

Agroecology Governance Committee  
PROGRAM BY-LAWS  
Revised September 2024

The Agroecology Governance Committee (AGC) will be comprised of seven faculty affiliates, two graduate agroecology student representatives and two undergraduate senior agroecology student representatives. Academic Staff who train in the undergraduate and/or graduate Agroecology programs may serve in lieu of up to two faculty members. The committee will meet monthly during the academic year and during recesses as the program chair deems necessary. The chair shall be a faculty member with at least a 50% appointment in CALS with a strong record of commitment to agroecology graduate and undergraduate instruction. At least two of the faculty/staff members must be involved in teaching in the undergraduate program. The graduate program manager (GPM) and the undergraduate program manager (UPM) will attend the AGC but not be voting members.

The AGC is charged with oversight of the agroecology BS and MS programs to ensure that students receive a world-class education in Agroecology. Oversight of each curriculum includes responsibility for assessment and reporting about the curriculum and decisions about learning outcomes and courses applied to program requirements, assessment of student learning, and academic program review according to University of Wisconsin-Madison's expectations. The committee is charged with oversight of Agroecology BS major advising. The undergraduate advisor will meet with each Agroecology student at least twice per year. The AGC consists of members from academic units participating in the major, as determined by classroom instruction, advising, experiential learning, etc. The AGC will make decisions about changes to the major, course/program requirements, address individual and collective student issues, solicit, assign, coordinate, and track teaching and TA responsibilities. Non-voting members of this committee will be the GPM and the UPM. The AGC will prioritize diversity and inclusion and work to recruit members from historically underrepresented communities.

The Agroecology program is housed in Department of Plant & Agroecosystem Sciences for bookkeeping purposes. All academic decisions will be made by the AGC.

### **Governance and Affiliation**

#### **I. Program Affiliation**

A faculty member who wishes to become a program Faculty Affiliate will submit a letter to the program chair stating the nature of his/her interest and a current CV. The program chair will share the request with the governance committee for a vote on and communicate the decision to the petitioner.

Affiliates will be formally listed as members of our faculty on our web site, can advise

Agroecology MS students, serve on student committees, and may be elected to the Governance Committee.

Meeting agendas will be drafted by the program chair with input from members.

The AGC will also function as the admissions committee for the MS program. At least two members will review each application and report their assessment to the committee. The program chair will make a decision about each applicant with input from committee members.

### III. Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the committee shall be held during the final month of the spring semester. The purpose of the annual meeting is to announce new committee members, review a draft of the annual program review that the Chair will share with the dean of CALS, review the budget, and to make any other transactions and decisions as seen fit by the chair.

### IV. Elections

In spring semester of each year, faculty and staff affiliates will nominate and elect fellow affiliates representing the social and natural sciences to serve on the governance committee for a 3-year term. Elections will take place before the annual meeting to determine the incoming committee member(s).

Undergrad representatives may be nominated by any agroecology undergraduate including themselves. To be eligible they must have senior status at the beginning of their term. They will be elected by having the more votes of those voting from the agroecology undergraduate student body than any other candidate. If there are two openings the top Election must take place before the end of the semester preceding their term. Undergraduate members cannot serve on the graduate applicant screening panel.

Terms will officially begin at the commencement of the academic year. Committee members may serve consecutive terms. Those members up for re-election will abstain from voting. In case of a tie, the acting committee chair will flip a coin to decide the election outcome. Two Agroecology graduate students will also serve as representatives on the governance committee. Their terms will be for 2 years, staggered, if possible, to include one returning student representative each year. The current Agroecology student body will nominate and vote among themselves to elect representatives before the annual meeting. Student representatives will serve as voting members of the committee, reviewers in the graduate application process, and will be advisory on chair selection.

### V. Program Chair

The program chair will be elected from the active members of the AGC in the first meeting of the fall semester by the non-student members of the AGC. The chair will oversee AGC meetings and report to the Dean of CALS annually. Two governance committee members

may co-chair the program. The chair may serve consecutive terms, for a maximum of six consecutive years.

#### VI. Grad student services coordinator.

The GPM will attend governance committee meetings, record minutes, and provide input as appropriate but will not have voting rights.

#### VII. Quorum

A majority of the AGC constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting.

#### VIII. Manner of Acting

The act of the majority of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present is the duly authorized act of the AGC, except where otherwise provided by law or these bylaws.

#### IX. Closed Session

AGC meetings are open to the public unless the committee goes into closed session. Closed session will be called when the committee discusses personnel including current and prospective students and all faculty and staff. In instances when the committee discusses current and prospective students, privacy and confidentiality are required by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA, guidelines can be found at the Office of the Registrar's website).

#### X. Amendments and Modifications to Bylaws

Proposed amendments and modifications to these bylaws may only be done through the following process: The AGC, through normal "manner of acting" proposes a draft; The AGC shares the proposed changes and an explanation/justification for them with the Agroecology Faculty Affiliates, giving five working days to comment on proposed changes; After considering comments of the faculty affiliates and making further changes through normal "manner of acting," the AGC will put forth proposed amendments and modifications to the Faculty Affiliates for a vote. After five working days, the proposed bylaws changes will be enacted or rejected based on a majority vote of the responding Faculty Affiliates (i.e., calculation of majority shall be based on the number of affiliates participating in the vote, not the total number of faculty affiliated with the Agroecology Program).

### **Agroecology Program Committees**

#### I. Undergraduate committee

#### II. Masters degree, Admissions Committee

The AGC will also function as the admissions committee.

### III. Student Progress Committee

This committee will be a quorum of the governance committee.

### IV. Student Project and Thesis Committee

This 3-member committee will oversee a public practice student's project and a research student's thesis. The committee must be composed of the student's faculty advisor and two other members at least two of whom are also a member of the faculty affiliates. One or more committee members must be from a department other than that of the advisor, and students are encouraged to pursue committee representation from both social and natural sciences. At least two members must be UW-Madison faculty and the third member can be non-faculty according to UW Graduate School policies.

### V. Ad Hoc Committees

Ad hoc committees will be created by the chair as needs arise, for specific lengths of time, normally not to exceed one year. Membership and charge will be determined at the time an ad hoc committee is created.

### VI. Prospective Students and Admissions

The GPM will respond to inquiries from prospective students and counsel applicants on admissions requirements and deadlines. The GPM will assist departmental staff in planning campus visits for prospective students that include meetings with the program chair, the program graduate advisor, faculty affiliates and current Agroecology students.

The fall application deadline will be December 1. The GPM will organize and circulate applications for the admissions committee to review prior to an open discussion at a governance committee meeting held as soon as possible after the application deadlines. The program chair will make a decision about each applicant with input from admissions committee members.

### VII. Program Requirements

Agroecology graduate students must select the research track or public practice track. During their second semester, all students, in consultation with their advisor(s), must design and sign an individualized "learning plan." This document sets out a balanced plan of cross-training electives, and an abstract of the intended thesis or project, that fits the student's needs and goals. At this time, students should also work with their advisor to establish a committee for their thesis or final project. Agroecology graduate students can pursue a joint degree with an affiliated department such as Plant & Agroecosystem Sciences, Entomology, Horticulture, Soils or Community and Environmental Sociology. A joint degree consists of one graduate degree with two majors. To apply for a joint degree a student must submit a proposal for the degree to the Graduate School along with an Application for Change of Major/Addition of Major for Currently Enrolled Students. A student must be admitted to the second major and must have two advisors – one from each program/department. The graduate school academic associate deans review all such

proposals. Students must submit the proposal before they complete the course work and no later than the beginning of their second year of graduate study.