

**Bylaws of the Agronomy Department**  
**University of Florida**  
Approved October 28, 2010

***Mission***

Our mission is to achieve excellence in the science of using plants for food, feed, fuel, fiber and turf, as well as in the management of weed species, through research, teaching, and outreach programs that serve the people of Florida, our nation and the world.

***Vision***

Our vision is to improve and sustain food production while conserving natural resources and promoting healthy and active lives by creating and disseminating knowledge in the plant sciences.

**GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Agronomy Department at the University of Florida has a diverse faculty with a wide variety of teaching, research and extension interests. The department currently is comprised of three programmatic focus groups: 1) Plant Breeding, Genetics and Genomics, 2) Plant Physiology, Nutrition and Management, and 3) Weed Science.

**Article I – Governance of the Agronomy Department**

These Bylaws establish the general principles by which the Agronomy Department shall be governed. These Bylaws are governed by and subordinate to the Constitutions of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and the University and the policies and directives of the University of Florida's Board of Trustees and the Florida Board of Governors. Operating within the context of these Bylaws, the governance of the Agronomy Department shall be shared between the administration and the faculty.

**Article II – The Faculty**

**Section 1 – Faculty Membership**

The faculty of the Agronomy Department shall consist of individuals in tenured, tenure-accruing, and non tenure-accruing faculty positions. Faculty are defined by the University of Florida Constitution and Senate Bylaws and include the various ranks of Professor, Scholar, Lecturer, Research Scientist, Extension Scientist and Assistant In.

**Section 2 – Faculty Rights**

Faculty have all of the rights and privileges granted to them by the University of Florida Constitution and the IFAS Constitution.

These include:

- the right to know the expectations of their job assignment and how they will be evaluated,
- the right to assemble without limitations to discuss issues of concern, and
- the right to open academic discourse without fear of retribution.

### **Section 3 – Faculty Responsibilities**

- Faculty are responsible for planning and conducting teaching, research, extension and service in a competent and professional manner.
- Faculty are responsible for the professional development of students, including mentoring, and organizing, attending and presenting departmental seminars.
- Faculty are responsible for contributing to the functioning of the Department, including infrastructure, social, public relations, and outreach functions. Contributions can include, but are not limited to service on committees, investing intellectual effort in long-range planning, and promoting the department.
- Faculty are also responsible for service to IFAS, the University, and professional societies.

### **Section 4—Department Chair Responsibilities**

The Department is headed by a Chair appointed by the Senior Vice President in accordance with the University Constitution.

The Chair serves as chief executive and administrative officer of the Department. The Chair provides financial planning and policy and supervises routine operations of the Department, including faculty evaluations and evaluations of selected staff (see *Appendix A* for a more complete description). The Chair is responsible to the Senior Vice President for administration of the Department and the three Deans for programmatic issues and is the agent of the Department faculty for execution of academic policy. The Chair provides programmatic leadership for all Agronomy Department faculties in the department, including Gainesville and REC faculty. The Chair is expected to operate the Department in the spirit of shared governance and seek faculty input, consider it, and provide feedback and rationale about final decisions. The Chair may maintain a program of teaching, research and/or extension, as time permits.

## **Article III –Committees**

### **Purpose and Classification**

Service on Agronomy Department committees is the primary means by which faculty can participate directly in the governance of the Department. Faculty, both in Gainesville and RECs, shall have the opportunity to participate in four standing committees (Sections 1 through 4) through which the major governance of the Department occurs: the Administrative Advisory Committee, the Graduate Committee, the Undergraduate Committee, and Honors and Awards Committee. General rules for standing committees include:

- Standing committees shall meet regularly. A secretary, elected from within the committee membership, shall keep and archive minutes and records (edited for confidentiality as necessary).
- Reports of the standing committees shall be made to the faculty via monthly email messages and at each monthly faculty meeting.
- Standing committees shall submit and archive an annual written report to the faculty (for the interval July 1 – June 30).
- Policy recommendations developed in the standing committees shall be emailed to all faculty prior to faculty meetings, at which time faculty input and discussion will be conducted.

### **Section 1 – Administrative Advisory Committee**

The Administrative Advisory Committee is responsible for providing input to the Department Chair on matters of space, allocation of year-end matching funds, and long-range planning. The committee will review the bylaws of the Department every three years and propose modifications to the entire faculty, as necessary. The committee will serve as the hosts and planning group for interfacing with the department's External Advisory Council.

The Administrative Advisory Committee shall consist of three faculty who will each serve three-year staggered terms. These members shall be elected by paper or electronic ballot. One member will rotate off the committee every year and be replaced with one elected faculty member. The Chair will serve as chair of the Committee. The agenda and the names of the committee members will be disseminated before each meeting with an invitation to faculty to propose items for discussion. Meeting minutes (edited for confidentiality) will be disseminated via email to the faculty after each meeting.

An ad hoc committee, consisting of three faculty members, will be formed when necessary to review faculty CRIS projects prior to external review. A separate ad hoc committee, consisting of three tenured faculty members, will be formed when necessary to perform the following duties: 1) review faculty packets for promotion to full professor, and 2) review the productivity and performance of tenured faculty (at the request of the faculty member) who have received Below Satisfactory ratings on annual evaluations or the Sustained Performance Evaluation Program (SPEP) and are being required to develop an IFAS Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). Evaluation of faculty members at the time of their three-year mid-career review will follow the guidelines in *Appendix B* (Mentoring of Junior Faculty).

### **Section 2 – Graduate Committee**

The Graduate Committee shall be chaired by a member of the graduate faculty who will be known as the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will be appointed by the Chair and shall serve a period of time to be agreed upon by the Graduate Coordinator and the Chair. Three faculty, in addition to the Graduate Coordinator, will serve as members of the Graduate Committee, each serving three-year staggered terms. The committee members shall be elected by the faculty by paper or electronic ballot. One member will rotate off the committee each year and be replaced by one elected faculty member. The Graduate Committee shall meet when needed at the request of the Graduate

Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator, or other designated committee member in the Graduate Coordinator's absence, will make a report of the committee's actions at faculty meetings as necessary.

The responsibilities of the committee shall include:

1. advising the chair on the distribution of scholarships and teaching assistantships,
2. recommending enhancements and improvements to the graduate curriculum,
3. reviewing new and revised graduate courses before submission to the CALS curriculum committee,
4. reviewing and recommending on graduate student admissions,
5. developing policies and procedures related to graduate students and graduate studies including grievances.

### **Section 3 – Undergraduate Committee**

The Undergraduate Committee shall be chaired by a member of the faculty who will be known as the Undergraduate Coordinator. The Undergraduate Coordinator will be appointed by the Chair and shall serve a period of time agreed upon by the Undergraduate Coordinator and the Chair. The committee shall consist of the Undergraduate Coordinator and three other faculty members that are nominated and elected by faculty through paper or electronic ballot. One member will rotate off the committee each year and be replaced by one elected faculty member. Minutes of the Undergraduate Committee shall be archived in the Student Services office. The Undergraduate Coordinator, or other designated committee member in the Undergraduate Coordinator's absence, will make a report of the committee's actions at faculty meetings as necessary.

The responsibilities of the committee shall include:

1. advising the chair on the distribution of scholarships,
2. recommending enhancements and improvements to the undergraduate curriculum,
3. review of new and revised undergraduate courses before submission to CALS curriculum committee,
4. evaluation of learning compacts,
5. oversight of undergraduate research experience course (AGR 4905) and honors theses (AGR 4909).

### **Section 4 - Honors and Awards Committee**

This committee will be made up of faculty, but could include students and staff. The committee will secure nominations for IFAS, University, and professional honors and awards for faculty and staff. The committee should have three to five members, elected by the faculty. The committee will solicit nominations from the faculty, staff and students for available honors and awards. The committee will elect one of its members as chair and recommend theses and dissertations to be nominated for IFAS, University and other national awards and honors. A database of awards and awarding organizations, along with nomination due dates, shall be maintained by the committee chair. Frequent dialog will be necessary and a meeting will occur when timely action is needed. Minutes of the Honors and Awards

Committee shall be archived in the Departmental main office. The committee chair, or other designated committee member in the chair's absence, will make a report of the committee's actions at faculty meetings as necessary.

## **Section 5 – Ad hoc Committees**

Ad hoc committees can be formed by the Chair or by faculty, as needed. Members of these committees shall be designated by the department chair and will elect a committee chair from among their members, if a chair is deemed necessary. Current ad hoc committees include:

### **1. Mentoring committee**

A mentoring committee for a particular faculty member shall be formed by at least two tenured members of the faculty at the Associate or Full Professor level (see *Appendix B*). The Mentoring Committee will be chosen by the chair with input from the faculty member (and input from the Center Director for REC faculty). The mentee may seek advice from the Chair and faculty colleagues on selection of faculty to serve on the committee. Committee members shall meet with the mentee as often as the mentee requests, but at least once a year, individually or as a group. Committee members should review the mentee's annual evaluation packet and meet with the mentee at this time. Committee members will submit a written annual evaluation to the mentee discussing his/her progress towards tenure.

### **2. Peer evaluation committee**

Faculty members needing their course(s) to be evaluated will form a committee of three members of the tenured faculty (from within or outside the department, as appropriate). Committees will meet with the faculty member whose course is being evaluated before the semester begins to discuss the course history and provide evidence and course materials. Committee members will observe at least two lectures and/or laboratories with prior notice, and will meet with the faculty member for a final summary and feedback session. Each member will provide a written evaluation to the committee chair who will summarize the evaluation and provide it to the faculty member and department Chair (see *Appendix C* for further guidelines).

### **3. Social committee**

This committee will be made up of a total of five faculty and staff, but could include students. One member will rotate off the committee every year and be replaced by another member selected by the Chair. Their responsibilities are to organize and conduct the social functions of the department. These functions include: a winter holiday celebration, a spring student/staff social, and other events as needed such as retirement social functions, and departing faculty/staff functions.

## Article IV – Faculty Meetings

The faculty meeting is the primary means of fostering communication among all faculty within the Agronomy Department on campus and around the state. Faculty meetings should be held every 4-6 weeks on a schedule published at the beginning of each semester. Faculty and administration have the right to place items on the agenda for discussion by contacting the Department Chair. The agenda should be distributed via email at least one week before the faculty meeting. If needed, Agronomy Department faculty serving as UF Senators and members of the IFAS Faculty Assembly and other IFAS faculty governing body should email short updates to all faculty before each faculty meeting so that dialogue can be initiated on critical items currently before these governing bodies.

The faculty meeting is appropriately used for discussion of policy issues, tenure and promotion packages, changes in curriculum, new positions, and other issues relevant to our academic mission. Departmental faculty, plus emeritus, courtesy, and affiliate faculty, and student and staff representatives may speak on any issue before the faculty. Voting on most matters shall be restricted to departmental faculty. However, voting on promotion and tenure will follow IFAS and University guidelines (only tenured faculty at higher rank may vote). Discussions regarding tenure and promotion should be considered confidential. Votes taken on tenure and promotion should be by paper or electronic ballot and the results made available upon request to the tenured faculty permitted to vote.

After all candidates for new faculty positions have interviewed, the merits of each candidate will be discussed in a faculty meeting. Written input on candidate qualifications will be submitted on an evaluation form (*Appendix D*). Any faculty member may fill out an evaluation form for candidate tenure-accruing and non tenure-accruing faculty for use by the Chair in faculty hiring decisions.

Paper or electronic ballots will be used for election of faculty to the four standing committees. The results of any paper or electronic balloting conducted should be tallied by a departmental secretary and relayed to the faculty.

The Chair will present yearly Plans of Work and Reports of Achievements at faculty meetings. Chairs of standing committees will present the annual report of their committee's actions during the year.

## **Article V – Ratification and Amendments**

- Section 1. These Bylaws shall become effective upon their ratification by the faculty of the Agronomy Department with a two-thirds majority vote, concurrence of the Chair, and approval of the IFAS Senior Vice President.
- Section 2. Proposals for amendments to these Bylaws may be made to the Chair by any member of the faculty.
- Section 3. Changes in these Bylaws shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote.
- Section 4. Faculty will have one month to review and register a vote for adoption and amendment of the Bylaws.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Department Chair Position Description**

The Department Chair serves as the faculty's representative to the UF/IFAS administration, and the administration's representative to the faculty. The primary role of the chair is to develop excellence in agronomy by functioning as a facilitator, guiding and overseeing the Department's personnel in providing needed services to the residents of the State of Florida.

The Department Chair provides coordination, accountability, and administrative functions for the Department in Gainesville by:

1. Providing leadership to faculty, staff, and students in carrying out the IFAS mission and the Land-Grant philosophy, fostering an appropriate tone, developing a set of policies, and promoting department programs in instruction, research, extension, and service;
2. Developing and managing human, fiscal, and physical resources in support of departmental instruction, research, extension, and service activities, within the constraints imposed by resource availability;
3. Developing and maintaining networks and relationships, both internal and external to the department, including fostering interagency, interdisciplinary, and private partnerships in support of academic functions of the Department;
4. Evaluating and rewarding excellence in all forms of scholarship.

The Department Chair also shares programmatic direction responsibility with Center Directors for faculty at Research and Education Centers statewide, and communicates with off-campus faculty and Center Directors.

The Department Chair is directly accountable to the IFAS Deans for the quality and direction of departmental programs, to the IFAS Vice President for administrative matters and the overall administrative efficiency of the Department and long-range planning, and to the faculty for internal program management of space, personnel, and other resources provided.

#### **Specific Tasks and Duties of the Department Chair**

##### **1. Governance**

- Facilitate development and administration of department policies, goals, and objectives
- Conduct faculty meetings
- Establish department committees
- Delegate certain administrative responsibilities to faculty and/or committees
- Facilitate development and administration of department policies, goals and objectives
- Help determine services to be supplied by the department to the College, University, and the State of Florida
- Serve as an advocate for the department and its personnel

- Monitor resources and services that affect the quality of the department and its programs
- Enhance diversity of the department and oversee compliance with affirmative action plans of the University

## **2. Department Programs**

- Communicate and facilitate departmental directions and programs to faculty, students, staff, and administration
- Provide oversight of class scheduling
- Provide oversight of graduate student activities and research
- Provide oversight of department curriculum, stimulating change as needed
- Support the activities of the undergraduate and graduate coordinators
- Work to assure availability of space and equipment to meet needs for teaching, research, and extension efforts

## **3. Faculty Activities**

- Set a tone of high professional, ethical, and scientific excellence
- Reward academic scholarship in all forms, including discovery, dissemination, and application of knowledge
- Establish processes for recruitment and hiring of faculty members
- Assign faculty responsibilities such as teaching, research, committee work, etc. to faculty in Gainesville and, in collaboration with Center Directors, for departmental faculty located in RECs
- Provide oversight of the peer evaluation processes
- Facilitate coordination among faculty for statewide programs
- Monitor and evaluate faculty performance in teaching, research, extension, service, and citizenship; communicate with Center Directors as necessary.
- Deal with unsatisfactory faculty and staff performance
- Maintain communication between the department and other units of the university
- Reduce, resolve, and prevent conflict among faculty members
- Encourage faculty participation in departmental, college, and university activities, including governance

## **4. External Communication**

- Serve as an interface between the department and deans, and other administrators
- Serve as an interface between the department and USDA, Florida Department of Agriculture, External Advisory Council and other agencies and groups as necessary
- Serve as contact for outside groups requesting information about the department and its programs
- Oversee production of department advertising and recruitment material

## **5. Budget and Resources**

- Communicate department needs to administration and faculty
- Communicate and gather input from faculty regarding budget allocations and reductions
- Administer department budget (state and federal funds allocated by deans)

- Coordinate special requests to deans for funding
- Encourage submission by faculty of grant and contract proposals
- Reallocate space and support staff to meet changing needs and requirements

#### **6. Facilities and Office Personnel Management**

- Manage department facilities, including inventory control
- Initiate and supervise new construction projects and renovation, as necessary
- Provide for building security, safety, and maintenance, including grounds
- Hire, supervise and evaluate selected staff
- Supervise department personnel, record-keeping, and accounting functions
- Compile information for productivity reports

#### **7. Professional Development**

- Foster the development of each faculty member's interests and talents, blending these efforts into a functional program
- Encourage faculty personnel development, including participation in self improvement programs, faculty development leave, consulting, and international experiences
- Foster excellence in teaching, research, extension, and service
- Promote affirmative action
- Encourage faculty to contribute to the enhancement of the department's and institution's visibility and reputation

#### **8. Personal Development**

- Contribute to productivity and reputation of the department through participation in the department's programs in instruction, research, extension, and/or service
- Keep current with developments in field of expertise

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Mentoring of Junior Faculty**

1. All tenure-track faculty must have a mentoring committee composed of at least two tenured faculty members from within the Agronomy Department with additional members from outside the department, if appropriate. Faculty mentors should be chosen based on their expertise and Research/Teaching/Extension assignment.
2. Mentees should provide their mentoring committee members with their annual plan of work and report of accomplishments.
3. Mentors provide an annual written assessment of the mentee's progress towards tenure to the tenure-track faculty member and the Chair.
4. A mid-career review will be conducted for faculty members in the tenure probationary period no later than the close of the third year of academic service. Junior faculty will prepare a packet documenting their achievements (without external letters).
5. Once reviewed by the appropriate Mentoring Committee, the packet will be emailed to all tenured departmental faculty for review and the opportunity to provide written comments to the Chair.
6. The Agronomy Department Chair synthesizes faculty comments and shares this assessment with the tenure accruing faculty member.
7. The Agronomy Department Chair's letter will accompany the three-year packet to IFAS Administration.

## APPENDIX C

### **Guidelines for Peer Evaluation of Teaching Agronomy Department Peer Teaching Observation Program**

#### **CALS Guidelines for the Teaching Section of the UF Tenure and Promotion Packet**

##### **Section 10. TEACHING EVALUATIONS, Part C. Peer Evaluation of Teaching Activities**

The revised CALS Guidelines for the Teaching Section of the UF Tenure and Promotion Packet (effective January 1, 2009) requires a summary **Peer Evaluation of Teaching Activities** ([www.cals.ufl.edu](http://www.cals.ufl.edu)). The peer evaluation narrative is prepared by the Peer Evaluation Committee, based on the candidate's teaching accomplishments, course materials, peer observations, and teaching evaluations. The narrative should be no more than three pages in length and is to be inserted as section 10.C. of the Tenure and Promotion document.

The Peer Evaluation Committee is appointed by the Unit Leader in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Unit. The Committee should work closely with the candidate in securing and reviewing appropriate materials. The narrative should include the following components:

1. Peer Evaluation Committee membership, and a brief summary of procedures followed in preparing the narrative
2. Summative assessment of course syllabi and materials with indications of changes made for improvement
3. Summative assessment of course planning, organization and content and improvement
4. Summative assessment of class presentation and delivery, including peer observation, student evaluations and student comments, with indications of changes made for improvement
5. Specific examples (evidence) of collaborative instructor/peer observer action plan development, implementation of actions steps with follow-up assessments of changes in instructor's teaching

Individual summaries of classroom observations or other reviews are NOT to be included in the Tenure and Promotion packet. Those observations and reviews are to be a part of the peer evaluation narrative

#### Agronomy Department Methods

##### a) Process

The process for peer evaluation of courses in the Agronomy Department involves the following:

Appointment of a Peer Evaluation Committee - appointed separately for each course that is evaluated. The committee consists of three members that are selected by the Department Chair and the faculty member. One member should be from the faculty member's peer discipline within the University; and a second should be an external (to the department) faculty member from within the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Evaluation/Observation/Classroom Visits - prior to classroom observation, the Peer Evaluation/Observation Committee meets with the instructor to discuss course history, goals, organization, examination, grading policy, etc. Materials furnished to the committee include course syllabus, representative handouts, representative quizzes and exams, final-grade summaries for the past three times the course has been taught, times which might not be appropriate for classroom visits, and any additional material that may be pertinent to the evaluation.

Subsequently, all three committee members individually visit the classroom 2 times during the semester.

Evaluation Instrument - near the end of the semester, the Peer Evaluation/Observation Committee meets and completes an evaluation document (completed forms are included in the following pages of this packet). The evaluation specifically addresses the following items: course content; syllabus; other handouts, quizzes, exams and other course requirements; instructor enthusiasm; classroom technique, innovations; student involvement/participation; overall course rating.

Summary Meeting with Instructor - The Peer Evaluation/Observation Committee holds a follow-up meeting with the course instructor to summarize and discuss the results of the course/instructor evaluation. The instructor is given an opportunity to respond to the committee's findings/suggestions, with those responses being included as part of the committee's final report.

Final Report - a final report that summarizes the results of the evaluations, along with any response by the faculty member, is submitted to the Department Chair.

Peer Evaluation of Course (AGR XXXX)

Written description of when the courses were evaluated

b) Peer Evaluation Results and Committee Report Summaries

2010 Peer Assessment for XXXXX

Peer Review Committee members: identify the members

	In need of Improvement	Satisfactory	Outstanding
1. Course content			
2. Course organization			
3. Syllabus			
4. Other handouts			
5. Quizzes, exams and other course requirements			
6. Instructor enthusiasm			
7. Classroom technique			
8. Innovations			
9. Student involvement/participation			
10. Overall course rating			

#### Operational Definitions

Outstanding - performance far surpasses the expected level for such activities in most respects.

Satisfactory - performance meets expected level for such activities in most, if not all, respects.

In need of improvement - performance fails to meet expected levels for such activities in several key respects.

Summative assessment of course syllabi and materials with indications of changes made for improvement:

#### General Comments:

- Bulleted Comments

#### Specific Suggestions/Recommendations:

- Bulleted Comments

#### Plan of Action:

- Bulleted Comments

Summative assessment of course planning, organization and content and improvement:

#### General Comments:

- Bulleted Comments

#### Specific Suggestions/Recommendations:

- Bulleted Comments

Plan of Action (includes improvement):

- Bulleted Comments

Summative assessment of class presentation and delivery, including peer observation, student evaluations and student comments, with indications of changes made for improvement:

General Comments:

- Bulleted Comments

Specific Suggestions/Recommendations:

- Bulleted Comments

Plan of Action (includes improvement):

- Bulleted Comments

Specific examples (evidence) of collaborative instruction/peer observer action plan development, implementation of actions steps with follow-up assessments of changes in instructor's teaching:

General Comments:

- Bulleted Comments

Specific Suggestions/Recommendations:

- Bulleted Comments

Specific Action Plans – Implemented for Fall 2009:

- Bulleted Comments



11. Potential (demonstrated ability) to teach and supervise undergraduate students	<input type="checkbox"/>				
12. Potential (demonstrated ability) to be a conscientious university community member	<input type="checkbox"/>				
13. Ability to make positive contribution to department's climate	<input type="checkbox"/>				
14. Overall evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Other comments:

Return form, marked confidential, to:

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