (e.g. ETF, discipline TA committees) are required to provide an annual written report to the faculty by the end of each fiscal year (30 June) that describes the metrics used and allocations made.

Article 6. Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC)

The FAC facilitates communication among faculty, staff, graduate students and the department administration on policy and workplace issues, helps bring to light and pursue solutions to issues of concern regarding department administration, works with the head to make faculty assignments to departmental committees, carries out post-tenure review as described in university rule RUL 05.68.55, and carries out a bi-annual performance evaluation of the department administration (head, DGP, and DUP, and any other departmental administrative positions held by faculty members) by the department faculty and staff. As noted in Article 4, the FAC also plays an important role in the process for selection of a new department head.

The FAC is an autonomous body of the faculty with a broad purview over the success of the department workplace and mission. FAC members are elected by the faculty, as described below, not appointed by the department head. The members elect the FAC chair, who convenes FAC meetings at least 4 times per semester during the academic year. The department head and other departmental faculty administrators are never members of the FAC. These measures reinforce the independence of the FAC from the departmental administration.

Still, the FAC maintains close and productive communication with the department administration. To this end, departmental faculty administrators (some or all) regularly participate in FAC meetings. Some FAC meetings take place among only the FAC members.

To facilitate communication within the department, summaries of all FAC meetings are prepared after each meeting and are distributed in a timely manner to all faculty as well as to the staff and graduate student representatives.

Any member of the faculty or staff with a significant concern related to the departmental administration or workplace may ask to attend a FAC meeting to present and discuss that concern. Additionally, one FAC meeting a semester is specifically designated for representatives of the graduate students and staff to bring their issues and concerns to the FAC. Part of the purpose of the FAC is to be a “safe place” in which to raise concerns that individuals might be reluctant to raise directly with the department head or other administrators. Concerns raised in the FAC, whether arising among the FAC members or brought to them from a non-member, are taken seriously and acted on by the FAC. In this sense, the FAC facilitates and carries out open communication to address potential problems early and maintain a positive workplace environment. To be effective in this capacity, the FAC develops and maintains a culture of cohesiveness in shouldering the responsibility to make the department environment the best it can be for all. This helps the FAC perform the vital function of keeping frank communication open between the faculty-staff-students and the head, even, and perhaps especially, when there are contentious issues.

The FAC reviews bi-annually, by a survey of all faculty members, the department head's administration, focusing mainly on the head but including questions related to the DGP, DUP, and any other administrative positions held by faculty members. The full department faculty approves the method of review proposed by the FAC. The FAC provides the head and dean with a detailed report, and all department faculty and staff with a general report, of the results of the evaluation. The head evaluation process run by the College of Sciences is not a substitute for this FAC-led evaluation.

The FAC is a group of 5 faculty members elected to the FAC by the department faculty for rotating 3-year terms. Three of the FAC positions are filled by a tenured professor or associate professor from the three major areas in the department, one member each from Earth science, marine science, and atmospheric science. One “at-large” FAC position is filled by a tenured faculty member from any area of the department. The fifth FAC position is filled by an untenured faculty member who participates in FAC meetings but not in post-tenure review or evaluation of the department head. The non-tenured member of the FAC may also excuse himself/herself from other FAC tasks that s/he finds potentially controversial. In the event that there are no untenured faculty members in the department, or none willing or able to serve on the FAC, this fifth FAC position reverts to another “at-large” faculty position for a tenured faculty member.

FAC elections for the coming academic year (1 or 2 open positions per year) are held before the end of the spring semester. The FAC receives nominations (including self-nominations) from the faculty, and announces candidates prior to an April faculty meeting at which voting occurs. All members of the DVF (MEAS definition, Article 3) may participate in nominations and voting for each member of the FAC. FAC members are elected on the following three-year rotation:

- year 1: earth and untenured
- year 2: marine and at-large
- year 3: atmospheric.

This rotation commences with the 2015-16 academic year as year 1.

FAC members may serve 2 consecutive terms, and become eligible again for FAC membership after 2 years off the FAC.

At the start of each academic year the FAC members elect the FAC chair. Working closely with the FAC members and using their input, the FAC chair calls FAC meetings and sets their agendas. Following each FAC meeting, the FAC chair or another FAC member provides concise written minutes of the FAC meeting to the department faculty.

Article 7. Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings are mainly for the purpose of conducting departmental business, with announcements of news items relevant to the department being a secondary item. A graduate student and a staff representative are requested to participate in most faculty meetings. Several meetings a year are reserved for faculty only including RTP meetings (Section 8) and up to 3 faculty-only meetings a semester. All faculty only meetings will be announced ahead of time in the meeting schedule and/or meeting agenda. *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief, 2nd Edition* (Sept. 2011, in paperback) are the governing procedures for all meetings; each faculty member receives a copy of this paperback from the department head. For faculty meetings, a quorum consists of one half of the DVF (MEAS definition) excluding from the total those on scholarly reassignment.

The department head convenes one or two faculty meetings per month during the 9-month academic year (none in the summer) and sees that an agenda is distributed at least three business days in advance of each meeting. Faculty members wishing to have items added to the agenda communicate that to the head, and s/he reasonably accommodates such requests, keeping in mind that meetings are limited to 75 minutes. The head also announces by late August the planned dates for faculty meetings during the coming academic year. The head generally chairs faculty meetings, and designates another faculty member to do so in his/her absence. Minutes listing all actions or decisions taken at the previous meeting are distributed to the faculty at least three business days before the next meeting.

Any faculty member may call a faculty meeting outside of the routine meeting schedule announced by the head, in response to special circumstances, such as a special opportunity or problem, especially but not only those that may be time sensitive. Such a call is normally made by an e-mail message to the full faculty, and if seconded (in this same e-mail mode) by at least two other faculty members, the meeting is considered officially called. Such special meetings should be called for the same day of the week and time used for regularly scheduled faculty meetings, if at all possible.

Article 8. Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT)

A number of written procedures (<http://www.provost.ncsu.edu/promotion-tenure/>) govern RPT processes at NC State. The purpose of this section is solely to clarify a few aspects of department-level timing and details in areas not covered in other written RPT guidance.

Dossiers

MEAS faculty members preparing RPT dossiers are expected to follow university guidelines on dossiers (NCSU REG 05.20.20). These guidelines are, however, incomplete on some important details. For example, “summaries” of student and peer evaluations of teaching

are required, but the nature of the summaries is not specified. In order for MEAS dossiers to have consistent contents, and thus promote consistent evaluation, MEAS requires that “summaries” of teaching evaluations for RPT dossiers consist of the full text of “Part II” on the MEAS form for peer review of teaching (for all peer reviews the candidate has received), plus statistics (mean, standard deviation, number of responses) for a few key statements from the ClassEval student evaluations form (<http://upa.ncsu.edu/eval/clev/course-eval/eval-instr>): “The instructor explained material well”, “The instructor was prepared for class”, “Overall, the instructor was an effective teacher”, “This course improved my knowledge of the subject”, and “Overall, this course was excellent”. Summaries should include the evaluation statements quoted above, not just the statement numbers from the ClassEval form (e.g., dossiers should not simply refer to “statement 3” or “question 3”).

RPT meetings

NCSU RPT policy requires the “department voting faculty” (DVF) to meet to evaluate a candidate’s accomplishments, as documented in his/her RPT dossier, relative to the written RPT standards (NCSU REG 05.20.05, Section 2). In MEAS, two fall meetings of the DVF are scheduled for this critical purpose: one meeting for discussion and evaluation of the dossier, and a second meeting, 1-2 weeks later, for any necessary follow-up discussion and voting. This two-meeting format allows an opportunity for follow-up, before the vote, on any missing information, inconsistencies, or unclear issues that come to light during initial discussion. It also allows more time for DVF members to weigh information and arguments before voting. Finally, it gives the DVF an opportunity to check in with each other, face-to-face, on their draft DVF assessment statement (contents of which are explained at the link above) that is prepared and distributed between the two meetings. The second meeting includes the vote of the DVF, and votes shall be tallied openly before the meeting is adjourned. The second meeting also includes a motion to approve the written DVF assessment.

To help resolve any potential points of confusion in the dossier and to give DVF members a chance to ask the candidate about his/her accomplishments, discussion of each candidate’s case at the first meeting mentioned above begins with the candidate in the room. When questions to the candidate are exhausted or if there are none, the candidate is excused from the room and the DVF discussion continues.

All RPT meetings and written evaluations arising from these meetings follow the university guidelines (NCSU REG 05.20.05, Section 2). As such, discussion and evaluation is limited to the candidate’s accomplishments, as documented in the dossier, relative to the written RPT standards. Other areas not related to written RPT standards, such as complaints about the candidate, his/her interactions with others, etc., may be topics for discussion in other venues, but not the RPT meetings, since the DVF evaluation is a scholarly/academic evaluation and is not intended to substitute for the department head carrying out his/her responsibilities regarding other potentially problematic faculty issues. Further, if the DVF and/or department head are to give feedback to a faculty member on individual workplace problems/issues, fairness and adherence to policy suggest that such feedback must be outside of, and before, RPT evaluation (e.g., as part of annual evaluation by the department head, drawing on his/her own observations and/or on comments from the DVF to the

department head as part of the consultation described in Section 7 of the MEAS RPT guidelines, NCSU RUL 05.67.701).

Timing

RPT meetings are generally the most important faculty meetings of the year, with significant consequences for the department and the candidate. As such, they must not be rushed to conclusion under strong time pressure. Given that RPT dossiers, with both DVF and department head evaluations, are typically due in the dean's office in late October, the two MEAS RPT meetings should be concluded by mid-October at the latest. Therefore: complete dossiers with letters should be available to the DVF in the second week of September, external letters of evaluation should be solicited early enough to meet this deadline, and the candidate's dossier should be complete, to send to external reviewers, in July. Dossier updates are permitted up to the first DVF evaluation meeting in the fall.

Article 9. Post Tenure Review

The university has detailed policies on post-tenure review (NCSU REG 05.20.04 – “Post Tenure Review of Faculty” and regulations therein). MEAS supplemented the university policy in Nov 2009 with NCSU RUL 05.68.55 – “Department of Marine Earth and Atmospheric Sciences Post Tenure Review Standards and Procedures”. RUL 05.68.55 states that the department's “Executive Committee” (taken here as being the FAC) will serve as the Post Tenure Review Committee. University RUL 05.20.04 states:

“5.4 In lieu of a review by the peer review committee, the faculty member to be reviewed may request an administrative review to be conducted by the Department Head. All requests for administrative review must be approved by the Department Head and the peer review committee.”

These bylaws further clarify that post-tenure review by the peer review committee is the default procedure. Administrative review by the department head is done only upon the written request of the faculty member being reviewed.

Article 10. Revision of MEAS Bylaws

Any MEAS faculty member (Article 3) may propose a revision to the MEAS bylaws. The proposed revision should be clearly written and show with separate markings any text to be deleted, added, and moved. The proposed revision will be distributed to the MEAS faculty, discussed at an MEAS faculty meeting, and perhaps modified as a result of this discussion but not voted on at the meeting where it is first discussed. At the next faculty meeting, a motion to adopt the revision in its final form may be made. The motion will carry if supported by at least 60% of the DVF (MEAS definition, Article 3).