

**School of Physics**  
**Georgia Institute of Technology**  
**Bylaws**  
*(last modified by the faculty Apr. 11, 2024)*

**Preamble**

These bylaws describe the governance of the School of Physics and the rights and responsibilities of its members. Its objective is to ensure and promote transparency, fairness, and efficiency in how the School operates. These bylaws adhere to and are consistent with Georgia Institute of Technology policies found in the GT Faculty Handbook. In the event of a disagreement, the GT Faculty Handbook will supersede these bylaws.

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## Code of Conduct

As part of the University System of Georgia, we in the School of Physics at the Georgia Institute of Technology follow the Code of Conduct described in the USG Policy Manual in 8.2.18.1.4, found here: [https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C224/#p8.2.18\\_personnel\\_conduct](https://www.usg.edu/policymanual/section8/C224/#p8.2.18_personnel_conduct)

### Article I. Faculty Meetings

Faculty meetings are meant to address major issues confronting the School. The proper place for extended discussion and the formulation of recommendations for the School should take place within the appropriate committees or between faculty outside of the faculty meetings.

#### ***Section 1. Kinds and frequency of meetings***

1. The faculty of the School of Physics typically meet in regular session monthly during the semester, throughout the regular academic year. The Chair shall establish the dates of meetings. Typically, the Chair sets these dates at the beginning of the semester.
2. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair, the Chair's designated representative, or by the Faculty Advisory Committee Chair.
3. The person presiding over the meeting must ensure that remote participation is possible.

#### ***Section 2. Meeting governance***

The Chair shall preside over faculty meetings. In the absence of the Chair, they may designate another voting member to preside. If the Faculty Advisory Committee Chair calls for the meeting, they will preside or they may designate another voting member to preside.

#### ***Section 3. Meeting Secretary***

The School Office Manager shall be the Secretary of the faculty meeting. In their absence, the presiding member shall appoint a substitute. The duties of the Secretary shall be

1. Recording the minutes of the faculty meeting,
2. Archiving the minutes and make them accessible to the faculty,
3. Overseeing votes on motions.

#### ***Section 4. Agenda***

The person who called for the meeting (i.e., the Chair, the Chair's designated representative, or the Faculty Advisory Committee Chair) shall prepare the agenda for each meeting and should distribute it at least two business days before the Faculty Meeting. Faculty members may request in writing (email is sufficient) that items be included on agendas. Expected motions and a short description of the rationale for the motion should be sent along with the agenda. The agenda shall include an item for faculty issues, during which any voting member may introduce a motion.

#### ***Section 5. Motions***

All motions except those recommended by a committee require a second in order to be considered. All faculty members wishing to speak on a motion shall have the opportunity to speak at least once, after which additional debate can occur at the presiding member's discretion. Amendments can be introduced to motions under consideration and require a second and a majority vote for approval.

## **Section 6. Quorum**

One-half of the voting members of the School shall constitute a quorum at any faculty meeting; attendance may be in person or online. If a quorum is not achieved, the meeting may proceed, but no votes may be taken. The quorum must be maintained at the time of voting. Votes by proxy do not count towards a quorum.

## **Section 7. Procedural Disputes**

Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with these bylaws. In cases of dispute or doubt as to the meaning of the rules, the presiding member's interpretation shall be adopted.

## **Section 8. Attendance**

1. The Secretary shall record in the minutes who was invited to the meeting.
2. The Secretary shall record in the minutes the names of all members present at each meeting, noting the number of voting members for the purposes of establishing a quorum.

## **Section 9. Voting (procedures, rules, consequences)**

1. Full-time regularly appointed tenured / tenure-track faculty and Professors of the Practice of the School of Physics shall vote on all matters.
2. Part-time regularly appointed tenured / tenure-track faculty of the School of Physics shall be allowed to vote on all matters if they have a minimum 50% appointment in the School of Physics.
3. Academic Professionals of the School of Physics shall vote on all matters except those regarding hiring and bylaws and unless the voting faculty pass a motion to restrict that vote to voting faculty only.
4. Motions are adopted by a supermajority (2/3 or more) in cases of adoption or changes of bylaws. All other motions are adopted by a simple majority (more than 50%).
5. The majority of a vote is to be based on the number of valid votes cast (not including abstentions), not the number of eligible voters in the SoP.
6. Voting faculty may assign their vote by proxy to another member of the voting faculty, valid for all votes during one meeting. The faculty assigning a proxy forwards the name of the proxy to the person who called for the meeting (i.e., the Chair, the Chair's designated representative, or the Faculty Advisory Committee Chair) prior to the faculty meeting. The meeting participants shall be notified of the proxy. Each voting member can carry only one proxy.
7. During meetings with remote participants, voting will normally be facilitated by sharing a link to an authenticated web form using the meeting platform's chat function.

# **Article II. The Faculty Advisory Committee**

## **Section 1. Composition**

The committee has 6 members, each serving two year terms. The committee composition comprises (at the time of their election) two Professors, two Associate Professors, one Assistant Professor, and one non-tenure-track faculty member. Terms are staggered so that 3 new members are elected each year.

## **Section 2. Selection of members**

FAC committee members are determined by election by single transferable vote. People eligible to vote in the election are (1) tenure track faculty with the rank of Professor, Associate Professor, or Assistant Professor, and (2) non-tenure track faculty: Academic Professionals, and Professors of the Practice. All eligible voters are eligible to be elected to the FAC, with one exception: no person may serve two consecutive terms. Elections for the open positions are run by the current FAC, in advance of the new term, which starts on the first day of the Fall Semester. Once the new FAC committee is fully determined, its committee members elect the committee chair.

## **Article III. Ad Hoc Committees**

With the exception of the Faculty Advisory Committee, the standing committees of the School and the chairs of those committees are appointed by the Chair of the School. Subject to Institute regulations, the Faculty and the Chair may appoint and charge ad hoc committees to deal with specific issues.

## **Article IV. Faculty Searches**

The process for hiring new tenure-track faculty begins with the Faculty Search Committee in consultation with the SoP Faculty and the Chair. The Faculty Search Committee will seek the advice of and feedback from the SoP Faculty in the search process. Acting upon the findings of the Faculty Search Committee, the Chair will convene one or more faculty meetings to discuss and vote on the candidates. The Chair will proceed with the hiring process guided by the faculty consensus.

When an open position for an Academic Professional needs to be filled, the Chair will convene one or more faculty meetings to discuss and vote on the candidate(s). The Chair will proceed with the hiring process guided by the faculty input and vote. Full-time Academic Professionals in the School can vote on candidates for an Academic Professional position.

## **Article V. Evaluation Rubrics**

In response to faculty handbook changes mandated by the Board of Regents and adopted under duress by the Whole Faculty of Georgia Tech in September 2022 as a necessary protection against arbitrary enforcement, the School of Physics has established rubrics for the purpose of annual evaluations of academic faculty, and post-tenure-review of tenure-track faculty. The evaluation rubrics are maintained as an appendix to the School bylaws (currently version voted 2022-11-10).

Initial adoption and subsequent changes to the evaluation rubrics for tenure-track faculty are considered changes to the School bylaws. As such, they must be approved by a supermajority (2/3 or more) of the voting tenure-track faculty.

Evaluation rubrics for tenure-track faculty are developed and ultimately proposed to the faculty by an elected "rubrics committee". This committee shall only be constituted when necessary, e.g. by a majority vote of the faculty, and must be elected by the academic faculty to serve for a period of no more than one year. Elections, including nominations, are the responsibility of the Faculty Advisory Committee. The committee must comprise no less than four tenured academic faculty.

Members of an expiring rubrics committee are eligible for re-election to a subsequent iteration of the rubrics committee.

Non-tenure-track academic faculty may choose to organize a rubric committee to develop alternative rubrics to apply to different non-tenure-track roles in the School. These shall be approved by a 2/3 vote of all non-tenure-track academic faculty. If no rubrics are specified for a particular role, the rubrics for tenure-track faculty will be used. Rubrics for research faculty may be developed individually with the faculty member's supervisor at the time of hire.

Faculty members are evaluated on the three rubrics in research, service, and instruction as necessary based on their duties and workload. By default, tenure-track faculty and professors of the practice shall be evaluated on all three rubrics, non-tenure-track academic faculty shall be evaluated on service and instruction, and research faculty shall be evaluated solely on research. Changes from the default set of rubric(s) used for evaluating a faculty member must be approved by the Chair and the faculty member in writing prior to the end of each evaluation period. The Chair must assign service or instruction duties, respectively, to any faculty member who will be evaluated on the service or instruction rubrics.

## **Article VI. Faculty involvement in Faculty Evaluations (new)**

### **Section 1. Annual Reviews**

For the purpose of conducting annual evaluations of academic faculty in the SoP, the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) is the designated elected committee. The election process of the FAC is codified in the school's bylaws.

If a faculty member opts in, the FAC will independently score the faculty's annual evaluation form based on the school's annual evaluation rubrics.

### **Section 2. Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure (RPT) & Post-Tenure Review (PTR) Committees**

The SoP establishes an elected "Faculty Review Committee (FRC)" for the purpose of conducting reappointment, promotion and tenure (RPT) and post-tenure (PTR) reviews of tenure-track and tenured faculty in the SoP.

*Composition of the FRC.* The FRC comprises at least 6 faculty members drawn from the SoP's tenured faculty. Each spring, the School Chair constructs a slate of faculty members to serve on the FRC. When creating the slate, the Chair will optimize the committee's size and faculty expertise based on the number and research areas of the faculty expected to be evaluated in the subsequent review cycle. The Chair submits the slate to the FAC for consideration, approval, and faculty election. When presented to the faculty, the FRC slate should identify a committee Chair.

*Election of the FRC.* Before the end of each spring semester, the FAC proposes the FRC slate to the faculty for election. The FAC presents two motions for a simple majority, yes/no, electronic vote on the entire slate:

Motion 1: “The **tenure-track** faculty elects the FRC slate for the purpose of conducting RPT in the subsequent academic year according to guidelines of the faculty handbook”.

Motion 2: “The **tenured** faculty elects the FRC slate for the purpose of conducting PTR in the subsequent academic year according to guidelines of the faculty handbook”.

If the slate is rejected (either RPT or PTR), the chair and the FAC propose a new slate.

*Post-election modifications of the FRC.* For the purposes of the RPT, additional members may be added to the FRC by the Chair to review specific cases of jointly appointed faculty or non-tenure track faculty. These additions do not require a faculty vote. Additional provisions of the faculty handbook apply (section 3.3.8 or equivalent). For the purposes of the PTR, the FRC has the authority to establish sub-committees, each composed of at least three elected members, to conduct reviews of individual faculty members. Additional provisions of the faculty handbook apply (section 3.3.9.1 or equivalent). When sub-committees are formed, a sub-committee Chair needs to be elected by sub-committee members.

## **Article VII. Amendments to the Bylaws**

These bylaws supersede any previous bylaws not herein included. They may be amended with a two-third majority vote in a faculty meeting after the faculty has been given prior notice and at least two weeks to consider the proposed amendment.

## ***Supplemental Information***

The following is not part of the bylaws nor is subject to faculty consensus. It intended for informational purposes only.

### **Membership**

Membership in the School of Physics shall include persons associated with the School of Physics in the following capacities:

1. full-time or part-time regularly appointed faculty in tenured or tenure-track positions and in visiting positions when the department's intent is to make them tenure earning;
2. other professional appointees, including those serving in faculty lines as instructors, temporary visiting faculty, courtesy appointees, adjunct appointees, postdoctoral fellows, professors emeriti, senior research associates, assistants and associates in research, teaching faculty, research faculty, support faculty, teaching assistants, and research assistants;
3. Undergraduate Physics and Applied Physics majors and minors and School of Physics Graduate students and Graduate students working for School of Physics faculty;
4. Administrative and Professional personnel;
5. University Service Personnel

### **Officers**

#### ***Section 1. Chair***

##### **1. Term of office**

The Chair shall be appointed by, and serve at the pleasure of, the College of Sciences' Dean. The Chair will serve for a length of time determined by the Dean, typically five years. An individual may be reappointed as Chair, at the discretion of the Dean, generally for a maximum of two terms.

##### **2. Selection of (new) Chair**

The CoS Dean appoints a search committee with members from the SoP. The search committee proposes a list of candidates to the Dean with input from the SoP faculty. The search committee provides the SoP faculty with regular updates regarding the search.

##### **3. Authority and Duties**

1. The Chair shall serve as the chief administrative officer of the SoP. The duties and responsibilities of the Chair include but are not limited to:
  - a. Ensuring the SoP meets its administrative obligations.
  - b. Holding faculty meetings in accordance with the duties and rights of Article III.
  - c. Supervising the SoP's personnel (directly or indirectly).
2. The Chair shall appoint all members of SoP committees with the exception of the Faculty Advisory Committee.
3. The Chair shall designate the chairs of SoP committees with the exception of the Faculty Advisory Committee.
4. The Chair normally designates the Associate Chairs of the SoP.

5. The Chair, serving as principal financial officer of the SoP shall:
  - a. Supervise receipt and expenditures of the SoP's funding.
  - b. Prepare periodic reports of budgets and expenditures for the SoP Faculty.
6. The Chair, in conjunction with appropriate faculty committees, shall supervise and coordinate the recruiting of new faculty members.
7. The Chair shall hold an annual evaluation meeting (in the Spring term) with each faculty member. The evaluation of the performance of professional responsibilities consistent with that member's annual assignment of duties will be for the previous calendar year. The assignment of responsibilities will be for the next academic year.
8. The Chair shall meet with a tenure-track faculty after the Critical Review advising them of their progress toward tenure. A written summary of the meeting shall be provided to the candidate.
9. The Chair shall coordinate all segments of the academic program, such as degree requirements, curricular offerings, and catalog announcements. The Chair shall determine and supervise, in consultation with appropriate committees, such matters as the scheduling of classes and the assignment of duties to faculty members.
10. Except when provided for otherwise, the Chair or their designee shall serve as liaison officer and departmental representative to officers and bodies outside the department.
11. The Chair shall regularly report to the faculty the actions performed in administering departmental affairs.
12. The Chair shall recommend salary merit increases to the Dean.
13. The Chair will oversee the infrastructure and equipment needs for 2<sup>nd</sup> year labs and Advanced labs with the College of Sciences and in cooperation with laboratory instructors and Associate Chairs.

## **Section 2. Associate Chairs**

### **1. Appointment**

Associate Chairs are typically appointed by the SoP Chair and support the Chair in fulfilling the SoP's mission.

### **2. Roles and Primary Responsibilities**

#### **i. Associate Chair of the Undergraduate Student Program**

- Chairs the Undergraduate Committee (See Article IV.2.4).
- Oversees matters of undergraduate academic advisement.
- Oversees undergraduate teaching and the undergraduate research program.
- Manages required assessments of undergraduate programs (i.e., OATS).

#### **ii. Associate Chair of the Graduate Student Program**

- Chairs the Graduate Committee (See Article IV.2.3).
- Oversees matters of graduate academic advisement.
- Oversees graduate teaching.
- Monitors students transitioning to research.
- Manages required assessments of graduate student programs (i.e., OATS).



### iii. Associate Chair for Physics Education

- Oversees the foundational 2<sup>nd</sup> year physics sequence and its assessment.
- Oversees the 2<sup>nd</sup> year labs.
- Oversees the training of teaching assistants.

### **Section 3: Other officers**

Standing positions with College and Institute responsibilities:

#### **Director of Teaching Effectiveness (DoTE)**

Monitors teaching of School faculty and provides a letter for each critical review, promotion, and tenure case evaluating the faculty's teaching performance.

#### **Academic Senate Representative**

Members are elected by the SoP Academic Faculty. The role of Academic Senate Representatives, as well as rules regarding their election and eligibility are described in the Faculty Handbook Section 2.2.3. All members of the SoP Academic Faculty are eligible for election as SoP Senate Representative. Election of new member(s) shall take place prior to the first Senate Meeting in the Fall, with vote taken by secret ballot. The Chair oversees the election. Election is for a 3-year term. Representatives may not serve consecutive terms.

#### **Dean's Advisory Committee**

Members are appointed by the CoS Dean.

#### **College Reappointment Promotion and Tenure Committee**

Members are appointed by the CoS Dean. According to the RPT Guide, page 12: "Each college has a standing Promotion and Tenure Committee. Colleges with schools should have representation from each school within the college on the committee. The procedure for establishing the committee can vary but should be posted in a place that is accessible to all faculty in the college." Traditionally, the CoS Dean, in consultation with the SoP Chair, selects the SoP representative for a 3-year term.

## **Committees**

### **Section 1. Committee Membership**

Service on SoP committees is considered to be part of each SoP tenure-track faculty's responsibilities. Tenure-track faculty refers to SoP members with the rank of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor, or Professor. Other SoP members such as Professors of the Practice or Academic Professionals also serve on SoP committees. Not yet tenured faculty are normally assigned to only one committee.

In addition, all SoP members are encouraged to raise issues and suggest changes to be considered by any committee. Meetings of committees should be held only when a majority of the voting members of the committee are present. Unless otherwise specified, all committee members serve in a voting capacity.

At the discretion of the Chair, non-voting members of the faculty may serve on committees and may vote on the committee's decisions. Determination of committee members for the following year is normally done by the Chair during the evaluation and assignment meetings with faculty members in the spring.

When appropriate and subject to Institute regulations, the SoP Chair may appoint a voting member from outside the SoP to a committee. However, a majority vote by the SoP Faculty on such committees is needed on any decision relating to academic functions of the SoP.

## **Section 2. Standing Committees**

### **1. Faculty Advisory Committee**

The Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) serves as an advisory group to the School Chair, reviewing issues that are brought to their attention by the School Chair, and, when requested by a member of the SoP Faculty or based on its own initiative, examining matters related to the well-being of the School. Votes and recommendations may be made to indicate the view of the FAC on particular issues. It is understood that such decisions by the FAC are advisory, not binding.

### **2. RPT Committee**

The RPT Committee is appointed annually by the School Chair. It is composed of at least five tenured faculty broadly representative of the research areas within the School. All members must undergo implicit bias training. The RPT Committee is responsible for (1) generating the list of external reviewers and (2) making written recommendations to the School Chair on all reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions with respect to Faculty, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Faculty Handbook and mandated by the Georgia Institute of Technology and the College of Sciences.

### **3. Graduate Committee**

The Graduate Committee is appointed annually by the Chair. It provides oversight and direction to the School's graduate degree programs. The responsibilities connected with this oversight and direction include graduate recruiting, curriculum development, student advisement, assessment of the programs, as well as ensuring that students receive exposure to those tools deemed essential for their professional development (such as technical writing and the ability to give scientific presentations).

### **4. Undergraduate Committee**

The Undergraduate Committee is appointed annually by the Chair with input from the Associate Chairs for Undergraduate Programs and Physics Education. It provides oversight and direction to the School's B.S. in Physics and B.S. in Applied Physics, the Physics Minor and Physics classes taken by other majors. The Associate Chair for Physics Education pays particular attention to the content and quality of the foundational 2<sup>nd</sup> year sequence. The responsibilities connected with this

oversight and direction include curricular assessment and development, student awards, scholarships, and undergraduate research.

## **5. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is appointed annually by the Chair. It has at least six members: one staff representative, one graduate student, one undergraduate student, and three faculty and academic professionals. The DEI Committee is charged with:

1. Providing a forum for all members of the School to facilitate conversations on how to make the School more diverse, equitable, and inclusive.
2. Leading DEI communication and education in the School-wide efforts, for example, drafting an SoP DEI statement/code of conduct for faculty consideration and collecting/disseminating DEI resources/best practices.
3. Stewarding DEI proposals as they are considered by the School.

## **6. Faculty Search Committee**

The Faculty Search Committee will be appointed by the Chair in the event of a search for a tenure-track faculty member. All members must undergo implicit bias training. The committee oversees the technical process of advertising open positions, proposing to the faculty a list of candidates for interview, and collecting faculty opinions on those interviewed.

### ***Section 4. Interactions of Committees with the Faculty***

1. If a committee addresses a topic of interest to the general faculty, the committee chair should give a status report about these activities in the faculty meeting.
2. Committee deliberations and votes are taken in closed session.
3. Motions or resolutions proposed by a committee shall be communicated to the general faculty via the faculty meeting agenda.