Charter for the
Department of English
Northern Illinois University

Approved 26 March 1999
Amended 1 September 2000

PREAMBLE

The faculty of the department establishes this charter for the governance of the department. This document serves as the primary and compelling reference for the administration of department self-governance and supersedes all earlier versions of and amendments to the charter. Bylaws of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the constitution and bylaws of the university will take precedence over the charter of the department.

Nothing in this charter authorizes any member or committee of the department to

a. infringe upon the academic freedom of any faculty member or student in the department
b. deny professional advancement, opportunity, or privilege to any faculty member for reason of race, religion, creed, sex, marital status, social status, sexual orientation, or national origin
c. abuse the confidential character of all statements made, oral or written, concerning the personal and professional qualities of any and all faculty members and students in the department
d. deny faculty members access to the contents of their personnel files, excepting credentials relating to initial appointment and private letters addressed to the chair
e. impede the timely notification to all faculty members of department, college, and university personnel recommendations concerning them, or impede the provision in writing, upon request, of reasons for unfavorable personnel recommendations that originate with the department

In keeping with the mission of the university, the department is dedicated to the transmission, expansion, and application of knowledge in all aspects of the study of English in its baccalaureate, masters and doctoral programs. The department recognizes that the integration of instruction, research, artistry, and public service is instrumental in accomplishing this mission. The department also recognizes the need to assess, regularly and systematically, its instructional programs.

It is the responsibility of all members of the faculty, regardless of rank, to perform the teaching duties assigned to them, to perform service that promotes the mission of the department, the college, and the university, and to develop their professional qualifications. All members of the teaching faculty shall teach their classes conscientiously and effectively and work to improve the quality of their teaching. It is the responsibility of all professorial faculty to be involved in a program of research or artistry or both.
ARTICLE 1
The Department

1. Definition. The department is defined as that organized body operating within the college and delegated with the responsibility of providing instruction, conducting research and artistry, and engaging in public service in all aspects of English language and in literature in English at Northern Illinois University.

2. Membership. The department consists solely of those persons who provide or support the instruction, research, artistry, and service as described above, and those, as defined in Article 5, who benefit from such endeavors.

3. Operation. Within the department, final authority in matters of policy, programs, and personnel rests with the faculty. However, in order to discharge its responsibilities within the college efficiently and equitably, much of the operation of the department is delegated to the chair, program directors appointed by the chair with consent of the council, and committees appointed by the chair, the program directors, and the council. Policy recommendations from the chair, the program directors, and committees must be submitted to the council for approval.

ARTICLE 2
The Professorial Faculty

1. Definition. The professorial faculty is defined as those full-time staff members of the university holding the ranks of professor, associate professor, and assistant professor in the department.

2. Appointment. Appointment to the professorial faculty of the department shall be made by the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences upon the recommendation of the department. A temporary appointment in the department carries with it no assurance or implication of renewal.

3. Tenure. Tenure, that is, continuous appointment in the department, shall be available to full-time continuing professorial faculty who demonstrate to the satisfaction of the department (and reviewing bodies of the college and university) that they are fully qualified in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service to the department and/or university. Specific department criteria for tenure shall be established and published by the Department Council, in accordance with criteria promulgated by the college. Specific procedures for recommending candidates for tenure shall be established by the Department Council in consultation with the college and the dean of the college. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as asserting or implying that any faculty member who meets department, college, and university requirements for tenure will be assured of continuous employment in the department.

4. Promotion. Promotion to higher academic rank shall be available to those members of the professorial faculty holding a doctoral degree or its equivalent who demonstrate mastery in teaching, contribute significantly to the body of knowledge in their disciplines, and through service advance the mission of the department, the college, and the university. Specific department criteria for promotion shall be established and published by the Department Council, in accordance with criteria established by the college. Specific procedures for recommending candidates for promotion
shall be established by the Department Council in consultation with the dean of the college. Nothing in this paragraph shall be construed as asserting or implying that any faculty member who meets department, college, and university requirements for promotion will be assured of advancement to higher academic rank within the university.

5. Probation. The period during which a faculty member is on regular nontenure appointment shall be regarded as probationary. During this period the department may recommend tenure or may, with appropriate notice, offer a terminal appointment. Notice of intention not to recommend reappointment shall be given in writing by the chair of the department in accordance with the schedule established in the 1940 AAUP Statement on Academic Freedom and Tenure and the Policies, Procedures, and Criteria Concerning Personnel Recommendations promulgated by the college.

6. Evaluations. Evaluation of the professional performances of members of the professorial faculty shall be conducted annually by the Department Council. These evaluations shall be used to help the council arrive at wise and just personnel decisions for professorial faculty.

7. Appeals. Any member of the professorial faculty shall have the right to petition the Department Council and the College Council for review of personnel decisions affecting him or her. The Department Council shall establish and publish procedures for such review in consultation with the dean of the college.

ARTICLE 3
Supportive Professional Staff

1. Definition. The supportive professional staff (SPS) is defined as those faculty members of the department holding SPS positions.

2. Appointment. Appointment as SPS shall be made by the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences upon the recommendation of the department. An SPS appointment can be continuing or temporary. A temporary appointment in the department carries with it no assurance or implication of renewal.

3. Responsibilities. SPS members shall carry out the duties of their positions, as outlined in their corresponding job descriptions. SPS shall bear such responsibilities as coordination of special programs; technology support and training; design, direction, and coordination of program assessment; design, direction, and coordination of testing for core competency and developmental writing; curriculum development; faculty development; teacher certification supervision; internship supervision; journal management; outreach to high schools, community colleges, and the university at large; general support of the undergraduate and graduate programs; advising; and teaching.

4. Evaluation. SPS members shall be evaluated, in writing, by their direct supervisors once during the year. Evaluations will be based on the performance of duties as outlined in their job descriptions. These evaluations shall be used to help the Department Council arrive at wise and just personnel decisions for supportive professional staff.
5. **Appeals.** SPS members shall have the right to petition their supervisors and the Department Council for review of personnel decisions affecting them.

**ARTICLE 4**

**Instructors**

1. **Definition.** Instructors are defined as those faculty members of the department holding the rank of instructor.

2. **Appointment and Evaluation.** Instructors shall be appointed and evaluated in accordance with their collective bargaining agreement with the university.

**ARTICLE 5**

**The Students**

1. **Definition.** The department recognizes four categories of students as members of the department:
   a. undergraduate English majors who are pursuing a B.A. degree in English
   b. graduate students who are pursuing an M.A. or Ph.D. degree in English
   c. undergraduate English minors
   d. students admitted to the department’s teacher certification program in English (these students may be majors, graduate students, students-at-large, or post-graduate students)

2. **Student Governance.** Undergraduate English majors are eligible to participate in the governing process of the department through membership in an officially recognized organization of undergraduate students in the department. Graduate students are eligible to participate in the governing process of the department through membership in the English Graduate Student Association (EGSA), which the department recognizes as the official university organization representing them.

3. **Committees.** An officially recognized undergraduate student organization and EGSA shall appoint or elect, as their constitutions provide, student members to department committees as authorized in Article 9.

4. **Fellowships.** The department has the right to nominate both undergraduate and graduate students for such fellowships as are open to nomination both within and without the university. All fellowships tendered to graduate and undergraduate students, unless otherwise specified, shall be considered temporary and shall carry no assurance or implication of renewal.

**ARTICLE 6**

**The Chair**

1. **The Chair.** The chief academic and administrative officer of the department shall be the chair, who shall be accountable to the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, to the Department
Council, and to the faculty of the department as a whole for all aspects of the operation, management, and development of the department.

2. **Appointment.** The chair shall be appointed by the dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences in consultation with the Department of English Chair Selection Committee as provided by Article 9 below. The chair shall be a senior professorial faculty member on continuing contract. The term of appointment shall normally be four years, renewable upon the recommendation of the Chair Selection Committee, the approval of the dean of the college, and the consent of the incumbent.

3. **Responsibilities.** As chief executive officer of the department, the chair shall provide academic and administrative leadership in developing the department, its faculty, and its programs. In providing such leadership, the chair shall bear such responsibilities as the following:

   a. to serve as chair of the Department Council and to participate in forming policies for the department, making decisions about its affairs, and, as appropriate, recommending college action on such policies and decisions
   b. to serve as the spokesperson of the department in all official transactions with the faculty and staff of the department, with other units within the university, and with the profession at large
   c. to administer, in consultation with appropriate department committees, the operating policies of the department
   d. to manage the resources assigned to the department
   e. to prepare the department budget, including salary increments for faculty and staff, and to project the future needs of the department and to seek ways of meeting those needs
   f. to assign faculty and staff work loads in accordance with guidelines approved by the Department Council
   g. to assist where possible individual faculty members in developing their professional qualifications
   h. to direct the department in recruiting new faculty
   i. to make personnel recommendations to the college
   j. to superintend the maintenance of department personnel records
   k. to ensure that faculty and staff are informed of the policies and procedures for personnel actions
   l. to call and preside over at least one department meeting during each regular term of the academic year, and such special department meetings as are requested in writing by twenty-five percent or more of the faculty

4. **Program Directors.** When a chair begins his or her term of office, he or she shall appoint, with the approval of the Department Council, directors of first-year composition, undergraduate studies, and graduate studies. They may be removed from office by the chair or by a two-thirds vote of the elected members of the Department Council. Vacant directorships shall be filled through appointment by the chair and the approval of the council. The directors may not serve as elected members of the council. The chair may delegate to the directors such duties as he or she deems necessary for the operation of the department and its programs.

5. **Other Appointments.** With the approval of the Department Council, the chair may appoint such other administrative assistants and committees as are required for the efficient discharge of the department's responsibilities and will make known to the faculty the names and duties of those so appointed.
6. Removal. The chair shall not be removed from office except for cause, nor without due process as prescribed by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

ARTICLE 7
The Department Council

1. Governing Body. The governing body of the department shall be the Department Council, which shall have responsibility for developing policy and recommending personnel action, subject to review by the College Council.

2. Membership. The Department Council shall consist of ten members: seven members of the professorial faculty serving on continuing contracts, one full-time instructor, one SPS faculty member, and the chair of the department, who shall serve as chair of the council.

3. Council Elections. The seven professorial members shall be elected at large by the professorial faculty on continuing contracts. Instructor and SPS members with at least one year's experience at NIU shall be elected respectively by the full-time instructors and SPS faculty. The term of the elected professorial members of the council shall be two years; the term of the instructor and the SPS member shall be one year. Elected members of the council may succeed themselves, except that no elected professorial member shall serve for a period longer than four consecutive years, nor shall an instructor or SPS faculty member serve longer than four consecutive years. Any member of the council retiring after four consecutive years' service shall be eligible for reelection to the council only after a period of two years following the end of the last appointment.

4. Time of Elections. Election of professorial faculty members to the Department Council shall be conducted during April preceding the term in office. Elections of the instructor and SPS member shall be conducted no later than the end of the first week of classes each fall. These elections shall be conducted in accordance with procedures established by the department Elections Committee, as provided by Article 9 below.

5. Special Elections. In the event an elective seat on the council shall be vacated through resignation, impeachment, or disqualification as a result of reassignment to an administrative position outside the department, a special election shall be held within two weeks of official withdrawal to fill the vacancy for the unexpired term.

6. Responsibilities. As the governing body of the department, the Department Council shall bear such responsibilities as the following:

a. to formulate policies for the department and, as appropriate, to recommend, through the chair of the department, college action upon such policies
b. to recommend to the college, through the chair of the department, personnel actions that require review by that body
c. to advise the chair regarding the department budget, to approve salary increments for faculty and staff, and to initiate programs designed to meet the projected needs and objectives of the department
d. to approve administrative appointments made by the chair of the department, and to invite such appointees to testify in person before it concerning policy and personnel actions that affect
their areas of responsibility

e. to establish and publish such criteria and procedures as required by Article 2 of this Charter, and to appoint such committees as required by Article 9 of this Charter

The instructor and SPS members of the Department Council may vote on matters of department policy but shall not vote on personnel matters. The instructor and SPS members shall be present and participate in the evaluation of the chair of the department, as chair, and the first-year composition director, as director, but the instructor and SPS representatives shall not be present or participate in other personnel matters.

7. **Timely Posting of Information.** The Department Council shall meet at regular intervals during the academic year and keep minutes of its meetings. It shall appoint someone who shall, with the approval of the council, prepare minutes of the council's deliberations and post them in timely fashion (normally no later than one week) via the English department bulletin board in or just outside the main English department office. The chair shall post the agenda of the council at least twenty-four hours in advance of discussion in order that faculty members may have the opportunity to confer with their elected representatives concerning items on the agenda.

8. **Open Meetings.** Excepting personnel matters, council deliberations are open to all faculty and staff of the department. The council may, at its discretion, admit other observers to its deliberations.

9. **Removal from Office.** Elected members of the council may be removed from office for cause by a two-thirds vote of the Department Council. In this election, the chair shall not vote. Elected members may be recalled by a two-thirds vote of the faculty represented. The department Elections Committee shall establish procedures for the recall of elected council members.

10. **Faculty Initiative and Referendum.** The Department Council shall recognize the right of the faculty to initiate legislation and the necessity of submitting certain vital policies and actions to a direct vote by the faculty. In such matters, two-thirds of the professorial faculty must vote aye or nay, depending, in order for such matters to become effective. The Department Council shall, accordingly, devise such instruments as are required to assure faculty participation in the department legislative process through the practices of initiative and referendum.

**ARTICLE 8**

**The Graduate Faculty**

1. **Definition.** The graduate faculty of the department is comprised of all those persons authorized by the Graduate Council to teach, on a continuing basis, courses described in the Graduate Catalog.

2. **Appointment.** Appointment to the graduate faculty of the department is made by the Graduate Council of the university, through the dean of the Graduate School, upon recommendation of the graduate faculty of the department.

3. **Responsibilities.** The graduate faculty directly or through its committees bears such responsibilities as the following:
a. to establish and publish criteria for admission to all graduate programs requirements for all graduate degrees offered by the department, and all graduate policies originating with the department
b. to recommend to the Graduate Council additions to, deletions from, and revisions of the English graduate curriculum
c. to recommend to the Graduate Council, through the chair of the department, candidates for appointment to the English graduate faculty
d. to review all applications for admissions to graduate programs offered by the department as well as the performances of students already admitted to these programs
e. to arrange for the administering and grading of such comprehensive examinations as are required by the department and the Graduate School for a graduate degree

4. Meetings. The director of graduate studies will chair meetings of the graduate faculty, which will be convened at least once annually and at such other times as deemed necessary by the director of graduate studies or as requested in writing by twenty-five percent or more of the graduate faculty. Minutes of meetings shall be circulated among the members of the graduate faculty.

ARTICLE 9
Committees

1. Graduate Studies. There shall be a standing Graduate Studies Committee, of which the director of graduate studies shall serve as chair. The committee shall consist of at least six graduate faculty members, appointed by the chair with the approval of the council, except that at least two members shall be elected by the graduate faculty; in addition, a student member shall be elected by EGSA. The majority of the committee members shall be senior members of the graduate faculty. The term of appointment or office shall be two years for faculty and one year for students. The committee shall advise the graduate faculty on all aspects of the graduate program, including

a. changes in admission criteria
b. changes in degree requirements
c. additions to, deletions from, and revisions of the graduate curriculum
d. assessment of the program
e. review of credentials and recommendations for appointment to and changes in graduate faculty membership

The committee shall recommend such policy and personnel decisions as it considers necessary for the advancement of the program. The committee shall keep minutes of its meetings, which shall be posted in the department office, along with the times and agendas of upcoming meetings. The committee shall appoint such subcommittees as are required for the effective discharge of its responsibilities.

2. Undergraduate Studies. There shall be a standing Undergraduate Studies Committee, of which the director of undergraduate studies shall serve as chair. The committee shall consist of at least six professorial faculty, appointed by the chair with the approval of the council, except that at least two members shall be elected by the professorial faculty; in addition, a student member, who must be an English major of junior or senior standing, shall be elected by the designated student organization. The term of appointment or office shall be two years for faculty and one year for students. The
committee shall advise the council on all aspects of the undergraduate program, including

a. changes in degree requirements  
b. additions to, deletions from, and revisions of the undergraduate curriculum  
c. assessment of the program

The committee shall recommend such policy and personnel decisions as it considers necessary for the advancement of the program. The committee shall keep minutes of its meetings, which shall be posted in the department office, along with the times and agendas of upcoming meetings. The committee shall appoint such subcommittees as are required for the effective discharge of its responsibilities.

3. First-Year Composition. There shall be a standing First-Year Composition Committee, of which the director of first-year composition shall serve as chair. The committee shall consist of at least eight members, including the coordinator of communication skills, the coordinator of networked writing and research, the instructor of English 500, one member of the professorial faculty, and an undergraduate student member, who must be an English major who has completed the core requirements in first-year composition, all members to be appointed by the chair with the approval of the council. The committee shall advise the council on all aspects of the first-year composition program, including

a. changes in program requirements  
b. additions to, deletions from, and revisions of the curriculum  
c. assessment of the program

The committee shall recommend such policy and personnel decisions as it considers necessary for the advancement of the program. The committee shall keep minutes of its meetings, which shall be posted in the department office, along with the times and agendas of upcoming meetings. The committee shall appoint such subcommittees as are required for the effective discharge of its responsibilities.

4. CITCE. There shall be a standing Committee on Initial Teacher Certification in English, consisting of all faculty who regularly teach the department's certification courses. The term of appointment shall be ongoing until such time as a member has not taught in the certification program for three consecutive semesters. In addition, the chair shall appoint with the approval of the council two members from the faculty, one of whom must be the director of either graduate or undergraduate studies. The term of appointment will be one year. The chair shall appoint, with the approval of the council, a member of the CITCE committee as committee chair. The committee shall advise, as appropriate, the Graduate Studies Committee, the Undergraduate Studies Committee, or the council on all aspects of the certification program, including

a. establishment of degree requirements in addition to State of Illinois requirements  
b. additions to, deletions from, and revisions of the certification curriculum  
c. assessment of the program

The committee shall recommend such policy and personnel decisions as it considers necessary for the advancement of the program. The committee shall keep minutes of its meetings, which shall be posted in the department office, along with the times and agendas of upcoming meetings. The committee shall appoint such subcommittees as are required for the effective discharge of its
responsibilities.

5. Elections. The chair shall appoint an Elections Committee, consisting of three members of the professorial faculty. With the approval of the council, this committee shall establish schedules and procedures for all general and special elections in the department. It shall also conduct these elections. Term of office shall be two years.

6. Chair Selection. In the last year of the department chair's current appointment, or whenever the office of chair is vacated, the faculty shall elect a Chair Selection Committee composed of five members, three of whom must be tenured. The dean of the college shall serve as chair of this committee. The responsibility of this committee shall be to evaluate the chair's performance as administrator and leader, and to recommend either reappointment or reassignment of the incumbent. In the event that the incumbent is reassigned or elects not to continue in office, the committee shall recommend to the dean of the college candidates for the vacated position.

7. Other. The chair shall, with the approval of the council, establish such additional committees as considered necessary to fulfill the department's mission. Membership shall be by appointment or election at the discretion of the council. All appointments must be approved by the council.

ARTICLE 10
Enactment

1. Effective Date. This charter shall become operative with the beginning of the academic year 1999-00.

2. Amendment. This charter may be amended with the approval of the full-time faculty members of the university in the department serving on continuing contracts. To be approved, an amendment must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast.