Bylaws of the Soil and Water Sciences Department
University of Florida
May 10, 2021

Preamble

The shared goals of the faculty and administration of the Soil and Water Sciences Department (SWSD) are to attain excellence in academic responsibilities of teaching, research, extension and service, and to maintain national and international recognition for their programs. These goals can best be achieved with a governance structure from the Department level to the University level that is inclusive, fosters collegiality, collaboration, mutual responsibility and accountability, and transparency. Shared governance is a system of dual authority and responsibility, constitutionally created, in which administrators and faculty participate in the decision and policy making process through voting, dialogue, and discussion. Shared governance is understood as a partnership based on mutual respect between faculty and administrators and follows the principles of shared governance as outlined in the UF constitution. The spirit of shared governance is embodied as lived reality based on mutual respect, openness, honesty, timely communication, togetherness, and that a thriving department is fundamental to everyone’s success.

The SWSD strives toward diversity, equality, equity, fairness, and inclusivity in terms of gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality, age, socioeconomic or cultural background, marital and parental status in the faculty, staff, and student body. Diversity, equality, equity, fairness and inclusivity are guiding principles in forming faculty and committees, as well as decision making. The departmental vision is to seek inclusion of underrepresented and minority representation at all levels (administrative, faculty, staff, and students).

Programmatic achievements for excellence and diversity are balanced by attention to and awareness of the physical, emotional, and mental health and well-being of all people in the department. All members of our department will contribute to a supportive and open professional environment where emotional and mental health issues can be detected and ultimately addressed in accordance with University of Florida protocols.

Article I – Governance of the Soil and Water Sciences Department

These Bylaws establish the general principles by which the SWSD shall be governed. These Bylaws are governed by and subordinate to the Constitutions of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS), the UF Constitution, 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 SWSD shall be shared between the administration and the faculty. Information will be provided regarding the allocation and access of departmental resources, on a per need basis as determined by the Faculty Advisory Committee, but at least once a year. Digital versions of all documents of interest to the faculty, including but not limited to, these bylaws, the current strategic plan, minutes of the faculty meetings, and departmental budgetary information as defined by the Faculty Advisory Committee will be stored on one single secure platform that is easily accessible by all faculty.
Article II – The Faculty

Section 1 – Faculty Membership
The faculty of the SWSD 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, and Scientist.

Section 2 – Faculty Rights
- Faculty have the right to know the expectations of their job assignment and how they will be evaluated.
- Faculty have the right to assemble without limit to discuss issues of concern. Faculty have the right to open academic discourse without fear of retribution.
- Academic freedom ensures that faculty members can engage in speech, writing, and through electronic communication to discuss and critique regulations in regard to departmental and academic matters without fear of censorship, retaliation, or sanctions while honoring existing college or university regulations (see UF Regulations UF-7 Academic Affairs, UF 7.018 and UF Constitution).
- Faculty have the right to petition the chair for conflict mediation and resolution.
- All faculty have the right to bring any grievances or complaints to the appropriate University authorities. Complaints shall be administered in accordance with University regulations and procedures (see UF Constitution). Faculty also have the right to file informal or formal complaints in regard to employee relations (see UF Human Resources).

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.
- Faculty are responsible to cultivate a culture of shared governance by 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 strategic planning, and promoting the department.
- Faculty, along with the Chair, are responsible to foster and maintain morale throughout the entire department through clear and ample communication, transparency, being inclusive in announcements, creating space for interaction outside the workplace, and finding ways to empower each individual by means of friendly gestures, recognitions and support of individual initiatives.
- Faculty are also responsible for service to IFAS, the University, and professional societies.

Section 4 - Faculty Meetings
The faculty meeting is the primary means of fostering communication and decision making among all faculty within the Department. Faculty meetings should be held regularly on a schedule published at the beginning of each semester. Faculty members should assist the Department Chair in developing meeting agenda items and are expected to fully participate in faculty meetings. An editable agenda will be posted in electronic format to a platform accessible to all faculty (e.g., Microsoft TEAMS) one week before the meeting, such that modifications may be made to the agenda up until the day before the meeting. Other important documents required for faculty action should be emailed as early as possible, ideally one week before the meeting. Minutes of all faculty meetings will be kept and distributed to faculty in a timely manner. Draft minutes are approved by faculty in the following faculty meeting. If minutes are not taken,
the meetings will be recorded by a system such as TEAMS that generates a written transcript of the meeting, and these transcripts will be posted with the recordings. Faculty meetings are held regularly, at least twice per Fall and Spring Semesters. If needed, additional ad hoc faculty meetings could be scheduled in addition to the regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Faculty meeting minutes and additional resources should be stored digitally in an accessible repository such as TEAMS. This digital repository should include all material pertaining to shared governance, such as the minutes of standing committees.

The faculty meeting is the most important platform for discussion of policy issues, changes in curriculum, new positions, and other issues relevant to the Department mission. All Department faculty, staff, and students may add items to the agenda regarding any relevant issue to the faculty. Voting on most matters shall be restricted to Departmental faculty. A quorum of the voting members must be present for the valid transaction of business during a faculty meeting. A quorum consists of the majority (>50%) of faculty in the Department. If the vote is conducted by an online polling system such as Survey Monkey, time should be allowed for discussion of the issue proposed for vote, and discussion should be accessible for all faculty.

Section 5—Department Chair Responsibilities
The Department is headed by a Chair appointed by the Vice President in accordance with the University Constitution. The Chair serves as chief executive and administrative officer of the Department. The primary role of the Chair is to develop excellence in soil and water sciences by functioning as a facilitator, guiding and overseeing the Department’s personnel, and supervising operations of the Department. The Chair provides leadership to faculty, staff and students in carrying out the IFAS mission. In that role, the Chair is 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.

The Chair develops policy and financial planning in collaboration with the appropriate committees (see also subsequent section on Committees), and ensures overall compliance with IFAS and University regulations and initiatives. This also includes 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. The chair will provide transparency with regard to salaries and raises by explaining the formula for allocating merit.

Responsibilities include faculty evaluations and evaluations of selected staff. The Chair is responsible to the Vice President for administration of the Department, and to the three College Deans, and to the faculty as laid out in these bylaws. The Chair serves as a faculty representative to UF and IFAS administration, and as the administration's representative to the faculty. The Chair, along with the faculty, should foster and maintain morale throughout the entire department through clear and ample communication, appropriate tone, transparency, inclusivity in announcements, creation of space for interaction outside the workplace, and finding ways to empower each individual by means of friendly gestures, recognitions, and support of individual initiatives.

The Chair is responsible for carrying out programmatic leadership for all SWSD Faculty members in the Department, including Gainesville, REC, and field station faculty. Shared governance means that programmatic decisions are transparent, and the Chair must be responsive to initiatives that come from the faculty. The Chair is responsible to lead the Department following this set programmatic course. The Chair also shares programmatic direction responsibility with Center Directors for faculty at Research and Education Centers statewide. The Chair is required to inform faculty regularly during faculty meetings.
and memos) of current affairs that affect the department’s programmatic course. The Chair gives a “state of the Department” presentation annually that includes programmatic evaluation and outlook for the coming year. The Chair shares in a transparent manner a draft and finalized minutes of faculty meetings, or transcripts of recordings if minutes are not taken, of faculty meetings, departmental records (e.g., committee leadership and members), committee reports, the bylaws, and votes on programmatic issues by the faculty members in one specific secure digital location accessible to all faculty members. The Chair provides data regarding departmental financial accounts (previous year’s budget amount, general expenditures in categories defined by the FAC with the advice of the Chair, and total proposed budget) to faculty members early in the fiscal year, or as requested by the faculty or the FAC. The Chair will be responsive to recommendations made by the FAC.

Article III – Committees

Purpose and Classification

Service on SWSD committees is the primary means by which faculty participate directly in the governance of the Department and establish programmatic course with the participation of the Chair. Faculty shall have the opportunity to participate in standing committees (Sections 1 through 4) through which the major governance of the Department occurs: the Faculty Advisory Committee; the Teaching Committee; and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Committee. Shared duties of the committees include:

1. Standing committees shall meet at least once during Fall and Spring Semesters. The committee chair, elected by the committee, shall set the agenda and lead the meetings. A secretary, elected from within the committee membership, shall keep and archive minutes and records (edited for confidentiality as necessary). Digital versions of these minutes and records will be archived on the same common secure and accessible digital repository as outlined above with other documents related to shared governance. A current list of all committee members will also be maintained in the digital repository.
2. Reports of the standing committees shall be made to the faculty at each regularly scheduled faculty meeting.
3. 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.
4. By default, the Department Chair is not required to attend each meeting of each of the standing committees but is invited to participate. However, the Chair is welcome to attend any meetings, and may be asked to attend if his or her input on an issue is desired by the committee.
5. A committee shall address a policy issue raised by a majority of the Faculty or by a majority of the committee, or by the Department Chair. A committee can charge the Department Chair with specific actionable items, such as requests to bring questions or issues before IFAS and UF’s senior administration. Committees can request any relevant information from the Department Chair in line with University of Florida policy. Disputes between the Chair and the committee may be brought to the Faculty. Both a simple majority of the committee and the Chair have the right to do so.

New standing committees may be established by first petitioning the FAC and the Chair with a justification for establishment of the committee based on need, the responsibilities of the proposed
committee, and the proposed membership of the committee. Once approved by the FAC and Chair, the proposal will be distributed to the faculty for comment. After a period of no more than two weeks, the faculty will vote to establish or to reject the proposal.

Half of the members of each standing committee are elected by Department faculty, while the other half of members are appointed by the Chair. The committee composition strives to represent the diversity of the faculty body and pays special attention to inclusivity and equality. A new standing committee’s structure and purpose will be added to these bylaws. Ad-hoc subcommittees established within standing committees which are limited in scope and time do not require a Bylaw change.

Figure 1. Flow chart showing the shared governance plan for the Soil and Water Sciences Department.

Section 1 - Faculty Advisory Committee

The Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) is responsible for evaluating resource allocation and long-range planning so that programmatic needs are met. The FAC also supports the Chair during internal and external reviews of the unit. The committee will review the Bylaws of the Department every three years and propose modifications to the entire faculty, as necessary.

The FAC shall consist of six faculty members who will serve three-year staggered terms. Three members shall be elected by paper or electronic ballot and three members shall be appointed by the Chair. Two
members shall rotate off the committee every year and shall be replaced by one elected and one appointed faculty. Appointed members may not serve two consecutive terms. The chair of the committee will be elected by the membership of the committee. The chair serves an initial three year term with the possibility of a two year extension.

The agenda and the names of the FAC members will be disseminated before each meeting with an invitation for faculty to propose items for discussion. Meeting minutes (edited for confidentiality) will be disseminated via email to the faculty after each meeting. To address some of its specific responsibilities, the FAC can formulate its own sub-committees as necessary. These subcommittees can include faculty not serving on the FAC. The Chair of the FAC will summarize the outcome of sub-committee reports and reports to all faculty.

Specific responsibilities of the committee are listed below:

1. Review financial plan (budget for fiscal year) as well as previous year’s income and expenditures. Work with the SWSD Chair on matters of resource allocation (including building, space, and inventory) and evaluate the Department’s long-term (five-year) strategic plan regarding academics, programs, faculty hires, etc. The FAC will work with the Chair to determine the level of detail needed for reporting to the faculty. Ensure transparency and accountability of financial plans.
2. Review the bylaws of the Department every three years and propose modifications to the entire faculty, as necessary.
3. Provide long-range planning following the Department’s strategic plan, including advice for internal and external review of the unit.
4. Review all courtesy and affiliated faculty nominations, according to the Department’s policy for these appointments.

Section 2 – Teaching Committee

The Teaching Committee (TC) is responsible for providing input to the SWSD Chair on matters of undergraduate and graduate programs, distance education programs, certificate programs, curriculum, teaching loads, teaching assistants and other related matters. The Chair is responsible for nominating the undergraduate, graduate, and distance education coordinators, and the nomination is confirmed by a simple majority faculty vote. Each coordinator has a term of three years with the possibility of extension for two years. Three members shall be elected SWSD faculty using paper or electronic ballot. One elected member shall rotate off the committee every year and shall be replaced by one elected faculty. One of the coordinators (undergraduate, graduate, or DE) will serve as chair (3-year term) of the Committee. Each of the three coordinators will rotate as chair of the Teaching Committee. The Teaching Committee will be composed of members of the Graduate, Undergraduate, and Distance Education Subcommittees. Each subcommittee will consist of four members: two appointed and two elected, for a total of twelve members of the Teaching Committee. With the exceptions of the coordinators, the members will serve two years.

The agenda and the names of the committee members will be disseminated to all faculty and posted to the digital accessible repository and communication tool (TEAMS) 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. To address some specific responsibilities, the TC will have three ad hoc sub-committees to address undergraduate, graduate, and distance education programs. The sub-committee chairs work closely with the TC Chair and report to the faculty.
Specific responsibilities of the TC are listed below.

1. Review all undergraduate and graduate tracks, as related to student and stakeholder needs, and review findings with the faculty to inform decision making. Proactively make recommendations for new courses and programs.
2. Review and update learning objectives for each undergraduate and graduate track and how these objectives are assessed.
3. Review course syllabi and make recommendations for improvements.
4. Provide long-range planning following the Department’s strategic plan.
5. Review all formal applications for course changes.
6. Review and revise the SWS Undergraduate and Graduate Student guides, as necessary.

Section 2.1 – Undergraduate sub-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 SWSD Chair and shall serve a period of three years with the possibility of a two year extension. The sub-committee shall consist of the Undergraduate Honors coordinator (if this individual is not the Undergraduate Coordinator) and four other faculty members, in addition to the Undergraduate Coordinator. Two members are elected and two appointed by the SWSD Chair and each member serves two-year staggered terms. One elected member and one appointed member shall rotate off the committee every year and shall be replaced by one elected and one appointed faculty member. Sub-committee members shall be nominated by the Teaching Committee and elected by paper or electronic ballot by Department faculty. The Undergraduate Committee shall meet on a regular schedule published at the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters. An agenda shall be distributed to all committee members before each meeting.

The Undergraduate Coordinator will make a report of the committee’s actions at each faculty meeting.

The Undergraduate Committee shall:

1. Oversee all undergraduate programs in the department, including Soil Science and Water Sciences tracks, and interdisciplinary degree in Environmental Management in Agriculture and Natural Resources (EMANR)
2. Develop strategies to increase student enrollment for undergraduates.
3. Invite, as appropriate, outside consultants to help the department develop new ideas.
4. Collaborate with Undergraduate Coordinators and advisors from other departments to discern their needs for courses in Soil and Water Sciences and EMANR.
5. Provide oversight of undergraduate research experience course (SWS4905).
6. Review all undergraduate courses including syllabus format on a regular schedule. These reviews will be conducted in collaboration with the entire Teaching Committee.
7. Aid faculty in identifying and attracting interested and qualified potential undergraduate students and facilitate recruitment of such students.
8. Revise, as necessary, the Undergraduate Student Guide and departmental undergraduate brochures, and other information for current undergraduates.
9. Develop and update promotional materials to advertise undergraduate programs.
10. Develop and update Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) for departmental undergraduate curricula.
11. Maintain and update, as appropriate, the guidelines for departmental “capstone experience.”
Section 2.2 Graduate studies sub-committee

The Graduate studies sub-Committee shall be chaired by the Graduate Coordinator. The Graduate Coordinator will be appointed by the Chair and shall serve an initial three year term with the possibility of a two year extension. Four faculty, in addition to the Graduate Coordinator, will serve as members of the Graduate Studies Sub-Committee. Two members are elected and two appointed by the SWSD Chair and each member serves two-year staggered terms. One elected member and one appointed member shall rotate off the committee every year and shall be replaced by one elected and one appointed faculty member. Sub-committee members shall be nominated by the Teaching Committee and elected by paper or electronic ballot by SWSD faculty. The Graduate Studies Sub-Committee shall meet on a regular schedule published at the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters. An agenda shall be distributed to all faculty before each meeting.

The Graduate Coordinator, or another designated committee member in the Graduate Coordinator’s absence, will make a report of the committee’s actions at each faculty meeting.

The Graduate Studies Sub-Committee shall:

1. Develop strategies to increase the quality, diversity, and competitiveness of graduate student enrollment in SWSD that also strives to build a more diverse student body.
2. Advise the SWSD Chair on the distribution of scholarships and teaching assistantships. Identify graduate students for Alumni, Graduate Retention, Presidential, and minority fellowships with consideration of enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusivity.
3. Promote overall graduate student welfare in the department, by increasing interaction opportunities among graduate students and fostering an environment of mental welfare.
4. Develop and update promotional materials for recruiting graduate students. Proactively promote departmental graduate programs. Maintain contacts with statewide four-year colleges to promote SWSD graduate programs.
5. Review all Graduate courses including syllabus format, on a regular schedule. These reviews will be conducted in collaboration with the entire Teaching Committee.
6. Develop proposals for new graduate degree concentrations as needed to meet the needs of changing clientele.
7. Provide continuous inputs to update the SWSD graduate program web page.
8. Invite, as appropriate, outside consultants to help the department develop new ideas related to graduate programs.
9. Exchange with other departmental Graduate Coordinators and advisors within UF to discern their needs for courses in Soil and Water Sciences.
10. Aid faculty in identifying and attracting interested and qualified potential graduate students and facilitate recruitment of such students.
11. Aid the SWSD Chair in establishing and maintaining up-to-date policies for graduate study in Soil and Water Sciences and for student advisory committees. A graduate student’s research program and course direction remains the responsibility of the major professor, the student’s advisory committee, and the graduate student.
12. Assist the SWSD Chair in scheduling and monitoring graduate teaching assistants for various departmental course offerings. Monitor the success of newly instituted opportunities for ‘professional experience’ utilized by students not assisting in supervised teaching.
13. Monitor graduate programs in Soil and Water Sciences and other units (including cross-discipline efforts) and make recommendations to the Chair for improvements or opportunities.
14. Develop and periodically evaluate SLOs for graduate programs in the department.
15. Provide inputs to update the Department’s graduate program web page.

Section 2.3 – Distance education, certificate programs, and short courses sub-committee

This Sub-committee shall be chaired by a member of the graduate faculty who will be known as the Distance Education (DE) Coordinator. The DE Coordinator will be appointed by the Chair and shall serve an initial term of three years with the possibility of a two year extension. Four faculty members, in addition to the DE Coordinator, will serve as members of the sub-committee, each serving three-year staggered terms. Two members are elected and two appointed by the SWSD Chair and each member serves two-year staggered terms. One elected member and one appointed member shall rotate off the committee every year and shall be replaced by one elected and one appointed faculty member. Sub-committee members shall be nominated by the Teaching Committee and elected by electronic ballot by Department faculty. The DE Sub-Committee shall meet on a regular schedule published at the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters. An agenda shall be distributed to all faculty before each meeting. The DE Coordinator, or other designated committee member in the DE Coordinator’s absence, will make a report of the committee’s actions at each faculty meeting.

The DE Sub-Committee shall:
1. Aid the SWSD Chair in establishing policies and guidelines for DE graduate studies.
2. Work closely with the Graduate Coordinator on promoting DE graduate programs.
3. Identify critical needs for the DE programs and make recommendations to the SWSD Chair.
4. Review and update scheduling of DE courses and make recommendations to the SWSD Chair for optimal coordination.
5. Review all DE courses including syllabus format on a regular schedule. These reviews will be conducted in collaboration with the entire Teaching Committee.
6. Identify statewide and out-of-state needs for DE and assist faculty in developing needed new courses.
7. Prepare and update promotional materials for distance education programs in the department.
8. Develop proposals for new DE graduate degree and certificate programs as necessary to meet the needs of changing clientele.
9. Identify topical areas for certificate programs and mode of delivery of these courses including e-technologies and tools.
10. Review existing DE courses and evaluate their use in thematic certificate programs.
11. Develop mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of DE certificate programs to meet the needs of the clientele.
12. Work with Center for Instructional Technology & Training (CITT) and other UF groups to keep the department up to date on e-technology, delivery methods and standards.
13. Provide inputs to update the Department DE graduate program web page.
14. Proactively promote departmental DE programs. Maintain close contacts with REC faculty and seek their assistance in promoting DE programs in their regions.
Section 5 - University Support on Personnel System (USPS) / Technical, Executive, Administrative and Managerial Support (TEAMS) Committee

The committee will be composed of four members, to include at least one administrative and one technical staff member. A chair will be elected from the members and will serve an initial three year term with the possibility of a two year extension. The chair of the committee serves as a liaison between staff and faculty, attends faculty meetings as needed, and provides input to staff. The primary role of the committee will be to identify critical needs of staff, including professional development, and to bring staff concerns and recommendations to the SWSD Chair and faculty.

Section 6 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Committee

The purposes of this committee are to evaluate the current climate of diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) within the SWSD, identify specific issues or barriers to enhancing DEI, and develop strategies, tools, and resources to address or remove those issues and barriers. The DEI committee is composed of four graduate faculty (two appointed by the Department Chair, two elected by the faculty), one graduate student (elected by the Graduate Student Association), one staff member (appointed by the Department Chair), and one undergraduate member (self-nominated and voted on by the rest of the committee). The chair of the committee will be elected by the membership of the committee. The DEI chair serves an initial three year term with the possibility of a two year extension. The members serve 3 years staggered terms. Objectives of the DEI committee include:

1. Assess the current state of DEI within the Department and improve on the current state. To meet this objective, a periodic climate survey to be sent to all members of the department (faculty, staff, graduate students, undergraduates) to assess the current state of DEI, and probe for ideas from the broader department on what activities and events would be beneficial.
2. Raise awareness of communication strategies for students, staff, and faculty to freely and openly discuss DEI issues.
3. Advocate for DEI issues in decisions regarding hiring, personnel and equitable resource allocation and management in the Department.
4. Enhance awareness of DEI issues within Department faculty, staff, and students.
5. Increase the diversity of undergraduate and graduate students in the Department through targeted recruitment, identifying and mitigating underrepresented student retention, and providing resources to instructors to increase the inclusivity students in courses and curricula.
6. Implement pro-active efforts to increase the diversity of faculty, staff and students in the Department.
7. Increase accessibility, inclusivity and equity in our physical spaces and communications.
8. Maintain an up-to-date resources document to be distributed or be made easily accessible to students that lists resources available to them if issues related to DEI arise.
9. Incorporate DEI into our departmental seminar series through
   a) Enacting regular trainings and workshops focused on DEI issues.
   b) Increase the diversity of invited speakers who come to discuss their science (as possible beyond exit seminars

Section 7 – Special Committees

Special committees are appointed by the Department Chair if supported by >50% of faculty. Members of these committees shall volunteer for the assignment and shall elect a chair from among their members.
Special committee chairs will report directly to the SWSD Chair. Special committees typically serve a time-limited and specific purpose that do not involve the department in general.

Section 7.1 - Mentoring Committees

All tenure-track faculty members will select mentors for service on a mentoring committee composed of at least three tenured faculty members from within the Department (with additional members from outside the department, if appropriate). Faculty mentors should be chosen by the mentee with the advice of the Chair, and in accord with the mentee’s Research/Teaching/Extension assignment. 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, the evolving tenure packet, and meet with the mentee to discuss the progress. The committee will produce an annual report summarizing the mentee’s progress toward tenure for the benefit of the mentee. In accordance with UF-7.010, the Department Chair may request, but not require, that the Committee submit the written annual report to the SWSD Chair summarizing the mentee’s progress towards tenure. The report’s goal is to assist the mentee in reaching tenure goals, and therefore it is not an evaluation tool. The mentoring committee will be responsible for review of mid-tenure review packets of the faculty member.

Section 7.2 - Graduate Student Association

1. The committee is composed of MS and PhD students. The committee is composed of a minimum of three students, with at least one on-campus student and one representing a REC.
2. Graduate students form a committee and elect a Chair to represent the group.
3. The Chair of the committee serves as the liaison between graduate students and faculty and the Department Chair, and attends faculty meetings as needed.
4. Identify critical needs of graduate students.
5. Bring graduate student concerns and recommendations to the Graduate Coordinator, DE Coordinator, and the SWSD Chair.
6. Assist new graduate students to settle in.
7. Assist the department in social activities.
8. Assist the department in organizing Departmental events.

Section 7.3 - Social Committee

1. The committee membership should include at least one faculty member, one staff member, and one graduate student to be appointed by the Chair.
2. The committee will organize and conduct the social functions of the department. Examples of such events might include:
   a. Winter Holiday Celebration
   b. Retirement social functions
   c. Departing faculty/staff functions
   d. Other spontaneous events
3. Coordinate with, and supply needed assistance to, graduate and undergraduate (Agronomy and Soils Club) social functions.
Section 7.4 - Search and Screen Committees

Hiring new faculty members is among the most important responsibilities of a chair. As such, the hiring process should be transparent at all stages and be in keeping with the concept of shared governance.

All search and screen committees will adhere to current rules for such committees established by IFAS. Composition of the committee will be recommended to the chair by the FAC and should be comprised of faculty representative of the different ranks and a graduate student, appropriate expertise, and be reflective of the department’s commitment to inclusivity and diversity. The committee composition should reflect the Research, Teaching, and Extension components of the position. The committee chair will be recommended by the FAC. The selection of the committee will be open to discussion by the faculty in general. Obvious conflicts of interest (e.g., the candidate’s mentor, if a UF graduate) should be avoided.

The top candidates will be identified for invitation to interviews. In cases where a SWSD graduate is invited for an interview, that candidate should be interviewed first to avoid information regarding other candidates being available to that candidate. Following all interviews, the faculty will evaluate the candidates by individual assessments and discuss in a faculty meeting. Written input on candidate qualifications should also be submitted by the faculty to the search committee, which the committee will discuss with the chair. Any faculty member (tenure-accruing and non-tenure-accruing) may evaluate the candidate for use by the Chair in faculty hiring decisions. The chair will make the final decision regarding the candidate to offer the position to and will provide a clear explanation of his/her choice in a faculty meeting, in the spirit of transparency, accountability, and shared governance. The chair will also announce a general summary of the of the faculty evaluation in the faculty meeting.

Article V – Ratification and Amendments

Section 1. These Bylaws shall become effective upon their ratification by the faculty of the Soil and Water Sciences Department with a two-thirds of all faculty majority vote, and concurrence of the SWSD Chair. Intractable differences between the faculty and the Chair with respect to items within the Bylaws would be resolved by consultation or mediation by IFAS Deans.

Section 2. Proposals for changes to these Bylaws may be made to the SWSD Chair by the Faculty Advisory Committee.

Section 3. Changes to these Bylaws shall be made by a simple majority of all faculty.