

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN
SCHOOL OF EARTH, SOCIETY, & ENVIRONMENT**

— BYLAWS —

(Revision approved by unanimous vote of the SESE Executive Committee on May 12, 2026)

These bylaws establish regulations for the governance and mechanisms for policy formation for the School of Earth, Society and Environment, hereafter referred to as "the School" or as SESE.

A. SESE MISSION STATEMENT

The School of Earth, Society & Environment (SESE) was established in 2007 in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. It aspires to be a premier program that maintains strengths in core disciplines of the member departments, yet at the same time forms bridges among these disciplines to tackle new problems that pertain to the Earth System and its human dimensions. In addition to serving the needs of its long-established programs in geology, atmospheric sciences, and geography and GIS, SESE strives to establish an intellectual focus for research and education in environmental and sustainability studies within LAS. As such, SESE can provide a basis for productive collaborations with units across campus. The School will maintain both physical science and social science components, and can anchor flexible, interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate curricula that meet the needs of a diverse student body. At the same time, the School will ensure that students will be able to specialize in core disciplines of the departments comprising the School, both at the undergraduate and graduate level. Finally, the School can serve as an anchor for discipline-based and interdisciplinary research centers, programs, or initiatives that will foster collaboration and provide the flexibility and critical mass to address evolving new research directions.

B. COMPONENTS OF SESE, AND ITS ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The School consists of the following individuals and entities as of May, 2026:

- SESE Administrators:
 - SESE Director
 - SESE Associate Director
 - SESE Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations
- SESE Executive Committee (SESE EC)
- SESE Business Affairs Office
- Environmental Sustainability (ES) Interdisciplinary Major
 - Staff for teaching, advising and maintaining the ES Major
- The Department of Climate, Meteorology & Atmospheric Sciences
- The Department of Geography & Geographic Information Science
- The Department of Earth Science & Environmental Change
- Research Initiatives, Programs, and Centers anchored or co-anchored in SESE

B-I. SESE Administrators

SESE Director: This individual serves as the executive officer of the School with responsibilities and duties as outlined in the University Statutes, and reports to the Dean of LAS. The SESE Director is appointed upon recommendation by the Dean of LAS, and should hold a tenured faculty position in one of the member departments of SESE. Generally, the position is viewed as a 50% appointment, so that the Director will continue to maintain some faculty duties. The Dean will solicit input from the School's Department Heads and Faculty for the initial appointment, will consult with the SESE EC for annual reappointment review, and with the SESE EC and others for the formal 5-year review of the Director, per University rules.

SESE Associate Director for Academic Affairs: This individual is responsible for overseeing the ES Interdisciplinary Major, SESE-anchored online education programs, SESE-anchored certificate or degree programs, ES-related academic advising, ES-related specialized faculty, and other duties as assigned by the SESE Director. The SESE Associate Director for Academic Affairs is appointed by the SESE Director, in consultation with the SESE EC, and reports to the SESE Director. The SESE Associate Director for Academic Affairs should make an annual report of activities to the SESE EC. The EC should provide comments and suggestions at this time, and may bring any concerns to the attention of the SESE Director in a subsequent meeting, with or without the participation of the SESE Associate Director. This position can be held by tenure-track or specialized faculty, or as a full-time administrative appointment. The holder of this position will teach courses and/or conduct research, in addition to administrative duties.

SESE Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations: This individual oversees all SESE business, finance, facilities, and other operational functions, and reports to the SESE Director. Duties include management of the SESE Business Affairs Office. When relevant, this individual coordinates activities of non-academic staff in Departments, as they relate to SESE overall. The SESE Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations is appointed by the SESE Director, based on the recommendations of an HR-approved search committee. The SESE Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations should make an annual report of activities to the SESE EC. The EC should provide comments and suggestions at this time, and may bring any concerns to the attention of the SESE Director in a subsequent meeting, with or without the participation of the SESE Associate Director. This position, in general, is a full-time academic professional position.

The SESE Administrators are supported by office support staff (e.g., the SESE Office Administrator) who report to the SESE Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations or the SESE Director. These staff may also serve individual departments, in addition to SESE Administrators, as agreed upon between the SESE Director and Department heads. The SESE Director may appoint additional administrative personnel, after consultation with the SESE EC, as need arises. Such appointments may be contingent on agreement between the SESE Director and the Dean of LAS.

B-II. SESE Executive Committee (SESE EC)

The SESE EC will consist of: (1) The Director of SESE who will serve as the chair of the SESE EC, who will call and coordinate meetings, and will be a voting member except for issues that pertain to performance or duties of the Director; (2) The Head of each department in SESE; (3) A

faculty representative from each department in SESE, selected by the department according to departmental rules. Faculty representatives of the EC shall be tenure-track and at the rank of Associate or Full Professor, so that the EC has sufficient members able to vote on appointments and promotions of tenure-track faculty; (4) The SESE Associate Directors; (5) Additional members of the SESE EC may be appointed by the Director to represent Research Centers, other interdepartmental programs, and specialized faculty, in the School if deemed appropriate and approved by the standing SESE EC.

Representatives from Departments should strive to represent the diverse viewpoints of the members of that Department. The term of office for elected representatives will be 3 years with terms staggered so that no more than two new representatives are added in any one year. Meetings of the SESE EC should take place regularly (i.e., every one to two months). Minutes will be recorded by an individual chosen by the SESE Director (generally, the SESE Office Administrator). All members can vote on all issues, unless otherwise stated above, with one exception: only tenure-track members of the EC can vote on tenure-track appointments and promotions, per University guidelines.

B-III. SESE Business Affairs Office

SESE operates using a "shared-services model" in which most operations and facilities issues are handled by the SESE Business Affairs Office, under the supervision of the SESE Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations. Responsibilities of this office include, but are not limited to:

- Financial management and accounting
- Proposal submission and management of grants and contracts
- Travel management and reporting
- Facilities management
- General issues of safety and compliance

B-IV. Environmental Sustainability (ES) Interdisciplinary Major, and its Staff

The interdisciplinary " Environmental Sustainability" (ES) major is anchored at the School level. Courses associated with this major have an ESE or ENSU rubric; they may be cross-listed with other departments. The ES major is supervised by the SESE Associate Director for Academic Affairs. At the recommendation of the Associate Director, the SESE Director may appoint Specialized Faculty, Academic Professionals, or Adjunct Staff to teach and advise for the ES major. These individuals report to the SESE Associate Director for Academic Affairs. SESE practices for appointing and promoting these individuals, and for the offering of multi-year contracts to Specialized Faculty, follow guidelines in a separate document, the "SESE Specialized Faculty Guidelines" (prepared in April, 2017), and are in accordance with relevant Provost Communications.

B-V. Departments

Each Department is organized with a Head, appointed by the LAS Dean, as its executive officer, as described in the University Statutes. Details of the Heads responsibilities are described in the bylaws of individual departments. Internal governance in departments is addressed by departmental bylaws. Department Heads are responsible for departmental budgets and appointments. Heads report to the School Director for most routine issues and for issues that relate to SESE. Annual evaluations of Heads are carried out by the LAS Dean's office with consultation with the SESE Director. Annual salary adjustments, when available, are overseen by the LAS Dean's Office in consultation with the SESE Director. Selection of Department Heads, and 5-year reviews of Department Heads will follow procedures agreed upon between the SESE Director and the LAS Dean and/or LAS Associate Dean at the beginning of selection or review process.

The Departments in SESE as of May, 2026 are: Climate, Meteorology & Atmospheric Sciences; Geography & Geographic Information Science; and Earth Science & Environmental Change. Other Departments may be added if proposed by the Director, and approved by a 2/3 majority of the SESE faculty and by the LAS College and other appropriate University entities, following University Statutes.

B-VI. Research Centers, Programs, and Initiatives

Research Initiatives, Programs, or Centers can help enhance SESE's educational, research, and outreach goals. The formal designation of these entities will be determined as appropriate, in consultation with the LAS Dean and Vice Chancellor for Research and Innovation. To be considered a component of SESE, these entities must be organized and administered by faculty members with primary appointments in departments of the School. Each shall determine their own internal organization and agenda. Establishment of a new SESE-anchored Initiative, Program, or Center requires submission of a written proposal to the SESE Director. Approval requires a majority vote by the SESE EC. Initiatives, Centers or Programs should be evaluated at least once every five years by the SESE EC. Resources to be allocated to these entities will be agreed upon between the SESE Director and the entity director, in consultation with the SESE EC.

B-VII. Voting and Meetings

SESE EC Meetings: Meetings of the SESE EC should take place regularly. In general, there should be at least two to three SESE EC meetings per semester. Additional meetings can be called for specific required votes. By consensus of the members of the SESE EC, some votes can be made electronically.

SESE Faculty/Staff General Meetings: Meetings of the entire SESE Faculty and Staff should take place at least once every other year; preferably they should take place annually. Additional meetings may be called at the discretion of the Director, but must be called if requested by petition from at least 20% of the Faculty.

All tenure-track faculty lines of SESE reside in departments, so most issues affecting faculty and requiring faculty vote are handled at the departmental level, following departmental bylaws. Should situations arise where there is a need for a whole-school vote on an issue, individuals

allowed to vote will be based on departmental criteria. For example, departments will determine if voting members include specialized faculty, and whether faculty who hold < 50% FTE appointments will be allowed to vote. Faculty who hold membership in more than one SESE department shall be granted only one vote during school-wide votes. Per University custom, only tenure-track faculty can vote on issues affecting appointments or promotions of tenure-track faculty.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

C-I. Duties of the SESE Director:

- Serve as the executive officer of the School.
- Guide the evolution of the School's structure and strategic plan.
- Work to maintain or increase the visibility of the SESE, and ensure that SESE instigate or participate in relevant activities in the University and community.
- Function as the liaison between the School and other units of the University.
- Serve as a representative of SESE to entities outside of the University.
- Call and preside over meetings of the SESE faculty and staff.
- Serve as chair of the SESE Executive Committee.
- Determine salaries of School-anchored academic and non-academic staff.
- Oversee School-level facilities changes, and space reallocations.
- Supervise the School's associate directors.
- Address budget- and space-allocation issues at the School level.
- Encourage collaborations among units in the School.
- Recommend faculty and staff appointments, reappointments, non-reappointments and promotions to LAS (after departmental vetting and consultation with the EC.)
- Assist Departments in advocating for their interests.
- Oversee any school-anchored endowment or gift funds.
- Approve service in excess requests for Associate Directors or for academic staff involved in the ES program or SESE-anchored on-line programs, after consultation with the SESE EC (either in a meeting, or by e-mail).

C-II. Duties of the SESE Associate Director for Academic Affairs:

- Oversee the undergraduate curriculum for the ES major, and its evolution.
- Oversee any SESE-anchored undergraduate minors, either in the School or in partnership with other units on campus.
- Oversee undergraduate advising for the ES major.
- Oversee development and operation of school-anchored online-education programs.
- Spearhead educational grant-getting and outreach efforts.
- Identify specialized faculty, academic professionals, teaching assistants and adjunct staff needed for operation of SESE-anchored academic programs.
- Respond to College or University requests concerning academic administrative issues, such as outcomes assessments and enrollment statistics.

C-III. Duties of the SESE Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations:

- Oversee the administration of the Business Affairs Office of the School (which includes grants and contracts, accounting, budgeting, travel, reimbursements, inventory, etc.)
- Oversee financial reporting in SESE and its Departments.
- Oversee all SESE facilities, and serve as the liaison between SESE and both college and campus-level facilities and services units.
- Oversee all SESE services, including mechanical/electrical shops.

C-IV. Duties of the SESE Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is advisory to the Director in all school academic, budgetary, and administrative matters. The Executive Committee shall also:

- Advise the Director on the formulation and execution of School policy and strategic planning, specifically in regard to setting School-wide hiring priorities.
- Evaluate School faculty for tenure and promotion by reviewing documents prepared by individual Departmental committees. Votes by the Executive Committee will be part of the consideration used by the Director in forwarding tenure and promotion decisions.
- Advise the Director on the long-term needs of the School including research directions for the School, the needs for faculty recruitment, and the best organization and use of facilities to meet the strategic goals of the School. As needed, the Committee shall evaluate the performance and needs of the Departments, Research Centers/Programs/Initiatives; and Interdepartmental Programs.
- Advise the Director on the preparation of the School budget, as needed
- Serve as a voice of the faculty and departments to the SESE Director.
- Evaluate appeals to the SESE Director initiated by faculty and students.
- Conduct reviews of the SESE Director.
- Address complaints, petitions, or appeals pertaining to the SESE Director.
- Provide comments concerning requests for service in excess, or plans for work loads of SESE personnel
- Perform such other tasks as may be requested by the Director.

C-V. Duties of Departments

The Departments in the School shall:

- Serve as the primary appointment homes for tenure-track faculty and for department-anchored specialized faculty.
- Oversee their departments academic and research programs and set departmental teaching loads and research expectations.
- Oversee their departmental budgets.
- Provide recommendations to the SESE Director and SESE EC for hiring and promotion of faculty within their department.
- Develop by-laws and procedures for the operations of their department.
- Address issues and petitions pertaining to students in their departmental degree programs.

- Have the right to appeal to the Dean on matters concerning actions by the Director and the SESE EC. Such appeals shall be taken only after the department concerned has notified the Director and the Executive Committee of its intent to appeal.

C-VI. Duties of the Faculty

The Faculty of SESE's component units (both tenure-track and specialized) shall:

- Fulfill teaching, research, and service obligations in accordance with departmental and university expectations and policy.
- Be willing to consider serving on SESE committees, and to consider participating in SESE activities.
- Be entitled to participate in meetings of the SESE Faculty by voice and by vote.
- Be able to request that the Director call a special meeting of the Faculty. Such requests shall be by written petition of 20% of the Faculty and shall include an agenda and/or a proposed resolution(s) with any supporting documentation.
- Petition the SESE EC about issues pertaining to the SESE Director.

C-VII. Appeals Processes

A faculty member may appeal to the SESE Director and EC on matters pertaining to decisions of Department Heads or the SESE Director. An appeal concerning a Department Head shall be initiated by written notification to the SESE Director within thirty (30) days of the decision. The SESE Director and SESE EC shall be responsible for hearing the appeal, and shall consider both the decision being appealed and the procedure by which that decision was reached. It shall make a timely recommendation to be implemented SESE Director. If the SESE Director declines to reverse the original decision, the faculty member may appeal to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. If the appeal concerns the SESE Director, the SESE EC is charged with evaluating the appeal, and making a recommendation pertaining to it to the LAS Dean.

C-VII. SESE Committees

The SESE Director may appoint *ad hoc* committees of faculty (tenure-track or specialized) and staff on an as-needed basis to address issues pertaining to the interdisciplinary ES major (e.g., a capricious grading committee; a curriculum committee), or to address specific issues that involved the school as a whole (e.g., cross-departmental faculty searches; shared facilities; establishment of collaborations; School-anchored events). The SESE Director can establish standing committees, if they are approved by majority vote of the SESE EC.

C-VIII. Review of Bylaws, and Amendments to the Bylaws

Changes in the Bylaws may be initiated by the SESE Director, by a majority vote of the SESE EC, or by a petition from at least 20% of the Faculty. Routine changes and updates in Bylaws may be made by majority vote of the SESE EC. Major changes in the configuration of SESE or operation of SESE require discussion at a SESE faculty meeting and approval by a 2/3 majority of the faculty. The SESE EC is responsible for determining if a change can be made by approval of the EC alone, or requires a faculty vote. If the latter is required, the text and rationale for proposed changes must

be circulated to the faculty at least 3 days prior to the meeting at which the changes are discussed. The SESE EC will oversee the vote.

In general, Bylaws shall be reviewed and approved at least once every ten years by the School Executive Committee.

D. BUDGET

D-I. State Budget

- The SESE Associate Director for Financial and Business Operations will review and advise the Department Heads and School Director on their respective state-allocated budgets.
- The SESE Director is responsible for advocating for budget modifications with the College.

D-II. ICR

- The School shall retain a percentage of the dollars received by the School of the net ICR return to all research grants and contracts to members in the School. The SESE portion of ICR shall be used to support operations, School-anchored programs and staff, new research or education initiatives, and start-up for new faculty. The remainder shall be distributed to the appropriate entity in SESE. The exact percentages to be distributed among various units of the School shall be determined by the SESE Director in consultation with the SESE EC, in accordance with University norms. The current rate distribution is as follows: Of the ICR funds that return to the University, the department home of the PI receives 19.5% and SESE receives 7.4%. (The remainder stays with the University or College.) Issues that arise where PI's have split appointments, or where centers and programs are involved, will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.
- Changes to the formula for allocation of ICR shall be implemented if there are changes in the campus-level distribution model, or by majority vote of the SESE EC.

D-III. Start-up funds

- SESE may contribute up to 10% of start-up costs for new faculty. The exact contribution shall be determined by the Director, in consultation with the SESE EC and the Department Head.

E. ROLE OF SESE SPECIALIZED AND AFFILIATE FACULTY

E-I. Distinction between Academic Staff (including Specialized Faculty) of SESE as a School, and of SESE Departments

Academic staff (including specialized faculty) may have appointments anchored: (1) entirely in "SESE Central" (meaning the school-level administrative level and the school-anchored ES major); (2) entirely in an academic department of SESE; or (3) split between "SESE Central" and

a department. In cases where an appointment is anchored entirely in "SESE Central," the staff member reports to either the SESE Director or the SESE Associate Director for Academic Affairs, as determined by the SESE Director. In cases where the staff member holds an appointment in a Department, the staff member reports to the Departmental administration, subject to departmental bylaws. In cases where there is a split appointment, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) will be prepared and signed by the SESE Director, the Department Head, and the staff member, defining reporting responsibilities and governance rights.

E-II. Governance Rights of Academic Staff (including Specialized Faculty)

Academic staff (including specialized faculty) are welcome to participate fully as voting members in whole-school faculty meetings, except in matters pertaining to appointment or promotion of tenure-track faculty. Staff may convey comments or requests to the SESE EC through their unit representatives, or by asking to attend a specific meeting of the EC. If requested by the SESE Director and approved by the SESE EC, an individual representing the academic staff across the School and its departments may be appointed as a voting member of the EC.

E-III. Affiliate Faculty Anchored at the School-Level in SESE

When appropriate, tenure-track faculty from units on campus outside of SESE may be appointed as "0-Time Faculty Affiliates," anchored at the School Level in SESE. It is assumed that such appointments have no financial implications for SESE. In order to obtain an appointment as an affiliate, a nominator (a tenure-track faculty member holding a >25% appointment in one of the departments in SESE) should submit a letter of nomination (including a statement of how the affiliation will benefit SESE), along with a current CV of the candidate, to the Director of SESE. The Director will distribute this information to the SESE EC, and tenure-track faculty in SESE will vote on the appointment. A majority vote will indicate approval by the EC. Note that if the tenure line of the proposed affiliate faculty member is not within LAS, the SESE Director will need to forward a proposed appointment, along with a justification, to the College for approval by the Dean. (Such approval is not needed for faculty who hold tenure lines in LAS.) Once approved, the SESE HR officer will submit paperwork to the University to ensure that the appointment is added to the faculty member in University personnel records. Appointments will be for three years, and are renewable, pending a review by the SESE EC. At the time of review, the sponsoring faculty member in SESE should submit a letter requesting renewal (including a statement of how the affiliation has benefited SESE), along with an updated CV. The SESE EC will vote on the renewal, and if the appointment is approved, the Director will contact the SESE HR officer to ensure continuation of the appointment in University records.

E-IV. Adjunct Faculty Anchored at the School-Level in SESE

When appropriate, individuals who do not hold a faculty appointment may be appointed as "0-Time Adjunct Faculty," anchored at the School Level in SESE. It is assumed that such appointments have no financial implications for SESE. In order to obtain an appointment as an affiliate, a nominator who holds an appointment in SESE (either a tenure-track or specialized faculty) should submit a letter of nomination (including a statement of how the affiliation will benefit SESE), along with a current CV of the candidate, to the Director of SESE. The Director

will distribute this information to the SESE EC, and members of SESE holding a faculty appointment (either tenure-track or specialized). A majority vote will indicate approval by the EC. The SESE EC will also decide on what rank is appropriate for the appointment. Once approved, the SESE HR officer will submit paperwork to the University to ensure that the appointment is added to University personnel records. Appointments will be for three years, and are renewable, pending a review by the SESE EC. At the time of review, the sponsoring faculty member in SESE should submit a letter requesting renewal (including a statement of how the appointment has benefited SESE), along with an updated CV. Faculty in the SESE EC will vote on the renewal, and if the appointment is approved, the Director will contact the SESE HR officer to ensure continuation of the appointment in University records.

*This revision was prepared by Jeff Trapp, SESE Director
The SESE EC voted May 12, 2026*