

Bylaws of the African Studies Center at Michigan State University

1.0 *Function and Objectives*

1.1 The African Studies Center (ASC) is a multi-disciplinary administrative unit designed to encourage, coordinate, and disseminate academic knowledge relevant to understanding the African continent and to coordinate faculty and students in attaining those goals.

- 1.2 In order to achieve these goals the African Studies Center, through its faculty, students, and associates, engages in a wide variety of activities, including, but not limited to:
- a. fostering research, consultation, research-informed policy and development work, and public service among faculty, visiting faculty, and scholars, which will increase understanding of Africa.
 - b. developing, fostering, and coordinating curricular offerings addressing Africa in whole or in part at Michigan State University.
 - c. organizing and supporting graduate training for the development of new scholars and new knowledge.
 - d. coordinating undergraduate instruction in order to achieve a well-rounded understanding of Africa.
 - e. engaging in the programs and governance of the Center among a wide diversity of faculty, students and the public, including those who have significant interest in Africa.
 - f. supporting and expanding the Africana holdings of the Michigan State University Libraries, Museums, and Archives.
 - g. fostering and maintaining ties with African institutions of higher learning, research, and national and international development.
 - h. stimulating and sustaining communication among and with scholars in other institutions interested in Africa.
 - i. disseminating knowledge about Africa in schools, colleges and universities, communities, government, and the media through Center outreach programs, publications, websites, social media, and other outlets.

2.0 *Composition and Definitions*

The African Studies Center is composed of Core Faculty, consulting faculty, visiting scholars, associate members, staff, retired faculty and students.

2.1 *Core Faculty*

The Core Faculty shall consist of faculty of Michigan State University holding the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, fixed term faculty, academic specialist or librarian, who have a continuing professional focus on the study of Africa.

2.1.1 *Selection*

Any qualified faculty member or librarian may be admitted to membership of the Core Faculty upon request or nomination, and by approval of a simple majority of the Advisory Committee voting.

2.1.2 *Voting Status*

Each Core Faculty member shall have a vote in the deliberation of regularly called meetings of the Core Faculty.

2.2 *Consulting Faculty*

The Consulting Faculty shall consist of members of Michigan State University faculty holding the rank of professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, librarian, or research associate who have an interest in the study of Africa and the activities of the African Studies Center and either are not qualified under 2.1 above or do not choose to become Core Faculty members. The Consulting Faculty shall receive pertinent Center mailings and notifications and will be invited to participate in faculty meetings.

2.2.1 *Selection*

Persons qualified under 2.2 above may become members of the consulting faculty upon the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and on written acceptance of nomination by the African Studies Center Director.

2.2.2 *Voting Status*

Consulting Faculty may attend all Center meetings and participate fully in consultation and discussion. Consulting faculty members have no voting rights or privileges in Core Faculty meetings or Advisory Committee meetings of the African Studies Center.

2.3 *Adjunct Faculty*

The *Adjunct Faculty* shall consist of faculty members of other universities with significant expertise in the study of Africa who wish to be affiliated to the Center. The Adjunct Faculty shall receive pertinent Center mailings and notifications, will be invited to participate in select faculty meetings and other activities and responsibilities as the Advisory Committee determines. Adjunct members shall be appointed for terms of five years, subject to renewal for terms of equal length upon mutual agreement of the Center and the Adjunct Faculty.

2.3.1 *Selection*

Persons qualified under 2.3 above may become members of the Adjunct Faculty upon the recommendation of the Advisory Committee and on written acceptance of nomination to the African Studies Center Director.

2.3.2 *Voting Status*

Adjunct Faculty may attend all Center meetings and participate fully in consultation and discussion. Adjunct faculty members may be accorded voting rights or privileges in Core Faculty meetings or Advisory Committee meetings of the African Studies Center as recommended by the Director and confirmed by the Advisory Committee.

2.4 *Associate Members*

Associate members of the African Studies Center shall consist of any persons who are not faculty members or students at Michigan State University, who are interested in continuing cooperation with and furthering the goals of the Center, and who have experience in and a clear and continuing commitment to the study of Africa. Associate members will have special benefits in the Center such as receiving Center mailings and gratis publications, faculty rates for Center journals and monographs, borrowing privileges granted by the MSU Libraries, attending faculty meetings, and other services. Associate members shall be appointed for terms of five years, subject to renewal for terms of equal length upon mutual agreement of the Center and the scholar.

2.4.1 *Selection*

Any person qualified under 2.4 may become an Associate Member upon written acceptance of nomination by the Director of the African Studies Center.

2.4.2 *Voting Status*

Associate Members have no voting rights or privileges in faculty meetings or Advisory Committee meetings of the African Studies Center.

2.5 *Visiting Scholars*

Visiting Scholars are those African studies scholars visiting Michigan State University for a period of three months to two years for research, sabbatical study, or other scholarly purposes and who desire a relationship with the Center. Visiting Scholars may be given such title by the Center Director who shall report this action to the Advisory Committee. Normally, such scholars shall receive office space when available, other services as are in supply, and full participation in the life of the Center. When possible, the Visiting Scholar title shall be jointly offered with other units of the University with their consent and when relevant.

2.5.1 A current roster of ASC Core Faculty, consulting faculty, and associate members shall be published on the Center website.

2.6 *Student Constituency*

A Michigan State University student is a member of the student constituency of the African Studies Center on the condition that the student:

- a. is enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate African Studies Center Specialization, Major, or Certificate program, or
- b. holds a Title VI African Language and Areas Studies Fellowship, or successfully
- c. completes four courses in the core curriculum in the African Studies Center, or
- d. is engaged in research concerning Africa for an M.A. thesis or Ph.D. dissertation, or

- e. Any other student enrolled at Michigan State University may become a member of the student constituency of the African Studies Center through nomination by a governing body of a student constituency and election by a simple majority of voting membership present at an Advisory Committee meeting.

2.6.1 *Observer Status*

The student constituency may be represented by observers at faculty and Advisory Committee meetings except for meetings considering personnel issues. The Director, in consultation with the Advisory Committee, may select one graduate and one undergraduate student representatives.

3.0 *Organization and Governance*

The African Studies Center is organized for governance through the following officers and bodies: the Director of the African Studies Center, Associate and Assistant Directors of the African Studies Center, the Advisory Committee of the African Studies Center, and the faculty and students duly assembled in faculty meetings.

3.1 *The Director*

The Director shall be the administrative head of the African Studies Center in accordance with 2.1 of the University Bylaws for Academic Governance, 2022.

3.1.1 *Selection of Director*

When a new Director is to be chosen, a Search and Rating Committee of Core Faculty members representing the diversity of the faculty shall be constituted including at least two members from the Center's Advisory Committee and two additional Core Faculty members nominated by the Advisory Committee. Additional members shall include a representative of the Dean of International Studies and Programs, one area or thematic center director, and one ASC graduate student as defined under 2.6. The Search and Rating Committee shall submit names and credentials of candidates to the Center membership for review and consultation and then submit recommendation(s) to the Dean of International Studies and Programs.

3.1.2 *Faculty Position of the Director*

To serve as the Director of the Center, the person chosen must have or receive a tenured or tenure-track faculty position in an academic department at MSU. The Dean of International Studies and Programs, to whom the director reports, shall administratively appoint the Director.

3.1.3 *Review of the Director*

The Director shall be subject to regular review at intervals not to exceed five years. Procedures for review shall be established by the Dean of International Studies and Programs in consultation with the Advisory Committee of the African Studies Center.

3.1.4 *Length of Service of the Director*

The Director normally serves for terms of five years. The director may serve for no more than three five-year terms subject to approval by the Dean of International Studies and

Programs. A review of the director shall be conducted by the Dean of International Studies and Programs in consultation with the Center Advisory Committee and the Core Faculty in the fourth year of each five-year term.

- 3.1.5 Request for a waiver of term limit: If a Director or the Faculty Advisory Committee desires or recommends an additional term upon completion of a third five-year term, either will request a waiver of the term limit rule to the Dean of International Studies and Programs in the fourth year of that term. If the Dean determines that the request has merit, the waiver request shall be directed to the Center Advisory Committee for recommendation after consulting with the members of the Core Faculty. If the original request is made by the Faculty Advisory Committee, the Dean will decide whether to accept or reject the request based on merit and other considerations including the Director's willingness to serve for an additional term. Each recommendation for a waiver of the term-limit rule shall be treated independently from a comprehensive review of the Director.

3.2 *Associate and Assistant Directors*

There shall be one or more Associate or Assistant Directors selected by the Director in consultation with the Advisory Committee. Associate or Assistant Directors whose salaries are in part paid by the Center shall be approved by the Board of Trustees.

- 3.2.1 The Associate or Assistant Directors shall serve ex-officio on all Center committees.

- 3.2.2 Their other duties and responsibilities shall be determined by agreement with the Director.

3.3 *Advisory Committee*

The Advisory Committee is the major channel for advising the Director on matters of Center policy, program, personnel, grants, and financial matters; on any matter which the Core Faculty, through its meetings, entrusts to it; on any matter about which the Director seeks advice; and on any other matter of importance.

3.3.1 *Composition*

The voting members of the Advisory Committee shall consist of seven members representing the diversity of faculty and academic fields in the study of Africa at MSU, the different ranks of faculty, and persons with significant cultural competencies about Africa.

3.3.1 *Term*

Members of the Advisory Committee shall serve for a term of three years. Terms shall be staggered in order to provide continuity from year to year.

3.3.2 *Meetings of the Advisory Committee*

Meetings of the Advisory Committee shall be called regularly by the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Committee or the Director, or by a majority of the members of the Committee. The Advisory committee shall meet at least once per semester.

3.3.3 *Election of Core Faculty Members to the Advisory Committee*

The selection procedure will be as follows:

- a. A list of Core Faculty according to academic rank with the exclusion of the Director and Associate or Assistant Directors will be sent to members of the Center Core Faculty who will nominate one person within each rank, plus four “at large” members from any rank. A second ballot shall be taken to select the candidates according to the number of votes for each position.
- b. No more than one individual will be selected from any single department. In a case where more than one is chosen from the same department, the person with the highest number of votes will be elected. The Advisory Committee should represent the diversity of faculty with research experience in Africa.
- c. No more than two members of the Advisory Committee shall be affiliated with the following four clusters of MSU Colleges and other units: (1) Arts and Letters, Music, the Residential College in the Arts and Humanities, and Communications Arts and Sciences; (2) Social Science, Law, and James Madison College; (3) Agriculture and Natural Resources, Natural Sciences, Engineering, and Lyman Briggs College; (4) Human Medicine, Osteopathic Medicine, Nursing, Veterinary Sciences, Education, and Business. If the members selected by rank do not represent these four areas, then the “at large” members will be selected from these areas, according to the number of votes received.
- d. If an elected member resigns or declines to serve on the Advisory Committee, the place will be offered to the person in that category who has the next largest number of votes.
- e. The Advisory Committee shall have the power to vote to ask elected members who do not come to meetings to resign.
- f. The Advisory Committee may grant ex-officio representation to other international units at MSU.

3.3.4 *Selection of Student Advisory Committee Observers*

An organized student constituency shall establish procedures to select up to two students' representatives as observers at the meetings of the Advisory Committee and Core Faculty. These representatives should include students with significant experience in or cultural competencies concerning Africa. At least one should be a graduate student.

3.4 *Core Faculty Meetings*

Meetings of the Core Faculty shall be called at least once each semester. Agendas shall be circulated one week before the meetings.

3.4.1 General or Core Faculty meetings shall be called by the Director of the Center.

Additional extraordinary meetings will be convened on petitions from any 10 Core Faculty members.

3.4.2 The Director, Associate Director, Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall chair faculty meetings.

3.4.3 Any Core Faculty member or student representative may schedule a matter for the agenda of an Advisory Committee or faculty meeting.

3.4.4 The student constituency shall be observers at the meetings.

4.0 *Committees and Procedures*

4.1 *Committees and Task Forces*

The Director shall consult with the Advisory Committee in establishing committees and task forces for the expeditious furthering of the program of the Center.

4.1.1 The Director is authorized to appoint to committees any person who is essential to achieving the purposes of the Center. As much as practicable, such appointments shall be in consultation with the Advisory Committee. When not practicable, the director shall inform the Advisory Committee of such appointments within 30 days.

4.1.2 Committees shall employ formal, fair, and expeditious procedures.

4.1.3 Where possible, committees shall make decisions by consensus. Where this proves unsatisfactory, decisions shall be made by majority vote of committee members in attendance.

4.2 *Procedures*

4.2.1 Appropriate records of faculty, Advisory Committee, and other committee meetings shall be kept and made accessible to all interested persons.

4.2.2 *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised*, shall be followed unless otherwise specified.

4.3 *Grievances*

In cases of grievances, the University grievance procedures apply.

5. *Interpretation and Amendment*

5.1 *Interpretation*

The Director, with the Advisory Committee, shall be the final authority with regard to the interpretation of these Bylaws.

5.2 *Amendments*

- 5.2.1 Amendments to these bylaws may be proposed in writing to the Advisory Committee by voting members of the Center. The Advisory Committee shall make recommendations to the Center membership as an explicit item on the agenda of a faculty meeting to consider the amendment(s).
- 5.2.2 Amendments to these bylaws shall be by two-thirds majority vote of the voting members present at a Core Faculty meeting. Proposed amendments will be voted on at a meeting subsequent to the one at which they were introduced.
- 6. *Effective Date*
These Bylaws were adopted on December 12-12-2023 then amended on 04-30-2025 by the Core Faculty of the African Studies Center.