

# Faculty Handbook

## PREFACE

The purpose of the Faculty Handbook is to provide information, as well as sources of information, which faculty find beneficial. The Handbook describes the University's history, vision and mission, and defines the university's principles of governance. In addition, the Handbook establishes the organization of the faculty. Faculty responsibilities, academic operating policies, university promotion and tenure procedures, Department of Human Resources Management policies, and other policies are addressed within the document. Where appropriate, this document links to original source material to ensure current and accurate information. This handbook is the result of the work of many people, compiled by the Faculty Handbook Committee, jointly appointed by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and the President of the Faculty Senate. Changes and corrections should be sent to the Faculty Senate office. Corrections and additions to the Faculty Handbook may be made to the online version as needed by the Faculty Senate Charter and Bylaws Committee. Substantive changes to the Faculty Handbook require senate, provost, and presidential approval.

## I. General Information

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### A. History of the University

The University began as The Agricultural and Mechanical College of the State of Mississippi, one of the national land-grant colleges established after Congress had passed the Morrill Act in 1862. It was created by the Mississippi Legislature on February 28, 1878, to fulfill the mission of offering training in "agriculture, horticulture and the mechanical arts. . .without excluding other scientific and classical studies, including military tactics." The College received its first students in the fall of 1880, in the presidency of General Stephen D. Lee. Other federal legislation provided funds for extending the mission of the College: in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act called for "instruction in practical agriculture and home economics to persons not attendant or resident," thus creating the state-wide effort which led to Extension offices in every county in the State; and, in 1917, the Smith-Hughes Act provided for the training of teachers in vocational education.

By 1932, when the Legislature renamed the College as Mississippi State College, it consisted of the Agricultural Experiment Station (1887), the College of Engineering (1902), the College of Agriculture (1903), the School of Industrial Pedagogy (1909), the School of General Science (1911), the College of Business and Industry (1915), the Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service (1915), and the Division of Continuing Education (1919). Further, in 1926 the College had received its first accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

By 1958, when the Legislature again renamed the College as Mississippi State University, the Graduate School had been organized (1936), doctoral degree programs had begun (1951), the School of Forest Resources had been established (1954), and the College of Arts and Sciences had been created (1956).

The School of Architecture admitted its first students in 1973, the College of Veterinary Medicine admitted its first class in 1977, and the School of Accountancy was established in 1979, rounding out the present structure.

Additional information about Mississippi State University can be found in John K. Bettersworth's book, *People's University: The Centennial History of Mississippi State*, University Press of Mississippi, 1979 and in *Maroon and White: Mississippi State University, 1878-2003* by Michael B. Ballard, University Press of Mississippi, 2008.

## **B. Vision and Mission Statements**

The university is guided by its vision and mission statements which identify the values of the university. These can be found at

<http://www.president.msstate.edu/communications/vision-mission/>

In the strategic plan, the university establishes specific goals and identifies the metrics by which it will assess its progress toward achieving its goals. The strategic plan was developed under the university administration's leadership with active participation by the faculty.

## **C. Principles for University Governance**

*As recommended by the Faculty Senate, Feb. 9, 1996;*

*As recommended by the Administrative Council, Feb. 12, 1996;*

*As recommended by Professional and Support Staff Advisory Council, Feb. 14, 1996;*

*As recommended by the Student Association;*

*Approved by the General Faculty, March 5, 1996 and*

*Amended by vote of the General Faculty, Fall 1999.*

*Amended by vote of the Faculty Senate, September 2012*

*Approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President, September 2012*

*Approved by the President, October 2012*

*Approved by the Provost and Executive Vice President, August 2013*

*Approved by the President, August 2013*

## **PREAMBLE**

The triad mission of learning, research, and service of Mississippi State University can best be achieved through cooperation, collaboration, and consultation among the membership of the entire university community. Achievement of that mission requires an understanding and commitment to the formal and informal decision processes by which the university conducts its work, maintains its standards, and responds to external feedback.

Members of the university community need to understand the university's noble and extensive mission and the part each member plays in its achievement. They need to understand how formal authority is shared, the scope and form of their involvement in governance, and the need for those in authority to achieve balance between codification and discretion. This understanding enhances each member's ability to sustain and strengthen the essential nature of the university and facilitates effective university governance and responsiveness to the needs of the people of Mississippi.

Central to effective and efficient university governance is open consultation, communication, and participation in decisions and decision-making bodies. An understanding of the responsibilities and limitations of authority by all members of the university community is also essential. Success of the university depends on collegial relationships and mutual respect among the faculty, professional and support staff, students, administrative officers, and representatives of external entities.

All members of the university community must be accountable for their roles and responsibilities. Adhering to policies and procedures is essential to achieving the mission and goals of the university.

Mississippi State recognizes the value of diverse opinions in decision making and pursues its mission in an atmosphere of shared governance and open communication. Faculty and staff are involved in policy formulation and in implementing the learning, research and service missions of the university. Faculty and staff also recognize their shared accountability for the performance of the university in carrying out its mission.

In the spirit of promoting effective governance of the university, the following statements of policy relative to members of the university community are adopted.

## **PRINCIPLES**

### **Authority**

Ultimate authority for governance of the university is vested by the State of Mississippi in the Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning and delegated by the board to the president. The president exercises that authority through the vice presidents, deans, directors, and other officials of the administration in consultation, as appropriate, with units of the university and with the faculty, professional and support staff, and students.

## **Consultation**

To facilitate open communication and effective university governance, the president and other administrative officers of the university will exercise due diligence in consulting with the faculty, professional and support staff, students, and external constituents on issues affecting them. Consultation is characterized by early discussions with the affected constituencies, jointly formulated procedures for consultation, reasonable deadlines within the constraints of the academic calendar, access to appropriate information, adequate feedback, and timely communication of decisions to the affected constituencies.

## **Representation**

Effective university governance includes consultation with the faculty, professional and support staff, students, and external constituents on budget, policy, and procedure matters. Appropriate representation of these groups is normally obtained through the university's council and committee structure. Elected and appointed representatives should, as far as possible, be selected specifically for the roles in which they will serve. When temporary special committees, study groups, or task forces are established by the president to address matters affecting the mission of the university, a majority of the membership should be composed of elected representatives drawn from the general faculty. Professional and support staff, students, and external constituencies should be included as appropriate. The chairs of these bodies may be appointed by the president.

*Faculty Representation.* By the Charter of Organization of the Faculty of Mississippi State University, the Robert Holland Faculty Senate is the official representative of the faculty on all matters not delegated by the general faculty to other elected faculty bodies.

University-level curriculum, promotion and tenure, and grievance committees should be composed of elected representatives from the general faculty. These bodies elect their own chairs.

*Professional and Support Staff Representation.* The Staff Council is the official representative body for the professional and support staff and reports to the president. The staff should have appropriate representation on matters affecting them. Consultation with the staff should be conducted through their elected representatives and/or the staff council, as well as through normal administrative channels.

*Student Representation.* The Student Association is the official representative of undergraduate and graduate students of the university. Undergraduate and graduate students should be represented on appropriate university councils, committees, and task forces. Consultation with students should be conducted through their elected representatives and/or the Student Association.

*Administrative Representation.* Administrative officers of the university represent entities for which they have administrative responsibilities on councils, committees, and task forces of the university. Officers who are members of the general faculty may also be

represented through the faculty senate, and other officers may be represented through the staff council.

*External Entities Representation.* To advance the mission of the university, the officers of the administration may appoint members of external entities to serve on councils, committees, and task forces.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

*Administration.* The president has been delegated authority to administer the university, to lead the university so that its mission and goals are achieved, and to coordinate university relations with officers of the Board of Trustees. The president recommends the appointment of appropriate administrative officers for the university to the Board of Trustees. The president exercises primary authority through members of the administration in:

- Control and allocation of the budgeted appropriation and other funds;
- Establishment of the administrative organization;
- Approval of personnel appointments;
- Administration of university programs and policies;
- Administration of student affairs and services;
- Administration of physical plant, campus operations, and fiscal affairs;
- Administration of athletics;
- Administration of resource development and fund-raising; and
- Accomplishment of all other assignments to the university by the Board of Trustees.

The president is required by the Board of Trustees to articulate long range university goals and to see that high standards are maintained in all university programs. The president exerts a major influence on the specific direction of change, not only through basic judgments on budgets and staff, but also in the continuous evaluation of existing university programs and in the planning of overall program direction. Such evaluation and planning necessitates the participation of faculty, staff, students, representatives of external entities, and administrative groups and is accomplished through the offices of the vice presidents.

The president is also responsible for maintaining fair employment practices, promotion procedures, and wage and salary distribution, as well as good working conditions for the benefit and safety of all personnel employed by the university.

*Faculty.* The principal responsibilities of the faculty are teaching, research, and service. Because an important additional responsibility of the faculty is to ensure that the university fulfills its educational mission, the faculty must be involved in the generation and implementation of policies that impact the university's mission. On matters primarily affecting the academic mission of the university (curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, advising, degree requirements, faculty scholarship, faculty status, faculty service), the principal responsibility for formulating and evaluating ideas

lies with the faculty. The faculty advises the administration through appropriate channels on these matters. The administration customarily follows this advice. On those extraordinary occasions when this advice is not followed, the administration will identify the reasons that render the proffered advice unwise or impracticable and so inform the faculty. A less direct but no less important role of the faculty is to advise the officers of the university about certain administrative matters that are intrinsically related to the health of the university. Among these matters are:

- Assessment of faculty performance;
- Selection of university officers;
- Determination of university priorities; and
- Establishment of principles for determining salaries.

*Professional and Support Staff.* The Staff Council is an advisory organization with the primary goals of facilitating communication between the staff and the administration and providing input to the administration on university policies and procedures. The primary role of the staff is to support the faculty and the administration in fulfilling the university's mission. The staff conducts the day-to-day affairs of the university, provides essential input to the faculty and administration in planning and decision making processes, and reports on the operations of the university for internal (management) and external (accountability) purposes. On matters of university governance affecting the academic mission of the university, the staff shall have an advisory role.

*Students.* The purpose of the Student Association is to stimulate university-wide student involvement in all areas of university life that lead to achievement of the university's mission. The voice of students is important in all aspects of the university; students should provide input, when appropriate, through university committees, councils, and task forces.

*Administrative Councils and Committees.* Administrative councils and committees play important roles in the governance of the university. These councils and committees may be composed of faculty, staff, students, administrators, and representatives of external entities. The members are elected by the appropriate bodies or are appointed by the president or appropriate vice president to advise the administration in the development of institutional policy, procedure, and practice. A listing of the university's councils and committees with the membership of each is updated annually online (<http://www.msstate.edu/web/standing/>).

## **Participation**

*Evaluation of Administrators and Faculty.* The performance of faculty, staff, and administrative officers should be evaluated periodically. Students should participate in periodic evaluation of the instructional faculty, and those evaluations should be considered important sources of guidance to improve course content and overall learning and teaching effectiveness. The faculty, staff, administrative officers, and students should participate in periodic evaluations of those responsible for the units affecting their roles in the university community including department heads, directors,

associate and assistant deans, and deans. The role of the various groups in such evaluations should be in accordance with their legitimate interest in the performance of the person being evaluated and the group's competence to make evaluative judgments. Evaluations should conform to commonly accepted procedures of evaluation established in consultation with those being evaluated and those evaluating.

*Financial Decisions.* Representatives chosen by the faculty, staff, and students should be consulted in university level discussions of resource allocation and budgetary policies and procedures. The administration may choose additional faculty, students, and staff to participate in discussions of these issues. Consultation in these issues should also occur in colleges, schools, departments, and other units.

*Administrative, Faculty, and Professional Staff Appointments.*

- All professional positions will be created and filled in consultation with the affected faculty, staff, and students, and with the appropriate external constituencies.
- For the Provost and the Vice Presidents for Agriculture and Research, for deans, assistant and associate deans, directors, chairs, and heads of academic, research, or service units, and for all faculty positions, search committees are required and will contain a majority of elected representatives of the faculty. Staff, students and external constituencies shall be drawn from the affected units, as appropriate. Exceptions may be made for one-time, one year appointments as approved by the appropriate vice president.
- For the Vice Presidents of Finance and Administration, Development and Alumni, and Student Affairs, search committees will be appointed by the president in consultation with the Robert Holland Faculty Senate president. The president will publicize the membership of the search committee and the process of selection.
- Specific administrators who serve primarily as advisors or assistants to *university* level executives and who do not regularly exercise independent executive and budgetary authority may be appointed without a search committee.

On those extraordinary occasions when the advice of a search committee is not followed, the administrator making the appointment will inform the committee of the reasons that render the proffered advice unwise or impracticable.

## II. Administrative Organization

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### A. Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the constitutional governing body of the State Institutions of Higher Learning. The purpose of the Board of Trustees is to manage and control Mississippi's public institutions of higher learning in accordance with the constitution and to see that the IHL System mission is accomplished. To do so, the board operates a coordinated system of higher education, establishes prudent governance policies, employs capable chief executives, and requires legal, fiscal and programmatic accountability. The board annually reports to the legislature and the citizenry on the needs and accomplishments of the IHL System. The mission and structure of the board is outlined in the *IHL Policies and Bylaws* which is continually revised (<http://www.mississippi.edu/board/downloads/policiesandbylaws.pdf>). The mission statements are listed in section 102 and the Constitutional Organization is described in section 201. The board office is located in the Education and Research Center, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, Mississippi 39211, phone 601-432-6198.

### B. The President

The President of Mississippi State University is the sole agent of the Board of Trustees on the campus. Full authority to manage the institution is conferred upon the president, in accordance with policies and procedures established by the board and with certain laws specifically applicable to the institution. In conferring full authority, the board requires full responsibility; the president alone reports to the board; and, in turn delegates limited and specific authority to several administrative officials, each with responsibility commensurate with the delegated authority. The president's specific responsibilities include financial management of the institution; the physical plant and campus operations; recruiting, contracting with, and supervising all personnel; recruitment, admission, and instruction of all students; and relationships with people and interested units outside the institution. All functions of the university as it conducts teaching, research, and services are the president's responsibilities.

### C. Other Senior Administrative Positions

#### Provost and Executive Vice President

The Provost and Executive Vice President is responsible for leading and administering the academic programs of the university. The provost prepares, allocates, and administers the academic budgets; administers all academic personnel procedures, including affirmative action, recruitment, appointment, retention, and promotion and tenure; provides leadership for vice presidents, deans, directors, faculty, and staff to meet stated goals; encourages faculty research and scholarly activities; ensures that academic procedures preserve academic freedom; manages academic facilities and



support services, including the Libraries; Information Technology Services; Human Resources Management; Registrar's Office; the University Academic Advising Center; the Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness; Career Center; the Center for Teaching and Learning; and all academic colleges and programs. In the absence of the president, the provost serves as the chief executive officer of the university.

### **Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine**

The Vice President for Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine is responsible for providing administrative leadership and coordination of the units comprising the Division of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine which includes the Forest and Wildlife Research Center, Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station, Mississippi State University Extension Service, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, College of Forest Resources, and College of Veterinary Medicine. Responsibilities for instructional programs are shared with the provost and executive vice president.

### **Vice President for Development and Alumni**

The Vice President for Development and Alumni is primarily responsible for coordinating the operations and activities of the MSU Foundation and Alumni Affairs. The primary function of these units is to communicate with alumni, friends, opinion leaders and the general public concerning the value of the contributions of the university to the State of Mississippi and beyond, and to raise private financial support. The vice president also plans, coordinates, and monitors efforts to secure private funds, ensuring that university programs are matched and coordinated with sources of private funds most appropriate to meet these needs. The university aircraft operations also report to the Vice President for Development and Alumni.

### **Vice President for Research and Economic Development**

The Vice President for Research and Economic Development has administrative responsibility for research, externally sponsored activities in the academic division of the university, and is the university's interface for economic development activities and support. Activities concerned with the development and coordination of basic and applied research are coordinated under the vice president and include formally organized research centers and institutes, as well as individual faculty research. The vice president supervises and administers operation of university level centers and institutes, the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration, the Office of Regulatory Compliance and Safety, the Office of Research Security, and the Office of Entrepreneurship and Technology Transfer, Institute for Imaging and Analytical Technologies, and Thad Cochran Research, Technology and Economic Development Park.

### **Vice President for Student Affairs**

The Vice President for Student Affairs has administrative responsibility for planning and implementing services to meet students' out-of-class needs and providing programs to help students develop psychologically, emotionally, physically, and intellectually. The vice president supervises and administers the Division of Student Affairs; including operations and fiscal planning for the division and coordinates, in consultation of other

professionals, the areas of emphasis, for programs and services to be provided for students.

### **Vice President for Finance and Administration (CFO)**

The Vice President for Finance and Administration (CFO) of the University is responsible for providing financial and operational leadership and coordination for the university. The subdivisions making up the Division of Finance and Administration include Office of the Controller and Treasurer, Campus Services, and Procurement & Contracts. Financial functions of the university, centralized in the Division of Finance and Administration, include the receiving, managing, and disbursing funds from all sources and for fiscal planning and the development of budgets for the university. Operational functions of the university, centralized in the Division of Finance and Administration, include the managing of facilities, parking, transit, and construction (planning and design).

### **Vice President for Access, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The Vice President for Access, Diversity, and Inclusion (VPADI) serves as the senior diversity and inclusion advisor to the President and has administrative responsibility to provide strategic and programmatic leadership for access, diversity and inclusion initiatives that advance equity as a critical component of social, academic and intellectual life at MSU. The VPADI provides vision and leadership to effectively integrate inclusion into the work of MSU, working closely with university leadership and the university community to shape and implement investments, plans and strategies aligned with institutional goals and creating a welcoming environment for all. This includes facilitating and coordinating university strategic planning and prioritization in the areas of diversity and inclusion; conducting periodic climate surveys; and working collaboratively to develop and implement strategies and initiatives that advance a climate of diversity and inclusion and support.

## **D. Administrative Councils**

The president is advised and assisted in administering the affairs of the university by the Administrative Council and the Executive Council.

### **The Administrative and Executive Councils**

The Executive Council is chaired by the president and proffers advice to the president on matters brought before it which include revision and creation of university policies. The council consists of the provost and executive vice president, the vice presidents, the chief information officer, the director of diversity and equity programs, the president of the faculty senate, the chair of the staff council, and the president of the student association. It also has a non-voting staff consisting of the university counsel, the director of internal audit, and the assistants to the president. Minutes of the council are online <http://www.president.msstate.edu/people/executive-council/> .

The Administrative Council advises the president and serves as the board of directors of the MSU Educational Building Corporation. Its membership includes the president

(chair), provost and executive vice president, the vice presidents, general counsel, the athletic director, and director of diversity and equity programs.

## **E. Academic and Research Councils**

### **The Academic Deans Council**

The Academic Deans Council provides leadership in establishing academic policies and procedures, in making decisions about academic programs, and in recommending new degree programs. This body participates in developing long range plans for the university. The Academic Deans Council is chaired by the provost and executive vice president, and includes the associate provost and associate vice president for administrative affairs, the deans of the colleges, the director of the center for distance education, the dean of university libraries, the dean of the Meridian campus, the dean of the Shackouls honors college, the vice president of the Robert Holland faculty senate, and the vice president of the student association.

### **The Associate Deans Council**

The Associate Deans Council recommends academic policies and operational procedures to the Academic Deans Council and implements approved policies and decisions. The Associate Deans Council consists of the associate provost, who serves as chair, the chief information officer, the associate vice president for administrative affairs, the registrar, an associate or assistant dean (or designated representative) from each school, college, or division, as assigned by the appropriate dean, the chair of the academic affairs committee of the faculty senate and attorney general of the Student Association. Other persons may be invited to attend as resource persons.

### **The Graduate Council**

The Graduate Council is the executive committee of the graduate faculty and is responsible for the evaluation and recommendation of academic policy and programs related to graduate study at Mississippi State University. In addition, the members of the council may advise the college deans on any matter they or the deans believe is appropriate. The chairperson of the Graduate Council is elected from the membership for a one-year term that is renewable.

The council is composed of one elected member from each of the academic colleges or schools offering graduate study (programs), and one less in number appointed by the provost. Not more than two appointed faculty members may be from the same college or school. To be eligible for membership on the council, members must have Level 1 status on the graduate faculty. The term of office is three years. Vacancies on the council are filled in the same manner in which the member vacating the position was selected.

In addition to the faculty, the council has one graduate student representative who is usually the president of the Graduate Student Association and is appointed for a one-year term.

Ex officio members of the Graduate Council include the dean of graduate school, associate dean of the graduate school, the provost and executive vice president, the vice president for research and economic development, the associate provost, the dean of university libraries, the director of distance education, the chair of the university courses and curriculum committee, the director of the office of institutional research and effectiveness, the director of the international institute, the graduate studies manager, and the associate director of admissions.

### **The Research and Technology Council**

The Research Council, chaired by the Vice President for Research and Economic Development, advises the president on research policies and procedures and on strategic initiatives in research and economic development. Members of the council are identified and appointed by the vice president in consultation with the president.

### **The Associate Deans for Research Council**

The Associate Deans for Research Council, chaired by the Associate Vice President for Research, advises the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic Development (ORED) on the university's research agenda, policies, and strategic direction. When requested, this council works together to recommend solutions to current questions being considered by ORED. Members of the council include all associate deans for research.

### **The Faculty Research Advisory Committee**

The Faculty Research Advisory Committee (FRAC), chaired by the Associate Vice President for Research, represents faculty interests in the research program. It may function as an advisory body review panel for internal competitive grants programs and make recommendations on operation of university research programs. Members of the FRAC include appointed members from the colleges, the director of Sponsored Program Administration (ex officio) and one representative from the faculty senate.

### **The International Institute**

The International Institute is responsible for providing oversight for the international academic, research and outreach activities. The institute encompasses the Office of International Programs, Study Abroad, and the International Services Office. The associate vice president and executive director of the institute is responsible to the Provost and Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Vice President of Agriculture, Forestry, and Veterinary Medicine, and the Vice President of Research and Economic Development.

### **The Academic Department Heads Council**

Members of the Academic Department Heads Council serve as liaisons between the provost's office and their college-level peers, including other heads and directors. The committee advises on issues related to the effective management of the academic departments to ensure a productive work environment and adherence to university policies.

## F. Standing Committees

Each fall the *Standing Committees* listing is published on the university website (<https://www.msstate.edu/directory/standing-committees/>) listing appointments of faculty, staff, and students to the university's system of standing committees. Committee appointments, which begin in August, typically are for terms of not more than three years, although successive appointments may be made. The website displays the year in which an individual's appointment to a particular committee expires. Individuals whose university titles are given in lieu of an expiration date serve on that committee by virtue of their position or special expertise, and are appointed for indefinite terms.

Most of the committees serve as advisory bodies. *Ad hoc* committees are appointed during the year as needs arise.

## G. Nonacademic Personnel

Nonacademic divisions of the university are generally organized in ways similar to the organization of the academic subdivisions, with departmental heads in charge. The heads, subject to the approval of their superiors, are responsible for hiring personnel and for supervising their performance. The organizational chart of the university shows how the nonacademic departments relate to the president.

## H. Organizational Chart

The organizational chart of the university is updated and posted online at (<http://www.hrm.msstate.edu/orgchart/University%20Org%20Chart.htm>)

# III. The Faculty

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## A. Organization of the Faculty: Charter

The faculty of Mississippi State University is organized under the guidelines set down in *the Charter of Organization of the Faculty of Mississippi State University*. The faculty is divided into two categories, the general faculty and the graduate faculty.

### THE CHARTER OF ORGANIZATION OF THE FACULTY OF MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

#### The General Faculty Composition

The general faculty shall consist of all professionals of the university with these appropriate ranks:

**Academic**

Instructor  
 Assistant Professor  
 Associate Professor  
 Professor

**Extension**

Extension Instructor  
 Assistant Extension Professor  
 Associate Extension Professor  
 Extension Professor

**Clinical**

Clinical Instructor  
 Assistant Clinical Professor  
 Associate Clinical Professor  
 Clinical Professor

**Research**

Assistant Research Professor  
 Associate Research Professor  
 Research Professor

and other appropriate ranks as recommended by the Robert Holland Faculty Senate and approved by the general faculty.

**Voting Eligibility**

All the members of the general faculty may vote.

**Officers**

The officers of the general faculty shall be a chair, who is the president of the university, and a vice chair, who is the president of the faculty senate. The vice chair shall act as the recorder at meetings and as the chair of the general faculty in the absence of the president or his/her designated representative. In the latter case, the vice chair shall appoint a member of the general faculty to act as recorder.

**Organization**

The chair of the general faculty shall appoint a committee to draft the necessary bylaws not contradictory to this charter, to enable the general faculty to perform its functions. These bylaws will become effective upon approval by a majority of the voting members.

**Meetings**

The general faculty shall meet twice a year within 30 days after completion of registration of spring and fall semesters and at other times upon call of the president of the university or of the faculty senate or by petition of 25 percent of the general faculty. A quorum shall consist of two hundred and fifty (250) members who are present and eligible to vote.

Official business of the general faculty will be proposed and discussed during a general faculty meeting. Voting on items can be conducted electronically for up to one (1) week after the general faculty meeting or can be conducted during the general faculty meeting if 250 voting members are present. The vice chair will be responsible for accomplishing the balloting and for reporting the results to the faculty within one month of vote.

**Functions**

The general faculty shall elect, according to the Charter of the Faculty Senate, the members of the faculty senate.

The general faculty shall function individually or collectively to recommend and refer to the faculty senate those matters dealing with the academic community and welfare of the university which it would desire to have the senate consider. This does not deny the right of direct approach of any member of the general faculty to the president or the administration.

The general faculty shall consider all matters referred to it by the president or the faculty senate or members of the general faculty and make recommendations concerning them at its discretion.

### **Amendments**

The Charter of Organization of the Faculty can be amended by a petition submitted by the officers of the general faculty, or by a petition signed by 25 voting members. Amendments must be provided at least thirty (30) days prior to next general faculty meeting. Amendments must be approved by a majority of faculty voting on the amendment. Amendments shall then be submitted to the president of the university and become effective upon the president's approval.

## **B. Organization of the Faculty: Bylaws**

### **Membership List**

The vice chair of the general faculty shall keep available a current list of the membership of the general faculty.

### **Meetings**

Members of the general faculty shall be notified at least seven days in advance of the date of each meeting unless an urgent meeting is summoned to deal with some emergency which will not admit delay.

Convocations of the faculty community that are called for the purpose of introducing new members and welcoming the community to a new school year may not be considered as meetings of the general faculty that are called for by the charter.

### **Committees**

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate, as prescribed in the Charter of Organization of the Faculty of Mississippi State University, is a standing committee of the general faculty.

### **Special Committees**

The general faculty may create special or ad hoc committees for special purposes at any time. Each such committee will report its findings to the general faculty upon completion of its charge.

### **Order of Business**

The regular order of a meeting shall be:

1. Old business
2. Report from the president and chair of the general faculty

3. Report from the Robert Holland Faculty Senate
4. Reports of from university committees designates
5. Time for questions
6. New business.

During that portion of the meeting devoted to questions, the chair shall reply to questions on the operation, policies, practices, and other aspects of the university. Questions can be submitted in advance to the Office of the President.

If time does not allow answers to be given to all of the written questions submitted to the Office of the President prior to the meeting, a written response to the unanswered questions will be sent to members of the general faculty within two weeks of that meeting.

### **Authority and Records**

The general authority for parliamentary procedure in all matters not inconsistent with these bylaws shall be *Robert's Rules of Order*, current edition.

## **C. The Charter of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate**

The general faculty elects representatives (senators) to the Robert Holland Faculty Senate, which functions as a channel of communication between the faculty and the president. The Robert Holland Faculty Senate advises the president on matters referred to it.

### **Composition**

Senators of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate, referred to elsewhere in this document as the faculty senate, shall be elected from the members of the general faculty who have had at least one year of service. Administrative officers at or above the assistant dean level (or equivalent) at Mississippi State University shall not be eligible for elected membership. The president and vice presidents are members of the senate ex officio. Four advisory (non-voting) members shall be the presidents of the Graduate Student Association and the Student Association, or their designates, and elected representatives of the Division of Student Affairs and the Professional and Support Staff Council.

Senators shall be elected by secret ballot from and by full time faculty members of the divisions of the university to be listed below. Faculty members are eligible to vote only within and for members of their particular division. The maximum number of senators on the faculty senate shall be 50. The senate seats shall be allocated on the basis of proportional representation from each of the divisions. All divisions shall be entitled to at least one senator.

Senate representation shall be refigured at two-year intervals or as necessitated by a change in the number of units represented. The units to be represented are as follows:



- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and associated personnel of the Mississippi Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station
- College of Architecture, Art and Design
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Business
- College of Education
- Bagley College of Engineering
- College of Forest Resources and associated personnel of the Forest and Wildlife Research Center
- College of Veterinary Medicine
- Mississippi State University Extension Service
- Mississippi State University-Meridian Campus
- The Libraries.

Other units composed of members of the general faculty may be represented upon the recommendation of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate and the approval of the general faculty. Faculty equivalent individuals who report to various administrative entities but do not hold appointments in one of the units listed above shall be assigned to one of the above units by the appropriate vice president.

Each senator shall serve a period of three years, with elections to be completed by March 15<sup>th</sup> for membership to be assumed during the April meeting and to participate in meetings thereafter. A senator may serve two consecutive terms, after which he/she is ineligible for membership for a year. A senator elected to serve out more than half of an unexpired full term shall be considered, for this purpose, to have served a full term.

### **Voting Eligibility**

Only elected members of the faculty senate (senators) may vote.

### **Officers**

Officers of the faculty senate shall consist of a president, vice president, and secretary who shall be elected in April by a secret majority vote of the senators present. These officers shall serve for a period of one year (July 1 through June 30). Those holding the offices of president and vice president shall not be eligible for more than two consecutive terms.

### **Organization**

The president of the faculty senate will appoint a committee to draft the necessary bylaws not contradictory to this charter, to enable it to perform its function. These bylaws will become effective upon approval of the majority of the senators present at a regularly scheduled senate meeting.

### **Support**

The university shall consider in its budget an appropriation of funds or the appointment of facilities sufficient to allow the faculty senate to perform its functions.

## **Meetings**

The faculty senate shall hold regular meetings in August, September, October, and November during the fall semester and in January, February, March and April during the spring semester and upon call of the president of the senate or petition of seven of its senators. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the senators eligible to vote.

## **Functions**

The faculty senate shall make recommendations to the president of the university on matters pertaining to the welfare of the university.

- The faculty senate shall consider all matters brought before it by the president of the university, the administration, the general faculty, or individuals of the general faculty, and make recommendations concerning them when appropriate.
- The faculty senate shall keep the general faculty fully informed of recommendations.
- The faculty senate shall be represented by its president or his/her representative on the Athletic Council, Board of Directors of the Alumni Association, Executive Council, Planning Committee, and University Faculty Senates Association and other committees as requested by the senate and/or university administration.
- The faculty senate shall be represented by its vice president or his/her representative on the Academic Deans Council, and University Faculty Senates Association, and other committees as requested by the senate, the president of the senate and/or university administration.

## **D. The Bylaws of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate**

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate, having been brought into being by the Charter of Organization of the Faculty of Mississippi State University, conscious of its role as an agency for stimulating, ascertaining, and appropriately articulating considered views and opinions of and for the general faculty will assist in the continued improvement of the university.

### Duties of Officers

*President:* The president of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate is the chief administrative official of the senate and its presiding officer. He/she has the powers and responsibilities commensurate with such functions. Specifically, he/she is charged with the responsibility to:

- send to senators, so as to reach them not less than three full days before a meeting, a notice of the specific items of subjects that he/she knows to be on the agenda for the coming meeting;
- ensure a record of the actions of each meeting be available to members of the general faculty within two weeks following each meeting;
- appoint the members and the chair of each committee;
- transmit to the president of the university, or to such other person to whom a senate recommendation may be directed, the recommendation of the senate;

- keep the senate informed of the disposition of each recommendation that is made;
- state clearly each issue that is being voted on before the vote is taken and announce the results of the vote immediately thereafter;
- notify newly elected senators of their right to participate in the nomination of candidates for the position of president of the senate;
- notify the dean or head of each college or division when any vacancy occurs that an election should be held to fill such vacancy on the senate;
- appoint members of other committees as specified by university policy;
- represent faculty senate on the Athletic Council, Board of Directors of the Alumni Association, Executive Council, Planning Committee, and University Faculty Senates Association and other university committees as requested by the senate and/or university administration.

*Vice President:* The vice president of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate shall preside at senate meetings in the absence of the president. When the senate is to be represented by the president and he/she is unable to represent it, the vice president shall be designated to represent it.

If for any reason the position of senate president should become vacant, the vice president shall become president, and a new vice president shall be elected according to the procedure set forth in this document. In the event of the absence of the president and the vice president at a meeting, the senate must select one of its senators to be the temporary president for that meeting.

The vice president of the senate or his/her representative shall represent the faculty senate on the academic deans council, and other committees as requested by the senate, the president of the senate and/or university administration.

*Secretary:* The secretary of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate shall:

- maintain a record of senate deliberations, keep current a membership list of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate, which shall include the date of expiration of each elected senator's term;
- keep current a membership list of each committee of the senate;
- maintain a list of senate designates on university committees;
- maintains records posted on the faculty senate website (<https://www.facultysenate.msstate.edu/>)

## **Procedures**

### *Studies and Recommendations*

- Each proposal for a study or recommendation by the Robert Holland Faculty Senate must be presented to the senate president in writing with the proposer's name appearing thereon. Each new proposed study or recommendation shall be

provided in written form via electronic or print format or read by the president to the senate prior to voting to accept the study or recommendation.

- After introduction, the question shall be on sending the proposed study or recommendation to committee for further processing.
- Upon the senate's approval, each proposed study or recommendation shall be assigned to the appropriate committee by the president, and a report from that committee is expected in a timely manner at a subsequent meeting of the senate.
- Following the questions of fact, debate shall take place on the question of adopting the proposed recommendation, as presented by the committee, as a recommendation of the senate. Amendments may be offered from the floor.
- One recommendation, or more, adequately based on such a report, may be adopted in the meeting at which the report is given only if the committee has provided the senators with a written copy (electronic or print format) of its report at least three full days before the meeting at which the report is given.
- A recommendation of no action, or the failure of a committee to make a report or recommendation, shall not preclude the right of the senate to take further action on a proposed recommendation or a variation of it.

*External Resolutions:* The proposing and adopting of resolutions pertaining to persons or matters outside the senate shall follow the procedure of proposed recommendation, for adoption, except that if such a proposed resolution shall have been presented to the senate president so as to have been included by him/her in the notification of the agenda to the senators at least three full days in advance of a meeting, it can be moved for adoption at that meeting.

*Internal Affairs:* Motions and resolutions pertaining to internal matters of the senate, which are not otherwise provided for by these bylaws or by the senate's charter, can be initiated and passed upon in a single meeting. A majority vote of those senators present and voting "aye" or "nay" is required for adoption of such motions and resolutions.

*Amending the Bylaws:* Each proposal for an amendment to these laws shall follow the procedure of a proposed recommendation, except that for any amendment to be adopted it must receive a two-thirds vote of the senators present.

*Election of Senators:* Each senator shall serve a period of three years, with elections coordinated by the Faculty Senate to be completed by March 15<sup>th</sup> for membership to be assumed during the April meeting. Colleges/units may elect senators by any procedure provided that:

- the call for nominations is open to the entire college/unit for a reasonable time;
- each person named on the ballot has agreed to serve, if elected;
- there is a clear provision, announced in advance, to determine how multiple vacancies of different terms (three-year term, completion of three-year term, sabbatical-replacement) will be filled;
- elections occur during the 9-month academic year, except in units in which all faculty members have 12-month contracts.

*Election of Officers:* Nominations for the position of president of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate shall be provided in writing to the Faculty Senate Office or the elections officer by any person who shall be a senator in the forthcoming year. The nominations shall be made during a specified time interval between the regular March and April meetings of the senate. In 2008, the faculty senate approved the following procedures for the election of officers:

1. Nominations and elections will be supervised and facilitated by an “elections officer” in the following order of appointment: a) outgoing president, b) elected officer (outgoing vice president, then outgoing secretary), c) a member of the executive committee appointed by the outgoing president, provided she/he is still on the senate and not a candidate for office. The elections officer will be appointed at the March meeting of the senate.

Duties of the elections officer will be to:

- A. Conduct the elections of officers
  - B. Call on candidates for speeches prior to election using alphabetical order
  - C. Develop questions for candidates to answer prior to the third round of balloting if necessary.
  - D. Send out and receive absentee ballots for the first round of balloting
2. All candidates nominated and willing to stand for election will submit electronically a one page statement indicating qualifications and reasons for seeking election to the specific senate office and a vita for distribution to the senate members no later than 5 p.m. one week prior to the date of elections. Statements and vitas will then be electronically forwarded to all senators no later than 5 p.m. the Monday prior to the election.
  3. In the event there are not two candidates for an office, candidates running from the floor should bring a statement indicating reasons for seeking election to the specific senate office for distribution at the senate meeting, and will distribute such statement to all senators present.
  4. All candidates shall have a maximum of five (5) minutes to speak prior to the first ballot for their position. After the second ballot candidates will respond to a question formulated by the elections officer, and again will have a maximum of five (5) minutes to respond to the question.
  5. Absentee ballots will be permitted on the first ballot only. In order to receive an absentee ballot, the senator must request an absentee ballot from the elections officer, and must provide an excuse for senate absence. Ballots must be requested no later than 12:00 noon on the Tuesday prior to the elections. Absentee ballots must be returned to the elections officer no later than 5 p.m. on the Wednesday prior to the elections. Absentee ballots may be submitted to the Robert Holland Faculty Senate or emailed directly to the elections officer.

6. After the March elections of new senators from their respective colleges, a detailed description of the “Nominations and Elections Operating Procedures” will be provided to all senators eligible to vote in the April election of senate officers. This will include instructions for requesting and submitting absentee ballots from and to the appointed “elections officer”.

The president's notice of the agenda for the election meeting shall contain an alphabetical list of the names that have been placed in nomination. If no more than one name has been received in nomination, then additional names can be placed in nomination from the floor. No person shall be considered a nominee unless he/she shall have served on this Senate at least one year.

At the election meeting, secret balloting for the office of president, from among those nominated, shall be conducted immediately following old business. Note that outgoing senators' terms are over at the conclusion of old business of the April agenda. Senators whose terms expire in April that year (and were not re-elected by their college) are not eligible to vote in officer elections. Newly elected senators are not able to vote on old business during the April meeting, but they are eligible to vote on the officer elections and new business.

If no person receives a majority of the voting senators, which includes absentee ballots in the first round only, a second balloting shall take place between the top two vote receivers of the first balloting, or top three vote receivers should there be a tie for second place. Balloting shall continue on those names which were on the second ballot until one receives the required vote. Nominations from the floor will be allowed if there is still a deadlock after five ballots.

The senate shall then proceed to nominate and elect first a vice president who has served on the senate at least one year and then a secretary. In both cases the procedure for election and the required vote as described in Item 2 and Item 3 of this section shall be the same as that given for the election of the senate president.

Following the election of all officers, the retiring president shall present the new officers to the senate.

### **Order of Business**

The regular order of business of the senate shall be:

1. Adoption of minutes.
2. Recognition of new members and guests of the senate (when appropriate).
3. Report of president. This shall include a report of the disposition of previous senate recommendations and resolutions and the report of communication to the senate.
4. Report of vice president.
5. Report from faculty senate designates on university committees.

6. Business to be sent to committee.
7. Standing committee reports.
8. Special committee reports.
9. Old business.
10. New business. Those proposed recommendations, studies, and resolutions that have been submitted to the president in writing shall be considered first, and then items that might be brought up from the floor shall be considered.

(At the April meeting, election of officers is to occur just prior to new business.) Note that outgoing senators' terms are over at the conclusion of old business of April agenda. Outgoing senators are not eligible to vote in officer elections. Newly elected senators are not able to vote on old business during the April meeting, but they are eligible to vote on the officer elections and new business.

### **Standing Committees**

The Robert Holland Faculty Senate shall have standing committees through which it can systematically and continually keep itself informed. These committees and their jurisdictions, until the Senate otherwise directs by a majority of senators, shall be:

- *Academic Affairs*--those matters that are directly concerned with the university achievement of its primary purpose;
- *Ancillary Affairs*--those matters that are subservient and subordinate to and adjuncts of the primary purpose of the university but which do not fall within the areas of student or faculty affairs;
- *Faculty Affairs*--those ancillary matters which exclusively or primarily affect the General Faculty;
- *Student Affairs*--those ancillary matters which exclusively or primarily affect the students;
- *Charter and Bylaws*--for regular review and recommendation concerning the operating procedure, structure, size, representation, and other internal matters of the Senate; to report the number of general faculty in each unit represented on the faculty senate at the February meeting of each year; to report at the February meeting of every odd-numbered year the number of senators each unit is to have on the faculty senate until the next reapportionment. The chair of the Charter and Bylaws Committee will serve as the chair of the Faculty Handbook Committee, and as editor of the Faculty Handbook.
- *University Resources*--study the allocation of resources within the university and acquaint the faculty senate with such allocations.

All senators (with the exception of the president and vice president) will be appointed to a standing committee by the president. Each senator shall serve on that committee to which he/she is appointed throughout his/her term on the senate, unless he/she asks for and receives removal by the senate president. The chair of each standing committee shall be appointed yearly by the newly elected senate president.

Each standing committee shall receive, inform itself concerning, and report to the senate through one of its members on any proposed recommendation, study, or other matter which shall have been referred to it by a vote of the senate. In the discharge of its responsibility, it shall seek collectively, and its members shall seek individually, such factual information and the opinion of such interested parties as will provide the senate with a firm and complete basis for sound and responsible decisions.

### **Special Committees**

By a vote of the senate, or on the initiative of the senate president, special committees can be created temporarily to handle such matters as do not readily fall within the jurisdiction of one of the standing committees, or to handle such matters as might require intensive work or special handling.

The majority of the members of a special committee shall be from the faculty senate.

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate shall be a special committee chaired by the senate president and shall consist of the vice president, secretary, and all the chairs of standing committees of the senate. This committee shall act as an advisory committee to the senate president on all matters brought to the attention of senate by any of its members or any items affecting the faculty brought to the attention of the senate president by members of the administration.

### **Terms**

- The terms of office of the senate's officers shall begin July 1 and end June 30 for the following year. These officers retain full voting rights in the Faculty Senate until the completion of their terms as officers.
- Each senator shall serve a period of three years.
- Election of senators is to be completed by March 15<sup>th</sup> for membership that will be confirmed during the April meeting.
- The full term of a senator begins with election of officers during the April meeting.
- The full term ends upon completion of unfinished/old business during the April meeting.
- The terms of persons elected to fill unexpired terms of senators who resign or otherwise relinquish their membership are limited to the unexpired terms of the senators being replaced. Election and active membership of these replacements shall take place immediately following the occurrence of the vacancy.
- A senator may serve two consecutive terms, after which he/she is ineligible for membership for one year. A senator elected to serve out more than half of an unexpired full term shall be considered, for this purpose, to have served a full term.
- During reapportionment years, when a unit loses one or more senators and either none of the senators' terms expire that year, or more than one of the senators' terms expire that year, the faculty of the affected unit must determine which individual(s) will continue to represent them.
- When units represented on the faculty senate are deleted by a vote of the general faculty, the terms of the affected senators will expire mid-meeting in April of that year.



## Meetings

- The faculty senate shall hold regular meetings in August, September, October, and November during the fall semester and in January, February, March and April during the spring semester. All meetings shall be held in the second week of each month, except when there is a conflict with scheduled holidays or other significant university events, such as graduation, in which case the meetings shall be scheduled on the Friday before or after the conflict. The August meeting will be held on the first Friday in August after classes have begun, i.e. normally the third Friday in August. If extraordinary circumstances cause a meeting to be cancelled (e.g., inability to meet because of natural disaster), the meeting should be rescheduled. Any changes to the regular senate meeting schedule should be communicated to the members as early as possible.
- All meetings shall be open unless by a two-thirds vote of the senators present the senate should otherwise direct for any meeting or part thereof.
- The senate, by a specific vote and for a specific purpose, may allow itself to be addressed by a non-member. The vote must be a majority of those present.
- While the senate has authority to make rules and regulations concerning the orderly manner and the time limitations thereof, no part of these bylaws or of such rules and regulations as shall be made by the senate shall ever prevent, obstruct, or inhibit the right of a senator or a member of the general faculty from personally bringing a matter to the attention of the senate during that portion of the meeting devoted to new business.
- Urgent meetings of the senate can be called to consider a matter which is felt to warrant immediate attention without the usual three-day notice of the meeting being given and the urgent matter shall be the agenda of the meeting; but such a meeting shall be null and void unless its purpose shall have been clearly stated to each senator available for notification of the meeting.
- For elected senators to be counted as present, they must be physically present for all regularly scheduled faculty senate meetings unless granted an excused absence.
- When a senator has three consecutive unexcused absences of regular meetings of the senate, his/her dean shall be notified by the president of the senate and a new election will be held to replace the recalled member.

## Voting

- Voting on the adoption of recommendations, external resolutions, amendments to the bylaws, and the appeal of rulings of the president shall be by a show of hands. The charter requires secret voting for the election of senate officers. In any other matter another method of voting may be used except that if one-third of the senators present request it, the vote must be by show of hands.
- The affirmative vote of two-thirds of the senators present shall be sufficient to suspend provisions of the senate's bylaws in order to expedite the handling of a particular matter, but the provisions of the bylaws on vote and voting shall not be suspended.
- Only senators may vote, and the vote of a majority of successive members voting "aye" or "nay" shall be sufficient in all instances not otherwise provided for by the senate charter or its bylaws.

## E. The Graduate Faculty

The Graduate Faculty are those Mississippi State University faculty whose expertise and professional accomplishments qualify them to participate in graduate education at MSU. The qualifications for Graduate Faculty are developed and approved by the Graduate Council and can be found at [www.grad.msstate.edu/faculty/](http://www.grad.msstate.edu/faculty/).

## IV. Faculty Responsibilities and Academic Operating Policies

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Important issues of an academic nature are established as Academic Operating Policies (AOPs) by the Provost and Executive Vice President. An alphabetized list of the AOPs is provided with links to the current AOPs. These policies are periodically reviewed and revised by the Associate Deans Council, Deans Council, and the Robert Holland Faculty Senate. All policies must be reviewed, maintained, and followed. To ensure the ease and accuracy of compliance, all policies are available at the Office of Internal Audit at [http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/mainindex.html#VOLUME\\_II](http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/mainindex.html#VOLUME_II)

# FACULTY HANDBOOK

## V. Promotion and Tenure Procedures

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Revised and Approved by the Robert Holland Faculty Senate, 2-13-2015  
Signed by Provost and Executive Vice President, Jerome Gilbert, 2-13-2015  
Signed by President Mark Keenum, 3-6-2015

### 1 A. Scope

2 This document records Mississippi State University's policies and procedures governing  
3 academic tenure and promotion in rank. These policies and procedures were drawn up  
4 by the Robert Holland Faculty Senate in accordance with the Bylaws and Policies of the  
5 Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) (sections 402, 403, and  
6 404) and have been approved by the Robert Holland Faculty Senate, the provost, and  
7 the university president.

This document (Section V.) applies only to faculty members in tenure-track positions. The appointment and termination of non-tenure-track faculty members is governed by IHL Board Policy 404.01-404.02, and their promotion is governed by university, college, school and departmental policies. Such faculty members are not eligible for tenure, but may apply for open tenure-track positions.

Suggested changes and recommendations to this document can originate with the president, the provost, the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Faculty Senate, and/or tenured and tenure-track faculty. The president of the Faculty Senate will distribute copies of the suggested change(s) and recommendation(s) to all senate members and the Faculty Senate will prepare its own recommendation(s). The Faculty Senate's report on the recommended changes in the promotion and tenure document will be reviewed at two regularly scheduled senate meetings before a vote on the recommendations will be held. A copy of the Faculty Senate's decision will be sent to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Final action on the recommendation(s) will be taken by the president and announced through all appropriate channels.

The procedure outlined in the previous paragraph will be followed, unless some extraordinary occasion should demand a more immediate change. In all cases, however, the Faculty Senate must vote to approve all changes and the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure will be a part of the process of consideration.

The policies and procedures in effect in any academic year must have been fully approved by the Faculty Senate and signed by the provost and the president. If the changes to the university document are approved between May 16 and October 1 of a given year (calendar year 1), then the changes to the university document will go into effect May 16 of the following year (calendar year 2). If the changes are approved after October 1 (calendar year 1) and before May 16 of the subsequent year (calendar year 2), then changes in the university document will go into effect on May 16 of the following year (calendar year 3). In both cases, all college and department documents must be revised as necessary no later than the effective date of the revised university document. Copies of all officially-approved, university promotion and tenure policies and procedures, including subsequent revisions, together with their dates of approval, will be kept in the Faculty Senate Office and the Office of the Provost. In addition, an electronic copy of the current policies and procedures will be posted on the MSU website (at [www.facultysenate.msstate.edu](http://www.facultysenate.msstate.edu)).

## **B. Academic Rank**

A faculty member of professorial rank must have a professional or terminal degree appropriate to the discipline (or the equivalent in training and experience), a strong commitment to higher education and to the mission of Mississippi State University, and a willingness to assume the responsibilities and obligations appropriate to a university faculty member.

Academic ranks at Mississippi State University include:

*Assistant Professor:* A faculty member who has met the requirements in the first paragraph of this section and has the potential to be successful in the areas of teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service.

*Associate Professor:* A faculty member who has met the criteria for assistant professor, who has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service, and who excels in at least one of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the departmental promotion and tenure documents, an associate professor is developing a national and/or international reputation, and is showing a potential for making sustained contributions to the university and to his/her profession, field, or discipline.

*Professor:* A faculty member who has met the criteria for associate professor, who has consistently demonstrated an ability to perform at a satisfactory level in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service, and who excels in at least two of these areas. Based upon the criteria established in the departmental promotion and tenure documents, a professor must have a national and/or international reputation within his/her profession, area of expertise, or discipline.

## **C. Promotion**

Promotion is never granted simply for satisfactory performance or for length of service, but reflects progressively higher professional competence and accomplishment. Promotion from assistant professor to associate professor, or from associate professor to professor, will normally only be considered after a faculty member has served at least five years in rank so that sustained productivity at MSU can be demonstrated. Applications for promotion prior to that time will be regarded as early action and considered only for exceptionally strong and well documented cases. Rank should reflect comparable stature with others in similar disciplines in other university settings. Professional achievement at another academic institution may be considered for promotion.

## **D. Tenure**

The granting of tenure is a faculty-driven process and is the academic community's chief guarantee of academic freedom for the faculty member to perform his/her academic duties without undue or inappropriate external pressures.

Definition: *Tenure* is defined by IHL Board Policy 403.01 as "Continuing employment that may be granted to a faculty member after a probationary period upon nomination by the Institutional Executive Officer for election by the Board."

IHL Board Policy 403.0104 further provides that a tenured faculty member is protected from dismissal except under the extraordinary circumstances stated in section *L. Dismissal of Tenured Faculty* of this document.

According to IHL Board Policy 403.01, tenure is granted in a department, unless otherwise designated by the IHL Board.

Attainment of tenure at Mississippi State University is by no means automatic, based on years of service, but is the result of a thorough evaluation of a faculty member's performance in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service. The proportions of these activities may vary by discipline. Excellence in one area and satisfactory performance in the others are needed to qualify a faculty member for tenure.

Tenure is granted with the university's expectation that the faculty member will continue to perform at or above the minimum standards set by the department, school, or college, and university.

Eligibility. Tenure may be granted to professors, associate professors, and simultaneously to assistant professors upon promotion to associate professor. Faculty members of all professorial ranks in specifically designated tenure-track positions may work toward tenure. An employee cannot be promoted into a professorial position unless specified in the original offer letter. Non-tenure track faculty positions cannot be converted to tenure track positions (IHL section 404.01).

## **Probationary Period**

A faculty member must apply for and be recommended for tenure by the president during the sixth full contract year of employment in a tenure-track position. Failure to earn tenure at the end of the sixth full contract year will result in a terminal contract in the seventh full contract year. The probationary period for tenure-track faculty begins at the start of the faculty member's first full contract year. A full contract year is defined as one that starts on August 16 for 9-month employees and on July 1 for 12-month employees and continues until the next contract period. If the initial contract is for a partial year, e.g., starts after August 16 for a 9-month employee and after July 1 for a 12-month employee, that time is not included in the probationary period.

Up to five years at other universities may be counted in this probationary period, as determined and agreed upon by the departmental promotion and tenure committee, the department head or director, the dean, and the faculty member in the letter of offer at the time of initial appointment.

For clearly stated personal reasons (e.g., emergencies related to health, activation of military service, pregnancy, adoption, childcare, care of parents), a faculty member may request an extension of up to two years from the first five years of this probationary period for an approved leave of absence or a modified assignment. Specific aspects of

such an extension must be established by the department head or director, the dean, the provost, and the faculty member. Such an agreement must be in writing. The departmental promotion and tenure committee shall be notified in writing of the extension and the revised probationary period.

IHL Board Policy 403.0101 allows a faculty member or an administrative employee who held faculty rank at the level of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor and tenure at another institution to be awarded tenure at the time of initial appointment if recommended by the faculty of the tenuring department, the dean, the provost, and the president, and awarded by the IHL Board.

For faculty members with a shortened probationary period as specified in an offer letter or an approved extended probationary period, the "third-year review" should be held at the midpoint of the individual's probationary period.

#### **E. Relationship Between Promotion and Tenure**

Faculty members who have met the requirements for promotion, but who have not fulfilled the probationary period for tenure, may be promoted without tenure.

Faculty members who are granted tenure as assistant professors automatically meet the criteria for promotion to associate professor.

#### **F. Performance Standards and Evaluation of Professional Activities**

Every faculty member is expected to meet high standards of professional competence and integrity and to further the goals of his/her department or unit. In every case, a faculty member's performance in teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service will be judged by all participants in promotion and/or tenure decisions on the basis of specific criteria in written policy statements, developed by the appropriate academic units. All criteria should be based on the application of the highest professional standards and are to be in harmony with the following university criteria:

*Teaching.* Criteria may include regular classroom and laboratory instruction; supervision of field work, internships, performances, and fellowships; direction of theses and dissertations; development of educational materials; conduct of other academic programs that confer university credit; invited presentation of non-credit and off-campus lectures and demonstrations; and other teaching activities as defined by the academic units. Excellence in teaching includes the ability to impart the knowledge, methods, and standards of the discipline, the ability to communicate effectively with students by counseling, advising, or motivating them, the ability to direct students in their own research, and the ability to evaluate student work accurately and fairly according to prevailing academic standards of the discipline. Excellence in teaching may be documented by peer reviews, student awards, student evaluations, student successes, faculty teaching awards, recognition of teaching excellence, sample course materials, recordings of teaching sessions,

graduate student theses and dissertations, and any other documentary materials that demonstrate teaching effectiveness on the university campus or at the national or international level.

*Research and/or Creative Achievement.* Criteria may include systematic, original investigation directed toward the enlargement or validation of human knowledge, the solution of contemporary problems, or the exploration of creative forms that bring greater meaning to life. Excellence in research and/or creative achievement must be established by critical peer evaluation, using standards prevailing in the discipline. Excellence may be documented by books, articles, or reviews published by commercial or university presses or in refereed journals of international, national, or regional prestige; research grants, leading to high quality research, intellectual property; presentation of papers before professional groups; invited participation in scholarly conferences; editorial work for professional journals or publishers; or artistic or humanistic performances, presentations, or shows. Evidence of substantive progress on long-term projects that meet the criteria above may be considered as specified by the academic units.

*Service.* Criteria may include activities which enhance the scholarly life of the university or the discipline, improve the quality of life or society, or promote the general welfare of the institution, the community, the state, the nation, or international community. Thus it includes outreach and extension of academic knowledge to the public, participation on departmental, college, or university committees, or on regional, national, or international scholarly committees, boards, or review panels, or on public boards as a representative of the scholarly community. Membership or participation in such bodies may constitute satisfactory service, but excellence requires leadership or initiative leading to substantial improvements or progress.

In evaluating a faculty member being considered for tenure, the appropriate faculty committees and academic administrators will give adequate consideration to the faculty member's professional performance as a function of his/her relative academic workload assignments within the three academic missions of service, teaching/instruction, and research/creative activities. Adequate consideration of a tenure case consists of a conscientious review, which seeks out and considers all available evidence bearing on the relevant performance of the faculty member, and assumes that the various academic units follow their approved procedural guidelines during the tenure and promotion review process. Such consideration should be based upon adequate deliberation over the evidence in light of relevant standards and exclusive of improper standards (i.e., any criterion not related to the professional performance of the faculty member). The evaluation of a tenure case should constitute a bona fide exercise of professional academic judgment.

## 199 **G. Annual Faculty Evaluation and Review**

200 At the time of initial appointment, each faculty member will be informed in writing by the  
201 department head or unit administrator whether the appointment is tenure-track or non-  
202 tenure-track and referred to the Promotion and Tenure Procedures section of the  
203 Faculty Handbook, as well as college and departmental promotion and tenure policies  
204 (e.g. appropriate websites with online versions of these documents). The new faculty  
205 member will agree by signature to the understood and agreed upon terms of  
206 employment.

207 During the probationary period, the department head will counsel each faculty member  
208 annually about progress toward promotion and tenure. This annual evaluation will  
209 comprise a written review of the previous year's progress and a written agreement  
210 about the faculty member's objectives, responsibilities, and expectations for the coming  
211 year, and the department head's or director's assessment of progress toward tenure.

212 The written agreement about the coming year must be consistent with the promotion  
213 and tenure criteria of the department, the school or college, and the university. If the  
214 department head or director and the faculty member cannot reach agreement, the  
215 matter will be referred to the dean.

216 The annual evaluation, signed by both parties, will be sent to the dean. A copy will be  
217 placed in the faculty member's personnel file. The faculty member has the right to attach  
218 a dissenting statement to all copies of this evaluation.

219 No record in personnel files relating to promotion or tenure is to be added, changed, or  
220 withdrawn without the knowledge of the faculty member and the unit administrator.  
221 Personnel files are confidential and are available only to the faculty member and  
222 university officials. Appropriate administrators will make all pertinent information  
223 available to elected promotion and tenure committees and administrators when the  
224 faculty member is a candidate for promotion and tenure. If material from a personnel file  
225 (or other material that is not in the candidate's promotion or tenure application) is  
226 provided to a committee or administrator, then the candidate will be provided a copy of  
227 the material and an opportunity to submit his/her written comments regarding the  
228 material before the material is considered by the committee or administrator. Otherwise,  
229 no additions will be made.

230

## 231 **H. Promotion and Tenure Committees**

### 232 **University Committee on Promotion and Tenure**

233 The University Committee on Promotion and Tenure serves four functions:

234 to advise the provost on promotion and tenure matters, including the review of  
235 criteria, policies, and procedures for promotion and tenure used by schools or  
236 colleges;



237 to hear appeals from faculty members whose nominations for promotion or tenure  
238 have been denied;

239 to review suggested changes in this document; and to hear appeals from tenured  
240 faculty members who have been recommended for termination.

241 The committee consists of one member elected from each academic unit with an  
242 administrative head. Committee members will elect a chair who reports directly to the  
243 provost. Members must be full-time, tenured professors, rank of associate professor or  
244 above. No faculty member functioning as an administrator, department head, or director  
245 of an academic unit will be a member of the committee. Committee members are  
246 elected in the fall by a majority vote of the unit's full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty  
247 members with the rank of assistant professor and above. Members may serve for two  
248 consecutive three-year terms, excluding partial terms. A partial term will be filled by  
249 election, as needed. The committee will annually elect its chair, who will be a full voting  
250 member of the committee.

## 251 **College Promotion and Tenure Committees**

252 Every college will establish and maintain a promotion and tenure committee. Each  
253 college will develop its own criteria for membership on the committee, and the  
254 procedures for electing members to that committee. These criteria and procedures  
255 must be approved by both a majority vote of the college's full-time tenured and tenure-  
256 track faculty and the college dean.

- 257 • Committee members must hold a rank at least as high as the candidate's  
258 aspirant rank to review and vote on each case. For example, an associate  
259 professor can participate in the review of dossiers for tenure and promotion to  
260 associate professor but not on the committee reviewing dossiers for promotion to  
261 professor. Only tenured faculty may vote on a tenure recommendation.
- 262 • The length of terms will be determined by the unit.
- 263 • No member of the committee will consider the application of a relative.  
264 Appearance of conflicts of interest should be avoided.
- 265 • No faculty member functioning as an administrator, department head or director  
266 of an academic unit will be a member of the committee.
- 267 • No faculty member may participate in a candidate's promotion or tenure review at  
268 more than one level.
- 269 • The committee will annually elect its chair.
- 270 • The membership of the committee will be made known to the faculty.
- 271 • An individual will not serve in a year that his/her promotion application is being  
272 considered.

The responsibilities of a college promotion and tenure committee will be the following:

1. To write the college's promotion and tenure policies and procedures which must be consistent with university promotion and tenure policies, include the mechanism for their adoption and revision, describe the procedures that will be followed if sufficient numbers of members are not available because of absences, recusal or insufficient rank, and identify the participation of the different categories of faculty in the college promotion and tenure process.
2. To approve the promotion and tenure documents of departmental committees within the college and to ensure that such documents are consistent with the mission of the university and the college, and the university promotion and tenure document;
3. To assist departments in developing procedures for a third-year review of all non-tenured, tenure-track faculty;
4. To assist departments in developing criteria for external peer reviews, including the identification of peer departments or schools at other colleges or universities;
5. To assist departments in developing definitions of excellence, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory as it pertains to the evaluation of candidates for promotion and tenure;
6. To assist departments in developing definitions of teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service consistent with the mission of the department or school;
7. To conduct a vote on all dossiers for promotion and tenure, ensuring department standards are fairly applied and university standards are maintained; and
8. To approve the departmental promotion and tenure document and policies and all subsequent changes.

## **Department and School Promotion and Tenure**

Every department and school will write a promotion and tenure document, which is approved by a majority vote of the professorial faculty. In comprehensive departments with both tenured/tenure-track and non-tenured/tenure-track faculty, the promotion-only portions of the document will be approved by a majority vote of the professorial faculty while the promotion and tenure portions of the document will be approved by a majority vote of the tenured and tenure-track faculty. The department document must:

1. contain the criteria and procedures for promotion and tenure,
2. define teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service, consistent with the mission of the department or school, including criteria for developing a national reputation and an established national reputation,
3. specify criteria for excellence, satisfactory, and unsatisfactory as it pertains to the evaluation of candidates for promotion and tenure,
4. determine the structure of the department promotion and tenure committee,
5. specify the criteria for eligibility of professorial faculty to serve on the department promotion and tenure committee, and

315 6. describe any specifics, including any uniqueness, of the department or school  
316 in which the individual is to be tenured.

317 Every department and school will establish and maintain a promotion and tenure  
318 committee. The department committee may include any category of faculty with  
319 professorial rank. The promotion and tenure procedures must specify the inclusiveness  
320 of the committee composition and clearly establish the eligibility for voting and  
321 participation within the department promotion and tenure process. In comprehensive  
322 departments where there may be non-tenure track faculty of rank serving on  
323 departmental committees along with tenured faculty, it is permissible for all faculty  
324 members on the committee of appropriate rank to vote on promotion to associate  
325 professor or to professor rank. Only tenured faculty members on the committee can  
326 vote on the tenure decision. When a candidate is being considered for promotion to  
327 associate professor or to professor and for tenure at the same time, any non-agreement  
328 of the promotion vote and the tenure vote will be resolved by vote of only the tenured  
329 faculty members on the committee.

330 The faculty of each school or department will determine the structure of its promotion  
331 and tenure committee, subject to the conditions that:

- 332 • The committee consists of at least three tenured members.
- 333 • Committee members must hold a rank at least as high as the candidate's  
334 aspirant rank in order to review and vote on each case. For example, an  
335 associate professor can participate in the review of dossiers for tenure and  
336 promotion to associate professor but not on the committee reviewing dossiers for  
337 promotion to professor.
- 338 • The department promotion and tenure policies shall describe the procedures that  
339 will be followed if sufficient numbers of members are not available because of  
340 absence, recusal or insufficient rank. Only tenured faculty may vote on a tenure  
341 recommendation.
- 342 • Unless a unit uses a committee-of-the-whole, the members of the committee  
343 must be elected. The length of terms will be determined by the unit.
- 344 • No member of the committee will consider the application of a relative.  
345 Appearance of conflicts of interest should be avoided.
- 346 • No faculty member functioning as an administrator, department head or director  
347 of an academic unit will be a member of the committee.
- 348 • No faculty member may participate in a candidate's promotion or tenure review at  
349 more than one level.
- 350 • The committee will annually elect its chair.
- 351 • The membership of the committee will be made known to the faculty.
- 352 • An individual will not serve in a year that his/her promotion application is being  
353 considered.

Among the responsibilities of the department and school promotion and tenure committee are the following:

1. To establish procedures for a third-year review of all non-tenured, tenure-track faculty;
2. To specify a mandatory date by which candidates must notify the department head of their intent to submit an application for tenure and/or promotion;
3. To specify criteria for external peer reviews, including the identification of peer departments or schools at other colleges or universities;
4. To facilitate all votes related to the promotion and tenure process, including the vote to approve the original promotion and tenure document and policies and all subsequent changes;
5. To conduct a review by the end of the third year of all non-tenured, tenure-track faculty; and
6. To conduct a vote on all dossiers for promotion and tenure.

College, school or departmental promotion and tenure committees will consider, if submitted, but are not bound by, the department head's annual review of a candidate's progress toward tenure or promotion.

Prior to the offer of hire, the appropriate promotion and tenure committee will make a formal recommendation about the initial appointment of a faculty member or administrator at the rank of associate professor or professor, about the acceptance of experience as the equivalent of a terminal degree, and about the award of years of credit at another institution of higher education toward fulfillment of the minimum probationary period for tenure.

## **I. Procedures for Faculty Promotion and Tenure**

### **The process**

The decision to recommend tenure to the IHL Board of Trustees is made by the president. All judgments made at lower levels of the university are recommendations to the president.

A candidate for tenure and/or promotion must notify the department head of his/her intent to submit his/her application for review on or prior to a date that must be specified in the department promotion and tenure document. Department heads must inform assistant professors of this date during the annual faculty review for the fifth year of their employment contract.

The date by which candidates must notify their department head of their intent can vary between departments and colleges, but it must provide sufficient time to notify external reviewers and receive their letters of evaluation prior to October 1<sup>st</sup> or any official stage of application review. The solicitation process for external evaluators will be initiated

392 when the candidate notifies the appropriate department head or unit director of his/her  
393 intent to be considered for tenure and/or promotion.

394 External letters will be solicited from professionals in the field who can provide an  
395 impartial evaluation of the candidate's work and accomplishments.

396 The external reviewers will generally be tenured faculty at peer to peer-plus institutions,  
397 or peer to peer-plus departments. External faculty reviewers should not include  
398 individuals who have a professional or personal conflict-of-interest with the candidate.  
399 Conflicts-of-interest in general would include but not necessarily be restricted to  
400 previous mentors, previous graduate students, collaborating co-authors, collaborating  
401 co-investigators, or relatives/past-relatives. In disciplines or fields where the general  
402 conflict-of-interest definition commonly does not apply, external reviewers normally  
403 excluded from the process can be utilized if complete and adequate justification is  
404 provided. Definition of what constitutes a conflict-of-interest may be further defined in  
405 the department promotion and tenure document and be in accord with the Policy and  
406 Procedures Document for Conflict-of-Interest and Ethics (Department of Human  
407 Resources and Management: Employee Relations Section Mississippi Code of 1972  
408 Sections 25-4-101 through 25-4-105). The candidate, the department promotion and  
409 tenure committee, and department head will each provide a list of names that will be  
410 used to create a master list of potential external reviewers.

411 The department head and department promotion and tenure committee chair will jointly  
412 select the final list of external reviewers from whom letters of evaluation will be  
413 requested and should include faculty names provided by all three sources. Both the  
414 department head and department promotion and tenure committee chair are  
415 responsible for eliminating, to the best of their knowledge, all external reviewers that  
416 have a conflict-of-interest.

417 Dossiers must contain an explanation of the credentials and qualifications of each  
418 external reviewer regarding his/her training/background in addition to the extent of  
419 his/her contact, interaction or relationship with the candidate. External letters of  
420 evaluation must be received from a minimum of four external reviewers for inclusion in  
421 the dossier of the candidate. It is the responsibility of the chair of the departmental  
422 committee or the department head to obtain at least the minimum number of letters of  
423 evaluation from external reviewers who have agreed to function in this capacity. All  
424 letters received from external reviewers must be included in the dossier of the candidate  
425 unless the department head and department promotion and tenure committee  
426 collectively decide to withdraw a letter from the review process if it contains information  
427 that refers to or describes a conflict-of-interest. In instances when substantial  
428 modifications of the application have occurred (e.g. official notifications of accepted  
429 publications or awarded grants) after documentation has been forwarded to the external  
430 reviewers, these achievements can be communicated in a letter written by the  
431 candidate and forwarded to the department head. The letter should be included in the  
432 section of the dossier containing the external letters of review.

433 The identity of the external reviewers will not be revealed to the candidate and  
434 communications must not include any information that might indicate the identity or  
435 location of any external reviewer. Exceptions may include situations as may be required  
436 by law or ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction. The specific procedures  
437 regarding solicitation and use of external letters of evaluation are to be detailed in  
438 school and departmental policies.

439 The candidate makes a formal application for promotion and/or tenure by completing  
440 the MSU Application for Promotion and Tenure form and attaching supporting  
441 documentation. Each unit will specify the format and the level of detail for the supporting  
442 documentation. No additional support material may be added or removed from this file  
443 after a decision has been made at the department level, unless the candidate,  
444 department head and the departmental committee mutually agree. The request will be  
445 made in writing, define what is being added or removed, state the purpose for the  
446 change in the application, be signed by all parties, and be included as part of the formal  
447 application. Letters of recommendation will be added to the dossier at each level of  
448 review. If the candidate submits letters of factual correction for any level of review,  
449 those letters and any review-level response (described below) will also be included in  
450 the dossier.

451 A complete dossier for promotion and tenure for the official review process will include  
452 the application submitted by the candidate and at least the minimum of four external  
453 letters of review. Only complete dossiers for promotion and tenure that contain the  
454 application for the candidate and the minimum number of external letters will be  
455 evaluated at the level of the department promotion and tenure committee, department  
456 head, college committee, college dean, or university provost.

457 Except for the candidate's optional letters of factual correction (described below), the  
458 candidate takes no part in the process after submission of the application, unless  
459 requested to do so by those considering the dossier. No discussion of correspondence  
460 relating to the dossier is to be initiated by the candidate with the reviewing authorities.  
461 Deliberation at all levels will be confidential.

462 The department promotion and tenure committee will review the information in the  
463 candidate's promotion and tenure dossier. The committee will make a recommendation  
464 on the question of promotion or promotion and tenure by a single vote evaluating the  
465 three areas (teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service) as a whole.  
466 The committee's recommendation will be based on a simple majority vote, conducted by  
467 secret ballot. The committee chair will submit a letter of recommendation and rationale  
468 to be included in the candidate's dossier. The candidate will receive a copy of the  
469 committee's letter of recommendation and rationale that is redacted only insofar as  
470 necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers. The rationale shall characterize  
471 external reviewers' comments that informed the committee's decision. The letter of  
472 recommendation and rationale of the committee will be included in the dossier as it  
473 proceeds through the review process. The chair will notify the department head of the  
474 committee's recommendation.

475 The department head or director will separately and independently review the dossier.  
476 His/her recommendations will be based on pertinent evidence documented in the faculty  
477 member's dossier and information in the personnel file that is applicable to the  
478 candidate's performance in professional activities. The candidate will receive a copy of  
479 the department head's or director's letter of recommendation and rationale that is  
480 redacted only insofar as necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers. The  
481 rationale shall characterize external reviewers' comments that informed the department  
482 head's or director's decision. The letter of recommendation and rationale of the  
483 department head or director will be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the  
484 review process.

485 The candidate may respond to the department promotion and tenure committee's  
486 and/or the department head's or director's letters to correct any factual errors  
487 represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of each letter. The  
488 candidate's letter(s) of factual corrections must be sent to the review level to which the  
489 response was made. That level may address the concerns in a new letter to be included  
490 in the application within 5 working days of receipt of the candidate's letter of factual  
491 correction. All letters shall be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review  
492 process.

493 The college promotion and tenure committee will review the information in the  
494 candidate's promotion and tenure dossier. The committee will make a recommendation  
495 on the question of promotion or promotion and tenure by a single vote evaluating the  
496 three areas (teaching, research and/or creative achievement, and service) as a whole.  
497 The committee's recommendation will be based on a simple majority vote, conducted by  
498 secret ballot. The committee chair will submit a letter of recommendation and rationale  
499 to be included in the candidate's dossier. The candidate will receive a copy of the  
500 college promotion and tenure committee's letter of recommendation and rationale that is  
501 redacted only insofar as necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers. The  
502 rationale shall characterize external reviewers' comments that informed the committee's  
503 decision. The letter of recommendation and rationale of the committee will be included  
504 in the dossier as it proceeds through the review process. The candidate may respond  
505 to the college promotion and tenure committee's letter to correct any factual errors  
506 represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of the letter. The  
507 committee may address the concerns in a new letter to be included in the dossier within  
508 5 working days of receipt of the candidate's letter of factual correction. All letters shall  
509 be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review process.

510 The dean will review the dossier and make a recommendation based on pertinent  
511 evidence documented in the faculty member's promotion and tenure dossier and  
512 information in the personnel file that is applicable to the candidate's performance in  
513 professional activities. The candidate will receive a copy of the dean's letter of  
514 recommendation and rationale that is redacted only insofar as necessary to conceal the  
515 identity of external reviewers. The rationale shall characterize external reviewers'  
516 comments that informed the dean's decision. The letter of recommendation and  
517 rationale of the dean will be included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review

518 process. The candidate may respond to the dean's letter to correct any factual errors  
519 represented therein within 5 working days of the candidate's receipt of the letter. The  
520 dean may address the concerns in a new letter to be included in the dossier within 5  
521 working days of receipt of the candidate's letter of factual correction. All letters shall be  
522 included in the dossier as it proceeds through the review process.

523 The faculty member has the right to discontinue the review process for tenure or  
524 promotion at any point before a decision has been made. His/her request must be made  
525 in writing to the department head or director before a final decision has been rendered.

526 Departmental and college committees on promotion and tenure will assist their  
527 department head or director and dean, respectively, in reviewing the eligibility of all  
528 faculty members who have met the minimum requirements for advancement in rank or  
529 tenure.

530 On rare occasions and in exceptional circumstances when a minor variation of the  
531 process described in this document needs to be initiated in order to be fair to the faculty  
532 member while still ensuring a rigorous review of the candidate's dossier, the University  
533 Promotion and Tenure Committee will review and approve any such appropriate  
534 requests during the review process. These minor variations of the process described by  
535 this paragraph cannot be the sole basis for an appeal.

## 536 **Chronology**

537 The receipt dates listed below for the department and college represent suggested  
538 guidelines intended to facilitate an organized and efficient review of candidates'  
539 dossiers during each official phase of the evaluation process. Minor chronological  
540 delays that may occur beyond these dates do not represent a significant procedural  
541 error. Departments and colleges may specify deadlines that are earlier, but not later,  
542 than those cited below.

543 On a date specified in the department promotion and tenure guidelines but no later  
544 than October 1, the candidate for tenure and/or promotion will notify the department  
545 head and the chair of the departmental promotion and tenure committee of his/her intent  
546 to submit his/her application for tenure and/or promotion. The department head has the  
547 responsibility to assist, where appropriate, the faculty member in preparing the  
548 application for tenure and promotion review.

549 By October 1 (or first working day thereafter), or earlier if specified in the departmental  
550 promotion and tenure document, a faculty member eligible for consideration for  
551 promotion and/or tenure must have provided the department head with all pertinent and  
552 available information to apply for consideration.

553 By November 15 (or first working day thereafter), or earlier if specified by the college  
554 promotion and tenure document, each faculty member's complete dossier will be  
555 provided to the college promotion and tenure committee. This will include letters of



556 recommendation and rationale from both the department promotion and tenure  
557 committee and the department head. Each of these letters of recommendation and  
558 rationale will be copied to the candidate. The letters will be redacted only insofar as  
559 necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers. These letters must include a  
560 summary of the procedures followed by the academic unit in evaluating the candidate  
561 and the committee's and head's independent evaluation of the candidate's teaching  
562 effectiveness, research and/or creative achievement, and service to the profession and  
563 university. The chair of the college promotion and tenure committee is responsible for  
564 inserting letters of recommendation and rationale from the department head and the  
565 department promotion and tenure committee, along with any letters related to correction  
566 of factual errors at the department level, into the dossier of each candidate reviewed by  
567 the college promotion and tenure committee.

568 By December 15 (or first working day thereafter) or earlier if specified by the college  
569 promotion and tenure document, the college promotion and tenure committee's letter of  
570 recommendation and rationale for each candidate shall be sent to the college dean.  
571 Letters of recommendation and rationale shall be copied to the candidate. The letters  
572 will be redacted only insofar as necessary to conceal the identity of external reviewers.  
573 The letter concerning each candidate must include the committee's summary of the  
574 procedures followed by the college committee in evaluating the candidate and the  
575 committee's evaluation of the candidate's teaching effectiveness, research and/or  
576 creative achievement, and service to the profession and university. The college  
577 promotion and tenure committee chair is responsible to provide the dean with each  
578 candidate's dossier including letters from previous stages of review. For each  
579 candidate, the dean is responsible for collection and inclusion of any letters related to  
580 correction of factual errors at the college level.

581 By January 15 (or first working day thereafter), the dean's letter of recommendation and  
582 rationale for each candidate shall be sent to the provost and copied to the candidate.  
583 The letter concerning each candidate must include the dean's evaluation of the  
584 candidate's teaching effectiveness, research and/or creating achievement, and service  
585 to the profession and university. The dean is responsible to provide the provost with  
586 each candidate's dossier including letters from previous stages of review. Copies of  
587 publications, works of art, etc., will be included only if specifically requested by the  
588 provost.

589 By March 10 (or first working day thereafter), the provost will have reviewed each  
590 candidate's dossier and will make a recommendation to the president. Copies of the  
591 provost's recommendation will be sent to the candidate with copies to the dean,  
592 department head, and chairs of college and departmental promotion and tenure  
593 committees.

594 The president will review the recommendation of the provost and will decide to accept  
595 or reject that recommendation.

596 The president will transmit that decision, together with reasons for a negative decision,  
597 to the faculty member directly, with copies to the dean, department head, and chairs of  
598 college and departmental promotion and tenure committees.

## 599 **J. Appeals**

600 Faculty members who have been denied promotion or tenure may, within ten working  
601 days of the date on the president's decision letter, request an appeals hearing before  
602 the University Committee on Promotion and Tenure. The request must be made through  
603 the provost who will forward the request to the University Committee on Promotion and  
604 Tenure. Grounds for requesting an appeal are:

605 that the decision was prejudiced, arbitrary, or capricious; or

606 that the procedures contained in the promotion and tenure policies of the IHL, MSU,  
607 or those in the candidate's college or unit promotion and tenure policies were not  
608 properly followed.

609 The University Committee on Promotion and Tenure, upon request of the provost, will  
610 review the entire case. The appeal will be heard by at least five members. Members  
611 should recuse themselves from appeals by candidates who are relatives or with whom  
612 they have some conflict-of-interest, if the committee member has served in the previous  
613 levels of evaluation of the appellant or if for any reason the committee member feels  
614 he/she cannot be objective. A committee member will not vote on an appeal unless  
615 he/she has heard all hearings pertaining to the case. If five members are not available  
616 because of absence or recusal, the chair may, with the concurrence of the committee,  
617 appoint substitutes from among the professors of the general faculty. In special  
618 circumstances potentially prejudicial to the appellant, the chair may, with the  
619 concurrence of the committee, appoint an ad-hoc committee to assist in the resolution  
620 of the appeal. This ad-hoc committee reports its findings back to the University  
621 Committee on Promotion and Tenure.

622 The committee will review all available pertinent information and will conduct interviews  
623 with appropriate persons, i.e., appellant, unit head, unit committee chair, dean, college  
624 committee chair and provost. The committee will render its recommendation, in writing,  
625 to the provost. The committee will also provide a copy of this written recommendation to  
626 the candidate.

627 The provost will transmit the committee's written recommendation along with his/her  
628 own recommendation to the president, who will make the final on-campus decision. This  
629 decision will end the university appeals process. A copy of each recommendation will be  
630 provided to the candidate.

631 The Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning may grant a further appeal  
632 as outlined in Board of Trustees Policy 403.0105.

633 Candidates who are denied tenure and who have no time remaining in their  
634 probationary periods will receive terminal contracts for the following year.

635 **K. Notice of Non-reappointment of Non-tenured, Tenure-track Faculty**

636 Non-tenured, tenure-track faculty members will be notified in writing of the university's  
637 intention not to renew their contracts as provided in IHL Board Policy 403.0102:

638 not later than March 1 before the date of contract termination during the first year of  
639 service;

640 not later than December 1 before the date of contract termination during the second  
641 year of service; or

642 not later than September 1 before the date of contract termination after two or more  
643 years of service.

644 This schedule of notification does not apply to persons holding temporary, part-time, or  
645 adjunct positions

646 **L. Dismissal of Tenured Faculty**

647 Termination of service of a tenured faculty member is made only under these  
648 extraordinary circumstances (as outlined in IHL Board Policy 403.0104):

649 financial exigencies as declared by the Board;

650 termination or reduction of programs, academic or administrative units as approved  
651 by the Board;

652 malfeasance, inefficiency or contumacious conduct; or

653 for legitimate and justifiable cause.

654 Termination for cause of a tenured faculty member or the dismissal for cause of a  
655 faculty member prior to the expiration of a term appointment will not be recommended  
656 by the institutional executive officer until the faculty member has been afforded the  
657 opportunity for a hearing. In no event will the contract of a tenured faculty member be  
658 terminated for cause without the faculty member being afforded the opportunity for a  
659 hearing.

660 In all cases, the faculty member will be informed in writing of the proposed action  
661 against him/her and that he/she has the opportunity to be heard in his/her own defense.  
662 Within ten (10) working days from the date of the president's decision, the faculty  
663 member will state in writing his/her desire to have a hearing. He/she will be permitted to  
664 have with him/her an adviser of his/her own choosing who may be an attorney. The

665 institution is directed to record (suitable for transcription) all hearings. In the hearing of  
666 charges of incompetence, the testimony will include that of faculty and other scholars.

667 Tenured faculty members, who are dismissed for financial exigencies or termination or  
668 reduction of program, academic or administrative units will remain employed for a  
669 minimum of 9 to 12 months, consistent with current contract periods of time, from date  
670 of notification. Tenured faculty members, who are dismissed for malfeasance,  
671 inefficiency, contumacious conduct or for a legitimate and justifiable cause will have  
672 their contracts terminated at any time subsequent to notice and hearing with no right to  
673 continued employment for any period of time. At the discretion of the Institutional  
674 Executive Officer, any faculty member's salary may be paid, and he/she may be  
675 relieved of all teaching duties, assignments, appointments and privileges when he/she  
676 is dismissed for any reasons stated above or pending a termination hearing.

APPROVED:

/s/ Randolph F. Follett 2/13/15

Randy Follett, Faculty Senate President Date

/s/ Jerome A. Gilbert 2/13/15

Jerome A. Gilbert, Provost and Executive Vice President Date

/s/ Mark E. Keenum 3/6/15

Mark E. Keenum, President Date

## **VI. Department of Human Resources Management Policies and Procedures**

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Important personnel issues, including those in state and federal law, are established as Human Resources Management Policies and Procedures by the Department of Human Resources Management in consultation with impacted units. These policies are periodically revised by the Department of Human Resources Management. A record of HRM policies is available at the Office of Internal Audit at [www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/mainindex.html#VOLUME\\_V](http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/mainindex.html#VOLUME_V)

## **VII. Other University Policies**

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It is the obligation of all members of the university community, including administrators, faculty, staff, and students, to adhere to the policies of the university. To ensure the ease and accuracy of compliance, all policies are available at the Office of Internal Audit at [www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/mainindex.html](http://www.msstate.edu/dept/audit/mainindex.html)

## **VIII. Employee Benefits**

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Current records of employee benefits are available for the Department of Human Resources Management and are located at <http://www.hrm.msstate.edu/benefits/>