

2025

Faculty Handbook



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN
MISSISSIPPI®

Faculty Handbook Committee

7/1/2025

Notice:

The Faculty Handbook is a guide to University offices, activities, and policies that affect members of the Faculty, as defined herein. The Faculty Handbook is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to all policies governing the faculty, nor is it contract of employment. However, it does provide guidance for the relationships between the University and the faculty. Material in the Faculty Handbook does not replace, amend, or abridge approved policies of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (“IHL Policies and Bylaws”) and the Policies and Bylaws of the IHL therefore take precedence and control in any conflict with the policies of the Faculty Handbook. Policies outlined in the University of Southern Mississippi Employee Handbook also apply to the faculty. The policies of the Employee Handbook do not usurp any rights to which faculty may be entitled under the Faculty Handbook.

The Faculty Handbook may be amended from time to time in accord with the bylaws of the Faculty Handbook Committee. University policies referenced herein may be obtained from the [University's Institutional Policies](#) webpage; Board policies referenced herein may be obtained from the [IHL](#) website. Information about employment benefits and policies that apply to all employees of the University, such as those regarding harassment and discrimination, can be found in the Employee Handbook or obtained from the University's [Department of Human Resources](#).

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Chapter 1. Academic Structure and Governance

1.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the aspects of the University's governance structure most directly relevant to faculty. The University's complete organizational chart can be found online.

1.2. Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL)

The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning ("IHL" or "the Board") manages the eight public universities in Mississippi, including USM. The members are appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Board sets institutional policies and requires legal, fiscal, and programmatic accountability from its constituent institutions. More information about the Board, including its Policies and Bylaws, can be found on the [IHL website](#).

1.3. The President

Appointed by the Board, the President of USM serves as both its chief executive officer and its principal educational officer. The President has administrative control over the University and, in concert with the State Commissioner of Higher Education, shapes its educational policy and academic standards. The President has final authority over all University employees.

1.4. The Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Provost is the second-most senior officer at USM and the University's Chief Academic Officer. The Provost advises the President on all matters related to curriculum and faculty. The Provost coordinates with the vice presidents and deans to plan for and accomplish the University's educational objectives. The Provost is also responsible for developing and monitoring college budgets.

1.5. The Vice Presidents

The University has vice presidents, whose functions and specific job responsibilities are determined by the President. The websites for each of these positions can be found on the [webpage of the University President](#).

1.6. Colleges and College Administration

The University is composed of several colleges. Some colleges house schools composed of multiple disciplinary programs: Arts and Sciences, Business and Economic Development, Education and Human Sciences, and Nursing and Health Professions. Some colleges do not have schools: University Libraries, Honors, and the Graduate School.

1.6.1. College Deans

As executive officers, the college deans provide overall leadership for their respective colleges. Deans are responsible for establishing a vision and strategic plan for their colleges and evaluating their overall effectiveness in achieving college and University goals and objectives. Within their colleges, they administer and supervise University policies and regulations, plan and manage budgets, and oversee program administration. Deans assign academic and professional responsibilities to school directors and evaluate their performance. They also make recommendations to the Provost regarding appointment, reappointment, salaries, promotions, tenure, and other academic personnel matters.

1.6.2. Dean's Executive Council

The Dean's Executive Council advises the dean of degree-granting colleges and participates in the administration of the college. The Executive Council is composed of the dean (who acts as chair), associate dean(s), and school directors. School directors may appoint a designee to attend and vote in their

absence. Council members serve for the duration of their administrative appointment. This committee's duties include regularly reviewing and updating college policies and procedures, facilitating dialogue and collaboration among college constituents, and avoiding duplication of efforts.

1.7. Schools and School Administration

1.7.1. Schools

Schools are the overarching units of academic program organization within Colleges. A school directory can be found [here](#). Each school is comprised of multiple programs that work together for the delivery of curriculum, promotion of student retention, and support of faculty research, teaching, and service.

1.7.2. School Administration

School directors are the chief administrative officers of schools and report to the dean. School directors must be members of the corps of instruction and should be tenure-stream and either an associate professor or professor. They are responsible for the general direction and supervision of the school, including administrative and personnel responsibilities. Directors manage school budgets and oversee academic program delivery in consultation with school faculty. They assign service responsibilities and promote research and creative activity. Directors evaluate academic personnel and staff and make recommendations regarding salaries, promotions, tenure, and retention of school employees.

1.8. University Representative and Advisory Bodies

The University operates under the principle of participatory or shared governance, with many institutional decisions being made with the advice and input from advisory bodies to the President. The President has the discretion to approve, appoint, dissolve, and convene advisory bodies as necessary. Depending on their specific charge, the University's advisory bodies may be composed of faculty, staff, students, and in some cases alumni and friends of the University.

The following representative and advisory bodies are the most important institutionalized forms of faculty input to shared governance.

In an effort for shared and diversified governance, faculty members may only be elected to serve on one of the major governing bodies (Faculty Senate, Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, Research Council, or Faculty Handbook Committee) at a time unless no other faculty are available or willing to serve. Ex officio and appointed positions are not elected positions; therefore, a faculty member can serve on two major governing bodies if directed by each council's bylaws.

The bylaws or constitution of each committee can be found on the Committee on Committees' [webpage](#).

1.8.1. Councils of Academic Excellence

While each council of academic excellence has its own mission, collectively they drive distinction and quality and ensure programs meet and exceed national standards. They provide recommendations regarding academic affairs and program delivery.

1.8.1.1. Executive Academic Leadership Council

The Executive Academic Leadership Council is comprised of chairs and chairs-elect of Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council, Faculty Senate, Council of Directors, and the Dean of the Graduate School (ex officio). This committee facilitates communication between faculty governing bodies and administration.

1.8.1.2. Graduate Council

The Graduate Council is responsible for graduate degree offerings, curricula, and assessment. It reviews, endorses, or rejects proposed changes in the graduate curricula (such as proposals for additions, modifications, and deletions of courses, majors, minors, and certificate programs), verifying compliance with University policies. Graduate Council provides recommendations on policy and practices for graduate student recruitment, admissions, and retention. It evaluates and grants graduate faculty status.

1.8.1.3. Professional Education Council

The Professional Education Council (PEC) ensures professional education programs at the University comply with standards of professional accrediting agencies and the Mississippi Department of Education. The Council reviews and recommends actions regarding the development, administration, evaluation, and revision of all licensure programs to the Dean of the College of Education and Human Sciences. This Dean is the designated University official charged with providing direction and leadership to the Professional Education Unit, defined as the College of Education and Human Sciences and the professional education faculty located in other colleges.

1.8.1.4. Undergraduate Council

The Undergraduate Council is responsible for undergraduate degree offerings, curricula, and assessment. It reviews, endorses, or rejects proposed changes in the undergraduate curriculum including proposals for additions, modifications, and deletions of courses, majors, and minors, verifying compliance with University policies. It provides recommendations and oversight on policy and practices for recruitment, admission standards, and retention. Subcommittees of the council will make recommendations to the Undergraduate Council on matters related to the General Education Curriculum (GEC) and licensure requirements.

1.8.2. Council of Directors

Directors of schools fulfill certain administrative and evaluative responsibilities; thus, they should not serve on faculty governing bodies. The Council of Directors (CoD) ensures that administrative faculty have a means of communicating with administrators. The CoD will include all school directors and a representative from the University Libraries. An elected executive committee of the CoD will serve as the primary point of contact between directors and the Provost.

1.8.3. Faculty Handbook Committee

The Faculty Handbook Committee considers proposals, modifications, and amendments to the Faculty Handbook brought to it from an official university governance body or administrative office. If approved by the committee, changes are formally recommended to the University President through the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs for a final decision.

1.8.4. Faculty Senate

As a key partner in institutional shared governance, Faculty Senate provides a collaborative forum where faculty advise the administration on policy, development, resources, and operations of the University, thus ensuring faculty representation and input to the administration. The executive committee of the Faculty Senate is the primary point of contact between the Senate and the administration.

1.8.5. Grade Review Council

The University Grade Review Council hears and adjudicates at its discretion the appeals of grades filed by petitioning students. The jurisdiction of the Council does not include allegations concerning the competence of a faculty member, the fairness of examinations, the difficulty of a course, or matters of a

purely academic nature. Rather, its sole charge is to determine whether the assignment of a grade was arbitrary or capricious.

1.8.6. Faculty Ombuds

The Faculty Ombud is a confidential resource for faculty and provides a means of informal dispute resolution for faculty at the University. The Faculty Ombud provides confidential, independent, impartial, and informal assistance to all faculty. The Faculty Ombud supplements, but does not replace, formal grievance processes, investigative systems, and appeals processes. The Faculty Ombud does not advocate for any side, either the faculty or the administration, and instead maintains impartiality in all concerns. The purpose of the Faculty Ombud is to facilitate communication, ensure that policies are followed, and encourage all parties to implement the University's policies and practices fairly. The Faculty Ombud is available for use by all faculty at any campus of the University, including online faculty, full-time and part-time, tenured or not, including administrative faculty.

1.8.7. Promotion and Tenure Committee

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee is composed of two members from each of the college promotion and tenure committees plus one member from the University Libraries. The two members from each college promotion and tenure committee consist of the committee's chair, plus one additional member. Both will be elected by a majority vote of the members of their respective college promotion and tenure committees. The chair of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee is elected by a majority vote of the committee members.

The Provost may seek the assistance of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee in any personnel matter. However, the normal function of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee is to make recommendations for promotions in rank and tenure after review of the candidate's dossiers and decanal, college, director, and school recommendations.

Faculty members who are candidates for promotion cannot serve as members of this committee during the academic year in which they seek promotion. School directors, assistant and associate deans, deans, and assistant, associate, and vice provosts may not serve on the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

Members of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee must recuse themselves from any personnel matter concerning a faculty member of the college they represent. In this and all other matters, the committee is subject to the same policies that govern school and college promotion and tenure committees.

1.8.8. Research Council

The University Research Council serves as an advisory body to the Vice President for Research on matters pertaining to research and creative activities.

1.9. Required Standing Committees for Degree-Granting Colleges

1.9.1. College Curriculum Committee

The College Curriculum Committee (CCC) makes recommendations to the dean regarding proposed undergraduate and graduate curriculum changes submitted by programs through the School Curriculum Committee Chairs. Deans then forward recommendations they approve to the appropriate council of Academic Excellence. The CCC is composed of the dean or associate dean(s) in charge of curriculum and School Curriculum Committee Chairs. Representatives from originating programs are invited as needed

to provide clarification regarding submitted proposals. The dean or associate dean with curriculum responsibility chairs the committee.

1.9.2. Dean's Advisory Council

The Dean's Advisory Council (DAC) represents to the dean the voice of college faculty, staff, and school-level administrators. It works with the dean on strategic planning for the college and provides input on college priorities, initiatives, and goals. All schools are represented either through their school director or elected faculty member(s). At least half of its faculty members are faculty representatives; the other half are school directors. It includes at least four school directors, elected by their peers in the Dean's Executive Council, and at least four tenured, full-time faculty representatives elected by secret ballot by the full-time corps of instruction. In addition, the DAC includes two staff members elected by secret ballot by the college staff. DAC members serve staggered three-year terms.

1.9.3. College Promotion and Tenure Committee

The regular functions of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee are to make recommendations to the dean regarding pre-tenure review and applications for promotion and tenure.

Academic colleges must have College Promotion and Tenure Committees. These committees include at least one tenured representative per school in the college, with a minimum of five tenured representatives per college, and at least two at-large, full-time teaching professors with the rank of associate teaching professor or teaching professor from different schools. Representatives are elected by secret ballot by the corps of instruction of their school for staggered three-year terms. Further details regarding the specific composition and size of College Promotion and Tenure Committees are at the discretion of each college.

Members of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee may participate only in decisions on candidates of a lower rank. Only tenured faculty members may vote on tenure candidates. Teaching professors may vote only on the promotion of teaching-track faculty. Faculty who are ineligible to vote on a candidate are present in discussions only at the request of the committee.

For the evaluation of interdisciplinary candidates, the committee shall have a reviewer from each of the schools (whether internal or external to the college) in which the candidate is appointed.

University administrators serving as President, Provost, associate or assistant provost, vice president, dean, associate or assistant dean, or school directors may neither vote in such elections nor sit as members or ex officio members of College Promotion and Tenure Committees. Faculty members who are candidates for promotion cannot serve as members of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee during the academic year in which they seek promotion.

The proceedings of promotion and tenure committees are strictly confidential. Committee members who are related to candidates being reviewed (as per Board and University nepotism policy) must recuse themselves; they cannot vote or advise other committee members. Members reviewing candidates from their school may not vote on that candidate at the college level.

1.9.4. Scholarships and Awards Committee

The Scholarship and Awards Committee (SAC) establishes and administers college-level awards for faculty, staff, and students. It is composed of one faculty representative per school elected by secret ballot from the corps of instruction and at least one staff member per college. Committee members are elected by their peers for one to three-year terms, as determined by the college.

1.10. School Committees

1.10.1. School Promotion and Tenure Committee

A school promotion and tenure committee is a committee of all faculty eligible to vote on a particular candidate who are employed with > 0.50 FTE in the school. If a school does not have three eligible faculty to serve on such a committee, the school in consultation with the dean must invite faculty from a discipline related to that of the faculty under review to serve on the School Promotion and Tenure Committee.

All candidates are to be voted on by faculty with academic rank equal to or greater than the rank being sought by the candidate. Only tenured faculty vote on promotion of tenure-track faculty or tenure decisions. For promotion of non-tenure track faculty, the Promotion and Tenure Committee must be composed of promotable non-tenure track faculty ranked higher than the candidate, and the candidate's school's associate professors and professors. In the case of large schools or very disparate disciplinary cultures committees are free to defer the bulk of deliberations to sub-committees.

University administrators serving as President, Provost, associate or assistant provost, vice president, dean, associate or assistant dean, or school directors may neither vote in such elections nor sit as members or ex officio members of school promotion and tenure committees. Faculty members holding honorary rank, employed on a terminal contract, or who are otherwise excluded for reasons specified in the rules governing school promotion proceedings are ineligible to participate in such proceedings.

Assistant or associate deans and assistant, associate, or vice provosts who are employed at < .50 FTE in a school may sit as members of that school's promotion and tenure committee provided they meet the following qualifications. First, they have served a minimum of five years as a non-administrative faculty member (as non-deans, non-assistant/associate deans or non-assistant/associate provosts) in the school in which they will be participating in promotion considerations. Second, they are invited by a majority vote in a secret ballot of the members of the promotion and tenure committee. If invited to participate in these deliberations, these administrators may not chair promotion committees in their school.

For non-interdisciplinary candidates, tenured faculty from other schools may be invited at the committee's discretion to serve as advising or voting members of the school promotion and tenure committee. For interdisciplinary candidates, all schools that fund the candidate's position must be represented on the candidate's promotion committee, ideally, proportional to the percentage of the candidate's workload.

The committee is chaired by a member elected by a simple majority vote of the committee members.

1.10.2. Faculty Evaluation Committee

Each academic year, the school will choose one of three governance options for faculty evaluations. Governance options are chosen and Faculty Evaluation Committees (FEC) are elected by secret ballot. Those eligible to vote include all the school's full-time members of the corps of instruction with a minimum 50% appointment within the school (when the school director is untenured, only option 3 is available). Depending on the governance option chosen, an FEC may be formed. The main function of the FEC is to conduct annual evaluations of faculty in the school. FECs may also advise school directors on other personnel matters, aside from promotion and tenure.

Those tenure-track faculty members eligible to serve on an FEC include only tenured faculty with at least three years' service at the University, a minimum 50% appointment in the school, and rank of professor or associate professor. School directors, however, are eligible to participate in the evaluation process upon

initiation of their appointment. Generally, eligible members should include only those who have workload responsibilities in all three evaluation categories with an overall satisfactory evaluation.

All teaching-track faculty within the school with a minimum of three years of service with the University, a minimum 50% appointment within the school, and who hold the rank of lecturer, senior lecturer, associate teaching professor, or teaching professor are eligible for committee membership. Teaching-track faculty with the rank of instructor or assistant teaching professor are ineligible for committee membership. Teaching-track faculty members serving on FECs may evaluate only other teaching-track members.

Faculty holding appointments within a school and serving as University administrative officers in the positions of President, Provost, vice president, or college dean may not be members of FECs. Faculty holding an appointment within the school and serving as associate dean or associate or vice provost are typically excluded from FEC eligibility, but they may be eligible if desired representation of an academic program would be unfilled because no other faculty members in the program meet eligibility requirements.

Faculty members who are clinical faculty, artist in residence, professor of practice, visiting professor, research faculty, as well as those holding honorary rank, employed on a terminal contract, undergoing post-tenure review, or otherwise excluded for reasons specified in the rules governing school evaluation proceedings; are ineligible to serve on an FEC.

Faculty members who are related (as per Board and University Nepotism Policy) to parties being reviewed or evaluated in any personnel matter must recuse themselves from all evaluation proceedings involving those parties. They must not vote or offer advice, either directly or indirectly, to other committee members.

In consultation with the college dean, schools may create FEC subcommittees to evaluate subsets of the school's faculty members if doing so best assures competent and fair evaluations of those each subcommittee represents.

1.10.2.1. Option 1 (director only)

The director has all authority for faculty members' annual evaluations and recommendations.

1.10.2.2. Option 2 (director plus at least two)

A personnel committee consisting of the school director and at least two tenured members of the corps of instruction employed by the school has all authority for faculty members' annual evaluations and recommendations. The minimum three-member committee elects its chair. The FEC should include no fewer than three members but can include additional members as deemed appropriate. In schools employing more than one teaching-track faculty member, the FEC may be expanded to include one member of the teaching-track faculty.

1.10.2.3. Option 3 (at least three without director)

All authority for faculty members' annual evaluations and recommendations is vested in an FEC consisting of at least three tenured members of the corps of instruction, exclusive of the school director, with independent input from the school director. The minimum three-member committee elects its chair. The FEC should include no fewer than three members but can include additional members as deemed appropriate. In schools employing more than one teaching-track faculty member, the FEC may be expanded to include one member of the teaching track faculty.

1.10.2.4. Replacement of Committee Members

If an FEC member resigns, is no longer able to serve on that committee, or otherwise relinquishes the committee position, another eligible faculty member within the school must be elected in the same manner that the original members were chosen. If a school is operating under Option 1 (school director) or Option 2 (the school director and two or more other faculty members) and the school director resigns from the FEC or is no longer able to serve on that committee, the members of the school's corps of instruction must reconvene and choose all members for Option 3 as their operational FEC for the remainder of the academic year and until the next annual election of the FEC option.

1.10.2.5. Committee Membership, Libraries.

The organization of the University Libraries differs somewhat from the academic colleges in that, although Libraries' faculty are assessed by a Faculty Evaluation Procedure, the Libraries do not have schools or school directors in the same sense as the academic colleges. Nevertheless, the three options for the Libraries' Faculty Evaluation Committee parallel those of the academic colleges. All members of the Libraries' Corps of Instruction with a minimum of three (3) years of service with the University and the rank of associate professor or higher are eligible for committee membership, with the exception of the dean of University Libraries, who is ineligible. The election of an ad hoc (for annual evaluation purposes only) director (see Note below) and then the selection of the Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) occur at a yearly meeting of the members of the Libraries' Corps of Instruction and are accomplished by means of a secret ballot. Option 1: Authority for all personnel evaluations and recommendations, exclusive of recommendations for pre-tenure review, tenure, and promotion, is vested in an ad hoc director chosen by mutual agreement between the University Libraries' dean and the Corps of Instruction. The ad hoc director prepares evaluations and recommendations, with independent input from the faculty members' immediate supervisor, and transmits them to the dean. Option 2: The Committee consists of two members elected by the University Libraries' Corps of Instruction and a third rotating member who shall be the unit head of the Libraries' faculty being evaluated. If the unit head is not a member of the Corps or is otherwise ineligible for the FEC, the ad hoc director will serve as the third member of the committee. The three-member committee elects its chair, selecting from the two members elected from the Corps. The chair of the committee, after obtaining signed concurrence or dissent from each committee member and receiving independent input from the faculty members' immediate supervisor, submits the committee's evaluations and recommendations to the dean. The ad hoc director does not write separate evaluations or recommendations. Option 3: The Committee consists of three elected members of the Corps of Instruction exclusive of the ad hoc director. The three-member committee then elects its chair. The chair of the committee, after obtaining signed concurrence or dissent from each committee member and receiving independent input from the faculty members' immediate supervisor, submits the committee's evaluations and recommendations to the dean. The ad hoc director does not write separate evaluations or recommendations.

Each year the ad hoc director is chosen by mutual agreement between the Libraries' dean and the Corps of Instruction using the following process. The dean will provide their choice of the ad hoc director. The Corps of Instruction will meet and decide by secret ballot whether they approve (a majority vote is necessary for approval). If the nominee provided by the dean fails to obtain approval, the dean will forward another nominee; the Corps of Instruction will meet again and decide whether they approve (majority vote again required). This process will be repeated until the Corps of Instruction approves the dean's nominee. If the dean and the Corps of Instruction are unable to agree on an ad hoc director, Option 3 will be employed for that academic year.

1.10.3. Other Committees

Each school will have various required standing committees, in addition to ad hoc committees and optional standing committees. Required committees include a school curriculum committee and a school leadership team. Ad hoc committees include school promotion and tenure committees, search committees, and other committees constituted as needed. Optional standing committees include a school graduate admissions committee, a research productivity committee, a scholarship committee, and other possibilities.

1.11. Institutional Policies

All University policies must be developed, approved, and published in accordance with the University's Policy on Policies (PRES-IR-001) and published on the [Institutional Policies website](#).

1.12. Procedural Rules

All University advisory bodies must adopt procedural rules for the conduct of their deliberations. In adopting those rules, the following principles apply.

A simple majority of members constitutes a quorum. A quorum is required of all University committees whose purview involves the evaluation of or personnel recommendations regarding academic personnel.

A proxy is authority, conferred in writing by a qualified voter to another qualified voter, empowering the latter to vote on behalf of the former in one or more specified matters. Proxy voting is expressly forbidden in all deliberations involving the evaluation of or personnel recommendations regarding academic personnel.

An absentee vote is a vote cast in absentia in writing by a qualified voter and delivered in a sealed envelope to a duly elected or appointed administrator or to a chair of a committee, council, or other deliberative body within the University. Absentee votes are permitted in all actions involving the evaluation of or personnel recommendations regarding academic personnel.

Chapter 2. Faculty Defined

2.1. Faculty Defined

2.1.1. Faculty

The Board of Trustees defines the faculty of Mississippi's public universities as "the teaching staff and those members of the administrative staff having academic rank in a college, university or other educational institution or one of its divisions" (IHL Policies & Bylaws 402.01). At The University of Southern Mississippi, duly certified librarians with academic rank are members of the faculty and corps of instruction. Universities are authorized to establish faculty positions designated as non-tenure track in the categories of research, teaching, and service (IHL Policies & Bylaws 404.01). The University of Southern Mississippi has non-tenure track faculty whose primary responsibilities are in teaching (teaching tracks, clinical faculty, artists-in-residence, and professors of practice) and research. Visiting professors (all ranks) are members of the faculty based on comparable training.

2.1.2. Corps of Instruction

The University's corps of instruction consists of all full-time members of the faculty except for research and visiting professors (all ranks) and those clinical faculty who are not employed directly by the University. Full-time members of the corps of instruction have voting rights in appropriate institutional elections and personnel proceedings. The bylaws of each university advisory body stipulate who may vote in elections for that body. Voting and committee membership rights with regards to personnel decisions, including promotion and tenure, for non-tenure-track members of the corps of instruction varies at the discretion of individual programs and are discussed in Chapter 4.

2.1.3. Academic Personnel

In addition to employees who are members of the faculty as defined above, the university also employs people, who by virtue of their academic training or duties, are included in this chapter and covered by some of the policies in this handbook. Academic personnel is the encompassing term used in this handbook to refer to all faculty, including those who are not members of the corps of instruction, adjuncts, and post-doctoral fellows and associates.

2.2. Tenure-Track Faculty

Only those faculty members who hold a rank of assistant professor, associate professor, or professor are eligible for tenure and are classified as tenure-track faculty. Only individuals in tenured positions qualify for a status of continuing employment within a state institution of higher learning in Mississippi. A faculty member with academic rank and rights of tenure in the corps of instruction who accepts an appointment to an administrative office retains academic rank and rights of tenure as an ex officio member of the corps of instruction but has no rights of tenure in the administrative office.

2.3. Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

Employees in non-tenure-track positions have no expectation of continuing employment beyond the expiration of their contracts. This policy must be indicated to prospective and incumbent holders of these positions. Non-tenure-track faculty may not have their status converted to tenure-track but may apply, on the same basis as other candidates, for available tenure-track positions.

2.3.1. Non-Tenure-Track Corps of Instruction

2.3.1.1. *Teaching Tracks*

Teaching faculty who do not have a terminal degree in the discipline, or a closely related one, in which they teach are initially appointed as instructors and can be promoted to lecturer and then senior lecturer.

Individuals in these positions who earn the relevant terminal degree may be moved to the rank of assistant teaching professor.

Teaching faculty who hold a terminal degree in the discipline in which they teach, or a closely related discipline, are appointed at the rank of assistant teaching professor, unless a higher rank is negotiated when hired, and can be promoted to the rank of associate teaching professor and then teaching professor in an equivalent time frame to tenure-track faculty.

2.3.1.2. Clinical Faculty

Clinical faculty are employed by the University, unless otherwise specified by the unit, with clinical instructional responsibilities. The ranks available for clinical faculty are instructor, assistant clinical professor, associate clinical professor, and clinical professor. Only clinical faculty who are directly employed by the University are members of the corps of instruction. Those paid by other entities are members of the faculty but not the corps of instruction.

Clinical instructors do not possess a terminal degree in the discipline in which they teach. Clinical professors (all ranks) do have a terminal degree in the discipline in which they teach. In exceptional circumstances, faculty who do not possess a terminal degree but have made substantial and outstanding contributions in their fields may be awarded the title of assistant clinical professor, associate clinical professor, or clinical professor.

2.3.1.3. Artists-in-Residence and Professors of Practice

Artists in residence and professors of practice need not have minimum academic qualifications but are appointed based on distinguished professional experience in their fields. They may have instructional responsibilities; if so, they are members of the corps of instruction and are evaluated annually in a manner appropriate to their assigned duties.

2.3.2. Non-Tenure-Track Faculty who are not Members of the Corps of Instruction

2.3.2.1. Research Faculty

Research professors (all ranks) are not members of the corps of instruction since their primary responsibility is research rather than instruction. Research professors (all ranks) may teach, provided they meet expectations of the Provost. Such teaching does not move the individual to the corps of instruction. Research professors may be promoted through the ranks of assistant, associate, and full research professor based on appropriate performance. In exceptional circumstances, faculty who do not possess a terminal degree but have made substantial and outstanding contributions in their fields may be awarded the title of assistant research professor, associate research professor, or research professor.

2.3.2.2. Visiting Professors

Visiting professors (all ranks) are members of the faculty based on training comparable to tenure-track faculty. Visiting professors do not vote in institutional elections or proceedings and are not considered members of the corps of instruction.

2.4. Non-Faculty Academic Personnel

Non-faculty academic personnel include part-time personnel performing specified instructional, research, or library duties, such as individuals who hold the title of adjunct; temporary personnel funded in whole or in part by contracts or agreements of fixed duration; library and research personnel not holding academic appointments; and post-doctorate positions, graduate assistants, and graduate fellows. If approved by the Graduate School, these individuals may serve on graduate committees.

2.4.1. Post-Doctoral Fellows and Associates

There are two types of post-doctoral positions: post-doctoral fellowships and post-doctoral associates. In both cases, the appointee must have a doctorate in a field appropriate to the appointment. Post-doctoral fellowships emphasize the continued professional development of the appointee. The appointment of post-doctoral fellowship is for the holder's education in research and teaching and is generally limited to two or three years. To qualify for a fellowship exemption under federal income tax laws, no assigned duties and responsibilities or services can be required other than those which are an integral part of the fellow's educational program. In contrast, post-doctoral associates perform specific duties and responsibilities as assigned which render compensable services to the University.

2.4.2. Adjunct Academic Personnel

Adjunct academic personnel are employed to fulfill specified instructional and other duties for a specified period but without any contractual guarantee of continuing employment. Individuals with adjunct status must have appropriate qualifications for each course taught. All adjuncts remain outside the corps of instruction, do not qualify for faculty status or privileges, and may not vote in institutional elections or personnel proceedings. The listing of adjunct academic staff members in the University's Undergraduate Bulletin, Graduate Bulletin, or website is strictly honorary, in no way implying faculty status, permanent employment, or an expectation of continued employment. Academic units will evaluate teaching by adjunct personnel annually, in accord with the respective unit's standards.

2.5. Distinguished Professor

The appointment to a distinguished professorship at the University constitutes the highest honor that can be accorded to a member of the professorate. The title can be conferred on select members of the faculty to recognize distinguished achievement in teaching/librarianship, research/creative activity, and/or service.

Distinguished professor candidates must have held the rank of professor at the University for at least five years. Distinguished professors should be recognized nationally, and usually internationally, and consequently, bring distinction to the University as a result of their accomplishments. Typically, a distinguished professor has a superior record in at least two of the following areas: teaching /librarianship, research/creative activities, and service.

University Distinguished Professorships are awarded upon the recommendation of the provost and president. The provost will convene the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, which will review the candidate's credentials and make a recommendation to the Provost and President for a final decision. From time to time, the provost will request nominations from members of the faculty, deans, and school directors. Nominations may be submitted to the provost at any time, except that no Professor shall be eligible to nominate her/himself. Written nominations submitted to the provost shall include a dossier containing, at a minimum, the following materials: a) a cover letter making or supporting the nomination and providing a brief summary of the candidate's qualifications and achievements, specifying the subjects to which the candidate has made seminal contributions and stating his or her principal contributions to those subjects; b) the candidate's curriculum vitae, including a current list of the candidate's publications, research grants, awards, and other achievements; c) letters of endorsement from relevant college deans and school directors; d) evidence of the candidate's national and international reputation, in the form of at least three letters from persons in university departments of high regard in the candidate's field, assessing the candidate's record of achievements in teaching/librarianship, research, and/or service. The qualifications of those writing letters of endorsement must be furnished. In some cases, letters from persons in prestigious non-university research laboratories or institutes may be appropriate; and e) letters

of support from students, faculty, and other colleagues at this University assessing the candidate's record of achievements in teaching/librarianship, research, and/or service.

2.6. Emeritus Faculty

The emeritus designation may be awarded to retired faculty members who have served the University with distinction for a minimum of ten years. Emeritus faculty are honored, non-voting members of the units to which they belonged before retirement. Units, schools, and colleges are encouraged to invite emeritus faculty to serve as lecturers, substitute instructors, and consultants. Although no longer employees, emeritus faculty retain many faculty privileges. Retirement benefits are fully outlined in the Employee Handbook. Retired or retiring faculty members may be nominated or apply on their own for emeritus status. All applications for emeritus status must be submitted within five years of the candidate's retirement. The maximum number of applications allowed per individual for emeritus status is two. For more information about the process, see the Provost's [website](#).

Chapter 3. Faculty Responsibilities

3.1. Introduction

Faculty members have three kinds of responsibilities: those deriving from their research/creative activities; those related to their role as teachers, and responsibilities stemming from their relation to the University and their disciplines. Each is addressed below.

Faculty are expected to fulfill their responsibilities promptly and conscientiously throughout their contract periods, University holidays excluded, even when classes are not in session.

The University's [Code of Ethical Conduct](#) includes statements of general principles regarding respect for governance, others, information, and property as well as statements regarding conflicts of interest and commitment.

3.2. Academic Freedom

Academic freedom and shared governance are long-established and living principles at The University of Southern Mississippi. The University cherishes the free exchange of ideas, diversity of thought, joint decision making, and individuals' assumption of responsibility.

Academic freedom is fundamental to the central values and purposes of a university, which in turn protects freedom of inquiry and speech. Faculty and students must be able to study, learn, speak, teach, research, and publish, without fear of intimidation or reprisal, free from political interference, in an environment of tolerance for and engagement with diverse opinions. Each faculty member is entitled to freedom from institutional censorship or disciplinary action in discussing his or her subject in the classroom, and when speaking or writing outside the classroom as an individual. It is understood, however, that with academic freedom there must be concomitant responsibilities for statements, speeches, and actions. Grievances regarding alleged violations of academic freedom are addressed in Chapter 7.

The University of Southern Mississippi believes in the widely accepted principles of shared governance within the University. Therefore, the University recognizes that the faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter, and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. The University also endorses a consultative process by which academic decisions are made through a joint effort of faculty and administrators and with the cooperation and support of the affected faculty constituency.

The President's authority derives from the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning. As the chief executive officer of the University, the President is largely responsible for the maintenance of existing institutional resources and the creation of new ones; has ultimate managerial responsibility for a large number of nonacademic activities; and by the nature of the office is the chief spokesperson for the University. In these and other areas the President's task is to plan, organize, direct, and represent, and in these functions the President should receive the general support of the faculty. The University recognizes that the faculty should be consulted and with respect to such matters as long-range plans for the institution, the allocation and use of fiscal and physical resources, and the selection of academic officers.

The University of Southern Mississippi acknowledges that true faculty participation in the governance of academic affairs requires good faith on the part of both faculty and administration and a genuine commitment by both to a program of shared governance.

3.3. Responsibilities Related to Research/Creative Activities

3.3.1. IRB and IACUC

All members of the University, including faculty, staff, and students, must secure approval from the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) or Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) before collecting data on either human or animal research subjects. Data collected without prior approval cannot be used; post hoc approvals are not granted under any circumstances. Application information is available from the IRB and IACUC websites respectively. Consult the Director of the Office of Research Integrity or Chairs of the IRB or IACUC for specific questions about whether [IRB](#) or [IACUC](#) review is necessary.

3.3.2. Integrity Assurance Program

All members of the University involved in research/creative activities, whether faculty, staff, or student, are required to participate in the University's Research and Scholarly Integrity Assurance Program (IAP). ('IAP' is USM's term for what is referred to in federal regulations and elsewhere as Responsible Conduct of Research: "RCR".) IAP includes online modules, provided by the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) and campus workshops and forums managed by the Office of Research Integrity. All who are covered by the policy are expected to complete CITI's basic or "Common" course; different versions of the Common Course are available depending on discipline and relationship to the University. Researchers submitting applications to the IRB also must have completed the Human Subjects Course; researchers submitting applications to the IACUC must have completed the IACUC Course.

3.3.3. Conflict of Interest Disclosure

All faculty members must complete the University's [conflict of interest disclosure](#) annually between September 1 and September 30. The [form](#) can be found on the University's Office of Research Integrity website, and it provides definitions for which kinds of financial interests must be disclosed under the policy.

3.3.4. Scholarly Misconduct

All members of the faculty and others with responsibilities for research/creative activities are expected to adhere to the University's policy regarding [scholarly misconduct](#). As USM defines scholarly misconduct, it includes (but is not limited to): (1) research misconduct as defined by federal policy: "fabrication, falsification or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research or reporting research results;" (2) abuse of confidentiality, including improper use of information gained by privileged access, such as information obtained through service on peer review panels and editorial boards; (3) violations of University policies concerning the use of human subjects, animal subjects, biosafety (biosafety level 2 or above) or materials transfer; and (4) misappropriation of funds or resources, such as the misuse of research funds for personal gain. Misconduct does not include honest errors or mere difference in judgment. Individuals with concerns or questions about possible violations of the University's Scholarly Misconduct Policy are encouraged to consult with the University's Research Integrity Officer ([RIO](#)), the Director of the Office of Research Integrity.

3.3.5. Office of Research Administration

The Office of Research Administration ([ORA](#)) provides a wide range of services as the University's principal facilitator of external funding for research/creative activity. Except for proposals designated for submission through the Office of Technology Development (OTD), proposals soliciting external resources or funding must be submitted through ORA. The University has policies regarding [gift card](#) purchasing, Cost Sharing, Facilities and Administration Costs (F&A) and other external support issues, and post-award administration.

3.3.6. Patents, Copyrights, and Inventions

Faculty members are required to adhere to University policies on copyrights, patents, and the disclosure of inventions. See the [Intellectual Property Policy](#). The Office of Innovation Management ([OIM](#)) assists in helping researchers identify, evaluate, and protect potential inventions and innovations. OIM is responsible for the protection and commercialization of all University research innovations, from the sciences to the humanities

3.3.7. Ancillary Institutional Agreements

With approval, academic personnel may provide institutional services outside the scope of their regularly contracted duties. In so doing, they may earn remuneration in addition to that stipulated in annual employment contracts. These ancillary institutional agreements include summer semester employment; employment within the University's programs in international and continuing education; employment on a domestic campus, extension center, or teaching/research facility of the University removed from the place of regularly contracted employment; teaching within the University's Interactive Video Network; directing University-sponsored projects; and serving as an internal consultant to the University. For details, see the [Employee Handbook](#), sec. 3.7 (On Campus Consulting).

3.3.7.1. *Summer Semester Employment*

Nine-month employment contracts do not include the University's summer semester. Faculty and other academic personnel teaching during the summer semester are compensated on a fixed scale based on academic rank and teaching load, with nine semester hours of teaching normally constituting full-time employment.

3.3.7.2. *International Education*

The University's faculty-led study abroad programs in the Center for International Education operate on budgets separate from that of the regular academic year. Academic personnel employed as program leaders are approved by the Director of Study Abroad and the Associate Provost for International Programs upon the recommendations of directors of schools, deans of relevant colleges, and the Provost. The nature of the activity and designated duties of a study abroad program leader justify additional compensation, and they are normally compensated for related expenses and/or afforded per diem.

3.3.7.3. *Off-Campus Employment*

Academic personnel who are regularly employed at one campus of the University, and whose designated responsibilities are in whole or in part performed at another domestic campus, extension center, or teaching/research facility of the University, may be awarded remuneration in addition to that stipulated on their regular employment contracts. These individuals are also normally entitled to reimbursement on a fixed scale for designated personal expenses incurred in the fulfillment of their responsibilities. In some cases, their respective academic units may be allocated developmental funds by the University administration. Such arrangements are made within the terms of employment contracts, without amending them, and at the discretion of the University President.

3.3.7.4. *Directing University-Sponsored Projects*

Contingent on the terms and conditions of contracts with funding agencies, externally funded research and creative activities sponsored by the University may entitle project directors to released time from regularly contracted institutional duties and/or remuneration during the summer months. For example, with the permission of funding agencies, project directors may receive one-third of their contracted nine-month salaries during the summer, provided they work on the externally funded project for the full three months of the summer.

3.3.7.5. *Internal Consultation*

Internal consultants are employees of the University who contract to provide specialized advice or services to externally funded projects administered by the University or to institutional activities supported by University funds. Internal consultation may entitle employees to compensation over and above that afforded by regular University employment contracts, but, in all cases, services rendered must be exclusive of regular contracted duties within the University. Internal consultation normally cannot exceed one day per calendar week.

Administrative officers with the rank of dean or higher may not receive consulting fees for on-campus activities. University policy restricts internal consultation to duties outside the purview of University administrative officers. In cases of externally-funded projects, University employees may not receive additional compensation for projects conducted by individuals employed within their academic or administrative units. Nonacademic employees of the University may serve as internal consultants and be compensated on the same basis as academic personnel. Internal consultants on externally funded projects can be appointed only after written approval from funding entities and approval by the University's Office of Research Administration. For more information, see section 3.7 of the Employee Handbook.

3.3.8. Outside employment

In accord with IHL policy, faculty members involved in any of the many possible forms of outside employment are required to disclose these employment relationships annually. [Forms](#) for doing so are located on the Provost's website.

3.4. Responsibilities Related to Teaching

In addition to the responsibilities specifically described below, academic personnel are expected to maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning, fair evaluation, and open-minded consideration of diverse points of view in their classrooms. Instructors of record are expected not to abuse their power or positions and to maintain reasonable disciplinary standards as needed to preserve the integrity of the learning environment. Further information on policies and procedures for addressing student discipline and instructor misconduct can be found in the Policy of [Classroom Responsibilities of Faculty and Students](#).

3.4.1. Advisement

Faculty members are expected to provide mentoring to students as assigned in their academic units and to be a resource for students seeking information about curricular options, career paths within the discipline, and other matters related to the student's course of study. Faculty should make reasonable efforts to apprise themselves of available student support services and refer students to needed sources of assistance as appropriate.

3.4.2. Instructional Expectations

3.4.2.1. *Rosters*

Instructors of record are responsible for ensuring classes are attended only by students who are officially enrolled in those classes. They are also responsible for meeting the Registrar's deadlines for submitting "Not Attending" rosters, interim and final grades, and for promptly submitting requested progress reports for student-athletes.

3.4.2.2. *Office Hours*

Instructors of record are expected to be regularly accessible to students. They are required to post and maintain reasonable office hours, subject to the approval of directors and deans.

3.4.2.3. *Teaching Loads*

The expected teaching load for full-time members of the Corps of Instruction is four courses or twelve credit hours per semester, or the equivalent, for the fall and spring semesters each. The University allows directors flexibility to consider reassignment, extension, honors, and other specialized courses as part of the normal teaching load and to grant reassigned time from teaching to those engaged in uncompensated administrative and committee work, research/creative activity, and other service.

3.4.2.4. *Contact Hours and Instructor Absences*

University accreditation is contingent on the maintenance of classroom contact hours calculated on a formula of 37.5 contact hours per three semester hours of academic credit; each semester hour requires at least one week of instruction. Therefore, instructors are expected generally to hold classes as assigned in class schedules. Contact hours may include field exercises, research, and examination periods supervised by the instructor or their designated representatives possessing appropriate academic credentials. Instructors who miss classes are expected to notify supervisors of their absences, regardless of arrangements made with students.

3.4.2.5. *Syllabi*

Instructors are expected to make syllabi available to students on the first day of class. Guidelines for writing class syllabi, including topics the University requires on all syllabi, are available from the Center for Faculty Development [website](#).

3.4.2.6. *Student Absences*

Instructors of record have the discretion to set their own attendance policies, subject to the approval of directors and deans. When given properly authorized evidence regarding a student's absence due to required University participation in an activity or event, instructors of record are expected not to consider the student as absent and should give students a reasonable opportunity to make up all work that was missed. Students with unplanned absences may be directed to the [Office of Student Outreach and Support](#) to have their excuses verified. Students are expected to cooperate by giving the instructor of record advance notice of scheduled absences and by completing all assigned course work.

3.4.2.7. *Academic Integrity*

Academic personnel are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#). Violations of this policy include cheating on examinations, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct. Instructors of record should take reasonable steps to ensure students comply with the policy, and, in the event of noncompliance, they are charged with determining appropriate sanctions from a range of options. These options include resubmission of the assignment, a lowered grade on that assignment, or a failing grade either for the assignment or for the entire course. If a student fails a course as a result of academic dishonesty, a grade of XF is awarded.

3.4.2.8. *Grading*

Standards for the award of evaluative grades are within the authority of instructors of record, subject to review only by the relevant academic units. The instructor of record may determine the basis of grades in all classes, assigning examinations, quizzes, essays, research papers, field exercises, and other graded activities at his or her discretion. Instructors of record are advised to consult the University's policy on [Undergraduate Academic Grades](#).

Except for unusual circumstances, instructors are expected to adhere to their own announced grading criteria and assignment schedule. They should return students' graded material promptly, and some graded work should be assigned and returned sufficiently early in the semester for students to adjust performance relative to the instructors' grading standards and expectations.

3.4.2.9. *Final Examinations*

In-class final examinations for a class must be administered at the time designated for that class on the University's Exam Schedule, found on the Registrar's website. The instructor of record may administer a take-home final examination in lieu of an in-class final examination or waive the final examination at his or her discretion under conditions specified in the class syllabus. In accord with the ["relief days" or "dead days" policy](#), there are limitations on student assignments during the week of classes before final examinations begin.

3.4.2.10. *Student Accessibility*

The Office of Student Accessibility Services ([SAS](#)) verifies students' eligibility for accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). SAS works with eligible students individually to develop and coordinate reasonable accommodations specific to their disabilities. Academic personnel are responsible for implementing reasonable accommodations identified in a letter sent by SAS on behalf of the student.

3.4.2.11. *Student Privacy and FERPA*

In brief, the Buckley Amendment to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 ([FERPA](#)) allows all students over 18 years of age the right to right, see, correct and control access to their student records. In accord with this legislation, the University has implemented a policy governing students' academic records. Faculty are responsible for understanding and complying with this policy.

3.5. Responsibilities to the Institution as a Whole

The principle of shared governance implies that faculty members and other members of the Corps of Instruction have a responsibility to contribute to governance and sound functioning of the Institution. This responsibility is often described as "service" in annual evaluation documents, promotion, and tenure criteria, and so forth. There are many kinds of service obligations including service to one's own program, school, college, University, professional discipline, and community.

While service obligations are incumbent upon all members of the faculty, individuals have wide discretion, in consultation with directors and other administrators, as to how best to serve and how much. For some, service time is most productively spent at the level of the program, school, and discipline; others may best contribute by University-level service. The issue of how much service is expected depends on various factors, including teaching loads, administrative responsibilities, research obligations, and expertise.

3.5.1. Responsibilities as Engaged Citizens of the University Community

Recognizing that diverse contributions across disciplines advance the Academy, full-time members of the corps of instruction at the University of Southern Mississippi are to be fully engaged citizens of the University community. Fully engaged citizens equitably contribute to the teaching/librarianship, research/creative activities, and service missions of the institution. This is accomplished through various activities that include, but are not limited to, the following: intentionally and conscientiously teaching and mentoring students; striving to advance one's own scholarly pursuits; contributing to shared governance through active engagement on school, college, and University committees; supporting colleagues; and complying with institutional policies. To this end, faculty are expected to be routinely present and participatory throughout the entire period of their employment contract.

3.6. Academic and Other Leave of Absence

Academic personnel may qualify for academic leaves of absence, including leave for graduate or postdoctoral study, otherwise enhancing academic credentials, professional leave, and sabbatical. School directors and deans are responsible for ensuring that classes are reassigned to existing faculty when faculty are awarded leaves of absence. The employment of additional academic personnel for this purpose will be approved by the Provost only upon the demonstration of substantial need.

Academic leaves of absence are distinct from those to which university employees are entitled under the terms of contracted employment, such as annual leave and medical leave. For more information regarding types of leave see Employee Handbook Chapter 6. Academic leaves of absence, including sabbaticals, are not entitlements but privileges conferred by the Board of Trustees upon the recommendation of the President. With the approval of the Board, faculty may receive creditable University service for a period of academic leave not exceeding 2 years during any 10-year period of University employment. Each classification of leave is subject to additional terms and conditions mandated by state law and Board policy.

3.6.1. Leave for Enhancing Academic Credentials

Academic personnel may be extended educational leave with or without pay for purposes of improving qualifications, for example, graduate or post-doctoral studies, for promotions in rank or appointment to new positions. Leaves of absence without pay may be granted by the Provost for an academic year, a semester, or (under unique circumstances) part of a semester.

3.6.2. Professional Leave

Professional leave is uncompensated absence from regular university employment for the purpose of external employment directly related to normal professional functions at the University. With the approval of the Board, faculty may receive creditable university service for a period of professional leave provided that: leave is for the purpose of full-time employment with a state or federal agency for a period of time equivalent to the period of professional leave granted; leave accrues to the professional benefit of the faculty member and promotes the interests of the University; the faculty member pays to the state retirement system the actuarial cost as determined by the actuary for each year of professional leave; and the faculty member serves the University on a full-time basis for a period of time equivalent to the professional leave period granted immediately following the termination of the leave period.

3.6.3. Sabbatical Leave

At the completion of six or more regular semesters of continuous, full-time university employment, faculty members are eligible for one semester of sabbatical leave (4 1/2 months). Sabbatical leave is granted for the sole purpose of professional improvement and is not necessarily earned by the required duration of employment at the University. Sabbatical leave is intended to assist faculty to achieve promotion in academic rank or enhance their professional development and scholarly reputation.

At the completion of 12 regular semesters of continuous, full-time university employment (sabbatical not being taken within that time), faculty are eligible for 2 semesters of sabbatical leave (9 months). Under no circumstances may sabbatical leaves of more than nine months' duration be granted. Sabbatical leave normally coincides with fall semesters, spring semesters, or both, exceptions allowable only in exceptional circumstances. In no case may sabbatical leave periods extend to summer semesters.

Refer to the Provost's website, [sabbatical and leave requests](#), for sabbatical guidelines, requirements, and application procedures.

Chapter 4. Annual Evaluation of Faculty Performance

4.1. Introduction

Annual evaluations of work performance are mandatory for academic personnel at the University. The evaluation framework serves to ensure effectiveness in teaching, research/creative activities, and service by providing a common structure for annual evaluations. This structure includes the allocation of workload and periodic opportunities for professional development. Additionally, annual evaluations inform decisions for tenure, promotion, and merit-based salary adjustments.

The annual evaluation framework is oriented toward proactive engagement between faculty members and their peers and supervisors. The annual evaluation process is meant to stimulate feedback among faculty, school directors, and deans in order to realize maximum potential, effectively allocate resources, and fairly arbitrate appeals made by faculty members. The process is aimed at maximizing potential and supporting the University mission.

Flexibility, clarity, transparency, efficiency, and fairness are key attributes of the evaluation framework. Schools are largely responsible for developing work performance criteria and expectations, which are to be consistent with college expectations, clearly articulated, in writing, and made readily available to faculty and administration.

Work performance criteria are designed to promote achievement in teaching, research/creative activities, and service. The three-tier evaluation system is intended to be efficient and effective and is based on meeting expectations established by academic units. School directors, or the ad hoc school director in University Libraries, are responsible for designating faculty workload allocations. Allocations should be based on the school level policy and procedures documents and Appendix A: Workload Allocation Guidelines

4.2. Workload Allocation

Annual evaluations of faculty performance are tied to types and proportions of work activities throughout a given academic year, including course load, research productivity, and service commitments. Allocation of workload should not be static but should balance the needs of a program or school and the professional goals of the faculty member; while maintaining the standards set forth by the school, college, and University and supporting achievement in all three categories of evaluation. The annual evaluation process should include a discussion of goals and workload allocation for the upcoming year in each of the three categories of evaluation. Workload should be clearly defined to promote transparency in allocation decisions and expectations for performance.

In developing workload allocations, the school director, or the ad hoc school director in University Libraries, should ensure instructional functionality of degree programs; support innovative modes of instruction; promote student success and involvement; encourage progress in research/creative activities; accentuate strengths of disciplinary clusters; foster interdisciplinary engagement; support professional development opportunities for faculty; and serve the needs of the school, college, University, professional organizations, and communities.

Workload allocation should be established between the school director and the faculty member in consultation with a program coordinator or dean as appropriate. Workload allocation is finalized by the school director in consultation with the college dean as appropriate. Workloads must be documented and acknowledged by both parties to complete the process and approved by the dean. Other members of a Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) should not be directly involved in decisions regarding workload allocation.

Course load allocation, a subset of overall workload allocation, is based on the equivalent of four 3-hour courses per semester. Schools should define equivalents in school policies and procedures documents. Each course is assigned a percentage determined in consultation with the faculty and director as defined in school policies and procedures documents. For guidelines more specific than those listed refer to Appendix A.

Faculty with any expectations for research/creative activities should receive a reduction in course load in order to meet expectations for those research/creative activities. Assigned course load or allocation of teaching (or service) at the discretion of the school director and approval by the dean, should consider student mentorship activities not directly associated with classroom instruction and other factors that may increase time devoted to teaching activities.

Service contributions to the program, school, college, University, or profession requiring a time commitment beyond the usual expectation for the school may warrant a reallocation of workload from either teaching or research/creative activities. This reallocation is particularly relevant for academic programs with few faculty members to sustain essential functions (e.g., annual reporting, academic advisement) or support strategic initiatives requiring service.

Some situations may warrant adjusting a faculty member's workload allocation. Examples include unforeseen circumstances, such as unexpected increases in enrollment or the departure of a faculty member which leaves a gap in the curriculum that must be covered; a faculty development plan; commitments created by new external funding agreements; or the need to participate in a significant service activity. In these instances, the workload reallocation should be documented.

Workload allocation should be aligned with expectations for the identified role (teaching track, pre-tenure/tenured) for which the faculty member has been employed, such that decisions for promotion or tenure are based upon criteria appropriate for that role. See Chapter 5 for more information on promotion and tenure.

4.3. Annual Evaluation Framework

The annual evaluation framework serves as the primary structure for setting annual objectives and allocating resources for faculty to achieve professional goals and progress toward promotion and tenure.

Submitted annual activity reports are reviewed by the school director and/or Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) in accordance with the governance model adopted annually by the school faculty. Faculty annual activity reports should include notation of responsibilities and reflections of annual productivity in teaching, research/creative activities, and service. Annual evaluations provide the opportunity to determine the extent to which the prior year's objectives were met and to set aspirational targets for the year ahead. Although objectives are set annually, discussions about progress towards objectives should occur as needed, for example when a major objective is attained early, some significant obstacle to fulfilling an objective arises, or a new opportunity presents itself that cannot be postponed to the next evaluation year.

Decisions for obligating authority for annual faculty evaluations are made at the school level and are based on the governance option chosen, see 1.10.2.

4.4. Faculty Annual Evaluation Process

All academic personnel must submit annual activity reports to the school director by the date noted in the [Provost's calendar](#), typically at the beginning of February. These reports include a summary of professional activities in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, and service during the year

evaluated. The annual activity report is submitted and evaluated in a process that moves through the governance option adopted by the school faculty.

Each member of the FEC is evaluated by the other members of the committee. School directors and associate deans are evaluated for all work-related categories, including administrative performance, by the dean and not by the other members of the FEC. However, evaluations of directors and associate deans in regards to teaching and research/creative activities are to be based on specifications outlined in the relevant school-level documents. Associate directors are reviewed by the FEC in the areas of teaching, research/creative activities, and non-administrative service while administrative performance is evaluated exclusively by the director.

Depending on the governance option chosen, the school director or FEC writes annual evaluation reports for each person evaluated. Each person is to be rated in the three categories of teaching, research/creative activities, and service based on the following rating categories.

4.5. Faculty Evaluation Guidelines

Teaching, research/creative activities, and service are evaluated annually for each faculty member according to the following ratings categories: “does not meet expectations,” “meets expectations,” and “exceeds expectations.” Schools are responsible for determining and documenting reasonable criteria for meeting expectations in association with assigned workload for the review period. These criteria require approval from the school director and the dean before being made publicly available through the Office of the Provost. The criteria must be approved at all levels and formally established in writing before faculty are held accountable to those standards. Separate categories of “collegiality” and “engagement” should not be added to the traditional three categories of faculty performance. Instead, academic units should develop clear definitions of teaching, research/creative activities, and service, in which collegiality and engagement are reflected.

4.5.1. Expectation Rating Categories

Given the wide diversity of subjects offered at the University, schools are best suited to assess faculty contributions and are responsible for determining and documenting expectations for each of the three categories of evaluation. These expectations can be subsumed within a detailed rubric (see Appendix B for an example) or a more simplified disclosure of standards that serve as a baseline for achievement. Further, schools should clearly articulate and document circumstances that warrant assignment of “does not meet expectations” and “exceeds expectations” (see Appendix C for examples). Evaluative criteria require approval from school directors and deans before being made publicly available through the Office of the Provost.

4.5.1.1. Meets Expectations

Faculty performance expectations should promote high levels of achievement facilitating student success and professional contributions consistent with the University mission. Meeting expectations implies that faculty achieve articulated and measurable professional objectives and maintain continuous career advancement, including progress toward promotion or tenure (see Appendix C for examples). Faculty are also expected to contribute to a culture supportive of students, colleagues, and units. Meeting expectations is more than achieving a minimally acceptable level of performance to avoid contractual termination.

While not a guarantee of success, meeting expectations in annual evaluations is an essential element of a successful path to promotion or tenure.

4.5.1.2. Does Not Meet Expectations

Assignment of does not meet expectations should be made for faculty who are unable to produce evidence of having met objectives established in the prior year. Quarterly or mid-year meetings between school director and faculty member are highly recommended for all faculty with categories rating “does not meet expectations.” Faculty who meet objectives early in the year but do not recalibrate them in consultation with their school directors also are not meeting expectations for faculty performance.

4.5.1.3. Exceeds Expectations

Assignment of exceeds expectations should be reserved for faculty who demonstrate excellence far beyond professional objectives set for the year, for achievement of highly ambitious objectives, or for a high level of contributions deemed especially complementary to the program, school, college, or the University vision. This designation should be reserved for faculty who provide evidence of high performance in teaching, research/creative activities, or service. When a faculty member achieved more than school expectations but not enough to merit assignment of exceeds expectations, a specific mention of achievement should be included in the noteworthy activities and remarks section of the annual evaluation report (see Appendix C for examples).

Faculty are expected to contribute significantly in their professional roles. Therefore, a high percentage of faculty in a school who exceed expectations suggests that school directors should examine goal setting and work with faculty to adjust to a higher aspirational level.

4.5.1.4. Considerations for Online Instruction

Due to the unique nature of the online learning environment, online teaching requires its own set of evaluation benchmarks. While specific assessment benchmarks may vary from one academic unit to another, each unit should develop online teaching evaluation criteria that meet or exceed standards set through the [Online Teaching and Learning at USM policy](#).

4.5.1.5. Noteworthy Activities and Remarks

Annual evaluation reports should include a separate section for noteworthy activities and remarks for evaluators to mention specific achievements or deficiencies that might not otherwise be discernible from evaluation ratings (see Appendix C for examples). Additionally, activities considered exemplary of interdisciplinary collaboration, intensive professional development, awards, etc. are appropriate for inclusion in this section. Documented activities and remarks can be used alongside the ratings for promotion and tenure decisions, merit-based raises, or other important personnel decisions. Noteworthy activities and remarks are not intended to be a comprehensive list of annual faculty achievements or deficiencies, but instead to disclose aspects of a faculty member’s performance that evaluators consider worth mentioning or to clarify assignment of a particular rating.

4.5.2. Faculty Annual Evaluation Meetings

The annual evaluation process follows a specific pathway which can involve meetings with the FEC and/or School Director. Based upon the governance option selected, the faculty member may have one or more meetings with the FEC and Director. These meetings offer opportunities to review activities from the previous year, for faculty to discuss and finalize professional objectives and goals for the year ahead, and to request necessary resources with their directors.

Evaluation meetings should be scheduled annually based on the Office of the Provost’s Calendar for annual evaluations for faculty.

The topics for the meeting include discussing the basis of the evaluation, allowing the faculty member the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings, and finalizing professional objectives for the following year.

Prior to acknowledging receipt of the annual evaluations, faculty may request an evaluation meeting as outlined above. Faculty also may appeal the results of their annual evaluations if they disagree with the assigned ratings or written comments from the evaluators. If the response remains unsatisfactory to the faculty member and efforts to resolve issues are unsuccessful at the school level, an appeal can be initiated in accord with the grievance procedure outlined in Chapter 7. In this case, the faculty member should acknowledge receipt of the annual evaluation prior to initiating the grievance process. Faculty member acknowledgment does not signify agreement with the evaluation, only receipt.

Annual evaluation meetings are required for all unpromoted tenure-track faculty, any faculty who receives a rating of “does not meet expectations” in any domains, and any faculty who requests such a meeting. Annual evaluation meetings are recommended for any faculty going up for promotion in the following academic year. For all other faculty, the meetings are optional and up to the discretion of the school’s policies. In schools where the evaluation is completed by the committee and the director (option 2) the meetings can include the committee and the director or the director only, depending upon the preference of the faculty member.

4.5.3. Transmittal to the Dean

Governance option 1: The school director submits signed evaluations to the dean

Governance option 2: The committee chair, after obtaining signed concurrence or dissent from each committee member, submits signed evaluations of the FEC to the dean.

Governance option 3: The committee chair, after obtaining signed concurrence or dissent from each committee member, submits the committee’s evaluations to the school director. Those evaluations with which the school director concurs are formally approved by the director’s signature and transmitted to the dean. If the school director dissents from any FEC evaluations, the director may prepare independent evaluations for those faculty and transmit them, along with the evaluations of the FEC (with dissent noted by the school director’s signature) to the dean with a copy sent to the faculty member and to the chair of the FEC.

Upon request by the Office of the Provost, annual summaries by academic unit or faculty rank are to be provided by colleges to facilitate assessment of evaluation metrics and to ensure consistent application of evaluation standards across the University.

4.5.4. Formal Development Plans

A formal development plan for improvement is initiated by the school director after a faculty member receives: (1) a second consecutive assignment of does not meet expectations in one of the three categories of faculty workload (teaching, research/creative activities, service) or (2) assignment of does not meet expectations in at least two categories in the same year. In addition to specific goals in the deficient areas, the development plan should specify the resources, training, and services that the faculty member needs to return to satisfactory productivity.

A faculty member’s workload should be reviewed by the school director as part of the development plan. If reweighting of workload obligations might solve the deficiency, it should be done as part of the process. For example, late-career faculty members who are doing less research might be assigned a 4/4

teaching schedule, expanded service obligations, and fewer research expectations. This approach may be the best way to support tenured faculty later in their careers who are still meeting expectations in two evaluative areas but not in the third.

Having a development plan in place does not mean that a tenured faculty member is on post-tenure review (PTR). A development plan is a proactive step to prevent the need for PTR. The development plan should follow the guidelines established in the annual evaluation process.

4.6. Interdisciplinary Appointments

4.6.1. Recommendations for Jointly Appointed Faculty

Jointly-appointed faculty have workload assignments shared between two evaluative units. Policies for jointly appointed and interdisciplinary faculty should be established that include a letter of agreement and written expectations for annual evaluation.

4.6.1.1. *Letter of Agreement when Faculty are Appointed*

A letter of agreement between academic units should outline the responsibilities of the faculty member with respect to each unit with regards to teaching, research/creative activities, and service. For new appointments, this agreement should be part of the offer letter. Differences between academic units in policies and procedures should be recognized and resolved in the letter of agreement. Differences may include workload allocation, annual evaluation, promotion, and tenure expectations.

Overall expectations of a jointly appointed faculty member should not exceed those of any non-jointly appointed faculty. Terms to be specified include: responsibilities for unit meetings, resources provided, physical space needs, level of support from staff within the unit, procedures to address conflicts between academic units, and whether the joint appointment can be renegotiated in the future.

4.6.1.2. *Annual Evaluations*

Expectations for annual evaluations should be set, modified, or reconciled based on the specific needs of the joint appointment. Units should set expectations based on the joint appointment rather than requiring the faculty member to meet both units' expectations. Units may be able to set expectations based on the percentage of the faculty member's appointment in each unit, especially for teaching and advising workload. However, issues of research/creative activities may require a new set of guidelines based on the specifics of the joint appointment (e.g., acceptable outlets for activities and types of research may need to be expanded). Evaluation committees for jointly appointed faculty should include at least one voting member of the minority evaluative unit(s).

4.6.2. Recommendations for Affiliated Faculty

When faculty have 100% of their budgeted lines in a home unit but have teaching or research/creative activity responsibilities in another unit, they are considered affiliated and not jointly appointed. However, many of the same recommendations above should apply to these faculty.

A letter of agreement between units should specify the rights and responsibilities of the faculty member and the units. Annual evaluation, promotion, and tenure guidelines for affiliated faculty should consider and account for their affiliated and interdisciplinary status. The home unit is encouraged to be flexible in modifying traditional disciplinary standards of evaluation without compromising the rigor of those standards. The home unit should solicit input from the affiliated unit.

4.7. Post-Tenure Review (PTR)

While tenure confers a qualified expectation of continued annual employment, tenured faculty members are as responsible as faculty without tenure for sustained and quality contributions to the University's

mission in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, and service. PTR is not a re-evaluation of tenure but is a way to assist faculty members in their professional development and document their ongoing commitment to the University's mission.

4.7.1. Post-Tenure Review Criteria

PTR occurs only after a faculty member has been given the opportunity to address deficiencies identified in the formal development plan discussed in 4.5.4 above. Provided there are no substantially mitigating circumstances (e.g., serious illness), PTR is initiated when faculty do not meet expectations in any one category for four consecutive years or in two or more categories for two consecutive years. Faculty are no longer on PTR if they receive a rating of meets expectations for all three categories within two years of being put on PTR. For faculty who fail to receive a rating of meets expectations for all three categories within two years of being placed on PTR, the school director, dean, and Provost must agree on a course of action that could include termination of employment.

4.7.2. Post-Tenure Review Process

When applicable, PTR should be initiated in the fall, as soon as annual evaluations for an academic year are approved by a dean. Schools should not delay the PTR process until the spring.

PTRs are to be conducted by three faculty members selected from any school or college within the University, with one member each selected by school director, dean, and the faculty member. By unanimous agreement of the three selected faculty, up to two additional faculty may be added to the committee. The committee meets over a two-year period. When committee members cannot complete their two-year terms, replacement representatives are selected by whoever made the original selections.

Within one month of the date of initiation of PTR, or not later than February 1 of the first year to be included in PTR, the faculty member being evaluated will prepare and submit a portfolio of all relevant materials. The portfolio should include the current annual evaluation; annual evaluations from the preceding four years; goals for each of those years; an up-to-date curriculum vitae; evidence of performance contributions in the categories of teaching, research/creative activity, and service; and a new formal development plan. Additional materials may be added to the portfolio by the school director or dean at any time during the process but added materials must be shared with the faculty member.

The PTR committee must review the submitted portfolio within one month of its submission. The review is based on the faculty member's specific role and responsibilities in the school. If necessary, in consultation with the faculty member, the committee suggests modifications to the proposed development plan to assist the faculty member in correcting identified deficiencies. The plan specifies how deficiencies will be remedied. The plan includes specific goals, activities needed to meet the goals, timelines for completing the activities, criteria for assessment of progress, and facilitating institutional resources needed to progress as described. With input from school directors, final drafts of development plans are approved by deans.

Prior to its final recommendation, the faculty member has a right to meet with the PTR committee. The committee elaborates in writing its findings regarding the proposed development plan and provides copies to the faculty member, school director, and dean. The final recommendation must be in place within two months of the faculty member's notification to prepare portfolio materials. The plan must be implemented the semester following its proposal (summer generally excluded).

The faculty member may appeal the findings of the committee and the recommended faculty development plan to the Provost, who consults the college promotion and tenure committee(s) and may seek the advice of the University promotion and tenure committee.

The faculty member and school director meet at least once each semester to review the faculty member's progress. After each meeting, the school director sends a progress report to the faculty member, PTR committee, and dean. The faculty member may request a review of progress by the PTR committee. If so, this review is forwarded to the faculty member, school director, and dean.

If, as determined by the PTR committee, the objectives of the development plan are met at any point within two years, the school director makes a final written report. This final report includes an overall rating for the time since the plan was implemented, as well as ratings for teaching, research/creative activities, and service during this time. If the objectives of the development plan are not met after two years, the committee recommends sanctions to the school director and dean. Termination proceedings begin if recommended by the dean.

4.7.3. PTR for Jointly Appointed and Affiliated Faculty

Development plans for jointly appointed and affiliated faculty should reflect the circumstances of the faculty member's appointment. PTR committees for such faculty include at least one member from every budgetary or evaluative unit connected to the appointment. The path of approval of the development plan for jointly-appointed faculty should be specified at the beginning of the PTR process. Depending on the situation, whether the joint appointment is across budgetary units within a college or in two colleges, directors and deans may act in concert or the school director and dean of the home unit may take precedence with input from the others. The process should be agreed upon with the Provost when PTR is initiated.

Chapter 5. Promotion and Tenure

5.1. Board Authority

Board policy 402.03 specifies that in making decisions regarding ranks and promotions in rank, heads of institutions shall take into consideration evidence of professional achievement and academic growth to include but not necessarily be limited to the following: a) Professional training and experience; b) Effectiveness of teaching; c) Effectiveness, accuracy and integrity in communications; The Board endorses the American Association of University Professors' (AAUP) Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure, which states in part: "When they speak or write as citizens, they should be free from institutional censorship or discipline, but their special position in the community imposes special obligations. As scholars and educational officers, they should remember that the public may judge their profession and their institution by their utterances. Hence, they should at all times be accurate, should exercise appropriate restraint, should show respect for the opinions of others, and should make every effort to indicate that they are not speaking for the institution." d) Effectiveness in interpersonal relationships, including collegiality, professional ethics, cooperativeness, resourcefulness and responsibility; e) The absence of malfeasance, inefficiency and contumacious conduct in the faculty member's performance of his/her faculty position at the university; f) Professional growth, such as research, publications and creative activities; g) Service and other non-teaching activities which reflect favorably upon the institution; and h) Any other criteria for promotions in rank set out in the applicable institution's policies which are not inconsistent with Board policy.

5.2. Pre-Tenure Review

Pre-Tenure Review is intended to evaluate the progress of tenure-track faculty towards the award of tenure and to determine areas for improvement of performance as necessary. Successful pre-tenure review is not a guarantee of tenure or of continued employment of any type or duration. Negative pre-tenure reviews constitute notice that progress toward tenure is unsatisfactory and may justify the issue of a terminal contract at the discretion of the President upon the recommendation of the Provost. Candidates who do not prepare and submit a pre-tenure review dossier when it is required will receive a terminal contract.

Pre-tenure review is typically performed in the spring of a faculty member's third year in a tenure-track position. Exceptions are discussed in 5.2.4 below for candidates with prior accomplishment. Candidates may request an extension of the pre-tenure review by one year in exceptional cases of personal circumstances beyond either the candidate's or the University's control. The application for an extension of the pre-tenure review, including the reasons for the application, are confidential, although the approval of an extension may be made public. Candidates may be granted an extension by the approval of their school director, dean, and Provost.

Circumstances that warrant an extension of the pre-tenure review include, but are not limited to, the following: becoming a parent (birth or adoption), significant responsibilities for the care of an immediate relative (spouse/domestic partner, parent, child), death of the immediate family (spouse/domestic partner, parent, child), serious medical conditions or disability, professional impediments, and prestigious external commitments.

5.2.1. Pre-Tenure Review Application Materials and Process

Pre-tenure review application materials and the process for submitting them are the same as for a tenure review. More information is available on the Provost's [webpage](#).

5.2.2. Pre-Tenure Review Evaluative Bodies and Actions

Pre-tenure review involves the same evaluative bodies and process as review of tenure or promotion, discussed in 5.8.1.2 below, with the following differences. Letters from external evaluators will not be solicited for pre-tenure review. The University Promotion and Tenure Committee will not review pre-tenure review materials and pre-tenure review stops at the Provost's level.

A principal task of the school promotion and tenure committee in the case of pre-tenure review is to identify areas in which the candidate may need to improve in order to eventually merit tenure. The members of the committee must assess whether the candidate is making satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress toward an award of tenure. In addition, the committee must identify areas where improvements are needed. As in the case of letters from the committee for promotion or tenure, the written recommendation must include the rationale and vote count of the committee.

Upon a candidate's dossier submission, the school director verifies that the submission is complete and ready for review by the school committee. School directors must submit the pre-tenure reviews to the college promotion and tenure committee and the dean of the college in which the faculty member under review holds academic appointment. School directors and the college promotion and tenure committees must also prepare and submit independent evaluations to academic deans, either concurring or dissenting with the school committee. If a school director is the subject of pre-tenure review, the recommendation of the school committee is forwarded directly to the college promotion and tenure committee and the dean. Pre-tenure reviews are forwarded from the deans to the Provost without involvement of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

As with promotion and tenure cases, the faculty member under review will receive a copy of the letter from each evaluative entity when it is sent to the next level of review. School directors also must assure that copies of pre-tenure reviews are retained in the candidate's personnel file. Upon request by a candidate, school directors must provide the candidate with a copy of the pre-tenure evaluations maintained in school personnel files.

University Libraries faculty will elect a pro tem school director from among the tenured department heads to fulfill the responsibilities of school director in the review process. The elected UL pro tem school director fulfills the role of the academic school directors in the pre-tenure, tenure and promotion process only. The UL pro tem school director may not sit as a member of the school, college, or University promotion and tenure committees.

5.2.3. Pre-Tenure Review Criteria

Criteria for pre-tenure review are the same as for tenure but take into account that candidates have not had the full probationary period to build their record of achievements. A principal task of the school promotion and tenure committee is to identify areas in which the candidate needs to improve to eventually merit tenure and to help the candidate identify strategies to improve. These strategies must be closely associated with the annual evaluation process so that candidates can monitor their progress in areas that were deficient and additional strategies can be developed to improve.

5.2.4. Pre-Tenure Review for Candidates with Credit for Prior Accomplishment

Candidates who were hired with three or more years credit towards tenure for prior accomplishments will not be subject to pre-tenure review. Candidates with zero, one, or two years credit towards tenure for prior accomplishments will proceed through pre-tenure review in their third, second, or first year at the University, respectively.

5.3. Promotion

5.3.1. Introduction

There should be a strict separation between promotion and tenure decisions for tenure-track faculty. Promotion is official institutional recognition of meritorious achievement in research/creative activities, service, and teaching. Promotion recognizes talented faculty for their records of achievement within their respective disciplines or in interdisciplinary settings. In contrast, tenure reflects expectations for long-term contributions to the University. Promotion to the rank of associate professor is a necessary condition for tenure at the University.

Promotion in the non-tenure-track corps of instruction is based on institutional recognition of meritorious achievement in both teaching and service. It recognizes talented non-tenure-track faculty members for their records of achievement within their respective disciplines.

Promotion of research and clinical track faculty follows the same processes as other faculty, except they are not evaluated by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

5.3.2. Evaluation Criteria

The following guidelines provide a uniform framework across schools, colleges, and campuses while recognizing that disciplinary variations necessitate a level of school autonomy in establishing more specific guidelines.

5.3.2.1. *Teaching/Librarianship*

High-quality instruction or librarianship is a requirement for the entire corps of instruction. Therefore, promotion criteria in regards to teaching should be as consistent as possible across disciplines. Candidates for tenure should provide evidence of high-quality instruction or librarianship. Examples of evidence of high-quality instruction include, but are not limited to, student and peer evaluations, student awards and success, teaching awards and recognitions of excellence, development of educational materials and presentations, direction of theses and other student-driven research. High-quality instruction or librarianship is the ability to educate and motivate a wide range of students effectively, imparting the latest knowledge, methods, and standards of the discipline being taught.

Examples of high quality librarianship include, but are not limited to, delivery of high-quality reference services and instruction, collection development that meets the scholarly needs of faculty and students, creation and remediation of metadata, development of research guides, finding aids, and digital collections that provide access to materials, and such outreach activities as exhibitions and events.

Schools and the University Libraries set their specific evaluation criteria for teaching and librarianship with an appropriate combination of meaningful metrics.

5.3.2.2. *Service*

Satisfactory service to the discipline, school, and University is a requirement for the entire corps of instruction. Service encompasses the use of one's professional expertise to enrich the general state of our university, society, and professional communities. Examples of service include, but shall not be limited to, active participation in committees, boards, review of evaluation panels, and professional organizations. Promotion criteria with regards to service should be as consistent as possible across tracks and disciplines. Schools set specific evaluation criteria.

5.3.2.3. *Research/Creative Activities*

Requirements for research/creative activities for tenure-track faculty should be set by the schools and should be comparable to (or exceed) those of peer units at peer institutions. Accomplishments in

research/creative activities should be a result of continuous contributions to the advancement of knowledge and creativity. Examples of such contributions include, but are not limited to, books, articles and reviews published by commercial or university presses or in refereed scholarly journals with international, national, or regional reputations; active participation in scholarly conferences and presentations; significant participation in pursuit of research grants or intellectual property; and significant participation in artistic creation, performances, or productions. This category may be considered but is not necessary for promotion of non-tenure track faculty.

5.3.2.4. *Other Criteria as Required by IHL*

The Board has established other criteria which must be taken into consideration when making decisions regarding promotion (IHL Board policy 402.03) and tenure (IHL Board policy 403.0101).

5.3.3. Unsuccessful Applications for Promotion

For tenure-track faculty, promotion to associate professor typically coincides with tenure. Should a candidate apply unsuccessfully for early promotion to associate professor, a new promotion application must be submitted at the time of applying for tenure.

In the event of an unsuccessful application for promotion from associate professor to professor, the candidate is not eligible to reapply for promotion in the following year. Exemptions may apply in exceptional circumstances identified by the school promotion and tenure committee or the school director during the annual evaluations process.

For non-tenure track faculty, although promotion is desirable, it can be appropriate to maintain individuals at the rank of assistant teaching professor or instructor beyond the five-year probationary period. In the event of an unsuccessful promotion, candidates are not allowed to apply for promotion in the following year with exceptions determined by the school promotion and tenure committee or school director during the annual evaluation process.

5.4. Tenure

5.4.1. Introduction

Although promotion and tenure bear a close relationship with each other in that both recognize faculty members for their records of achievement, the processes serve distinct purposes. Tenure extends an additional level of protection to the faculty member from arbitrary dismissal. Although research/creative activity is a significant component of the University's mission, tenure should not be awarded solely based on this. By granting tenure, the University exercises its belief in academic freedom and recognizes that a faculty member has the knowledge, skills, and professionalism required to make continuing, positive contributions to the discipline, school, and academic community. Tenure is an essential element within our institution. It protects the academic freedom necessary to conduct research, teaching, and librarianship, provides long lasting student mentoring, and strengthens the university's mission. The tenure guidelines that follow acknowledge that disciplinary variations necessitate a degree of autonomy at the school level.

5.4.2. Definition of Tenure

Academic tenure is defined as the qualified expectation of a continuation of annual employment that may be awarded to a full-time member of the faculty after completing a probationary period. There is no guarantee that tenure will be awarded at the conclusion of the probationary period. Tenure is not guarantee of lifetime employment. Rather, no person who has been awarded tenure may be discharged except upon certain grounds and in accordance with specified procedures.

An award of tenure requires excellence in performance and the promise of continued excellence in teaching, research, and service. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to demonstrate that tenure should be awarded. If awarded, tenure is vested within the school or lowest unit of academic appointment (unless otherwise designated by the IHL Board (IHL 403.01)). Achieving tenure does not relieve a faculty member from the standards of professional performance, conduct, achievement, merit, and probity maintained by schools, colleges, the University, and the Board of Trustees.

5.4.3. Associate Professor Requirement

Because promotion is viewed as a reflection of the disciplinary competence necessary for tenure, the promotion to the rank of associate professor is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for tenure at the University. Therefore, assistant professors cannot apply for tenure before or without simultaneously applying for promotion to associate professor. Faculty appointed at ranks above assistant professor may apply for tenure without applying for promotion.

5.4.4. Evaluation Criteria

The criteria for tenure are determined in the typical areas of assessment (teaching, service, research/creative activities, other criteria required by IHL) described in 5.3.2 above with additional considerations of collegiality within the University.

Because they aim to become part of the cadre of faculty that will shape the long-term future of the institution, candidates for tenure must exhibit a clear sense of shared responsibility for the excellence of the University; this includes collegiality. Collegiality is interlinked with the categories of evaluation and its evaluation should be in those contexts. Accordingly, the separate category of collegiality should not be added to the traditional three areas of faculty performance. Schools and colleges instead should focus on developing clear definitions of teaching, research/creative activity, and service in which the virtues of collegiality are reflected.

5.4.5. Unsuccessful Applications for Tenure

If tenure is denied, a final, one-year non-renewable contract at the candidate's rank is to be issued to the candidate.

5.5. External Evaluators for Tenure-Track Faculty

5.5.1. External Evaluation Requirement

Unless otherwise determined by the school, letters from external evaluators are strongly recommended for applications for promotion or tenure of tenure-track faculty from assistant to associate professor. However, letters are required for promotion of tenure-track faculty from associate professor to professor. Letters are not required for the promotion of non-tenure-track faculty. When letters are solicited, the following guidelines will be used regardless of the candidate's rank.

External evaluations generally focus on research/creative activities, but, if possible, should consider the candidate's whole body of work, including teaching and service duties.

Schools are responsible for soliciting external letters, respecting a faculty member's disciplinary requirements and individual differences in faculty roles and responsibilities. Under no circumstance will individuals be responsible for soliciting their own letters or solely responsible for identifying evaluators.

5.5.2. Eligibility to Serve as an External Evaluator

Schools determine the required qualifications for external evaluators. Widely used rules for similar types of eligibility can be found, for example, in the National Science Foundation's rules for grant reviewers.

All evaluators solicited should be competent to judge the candidate's work within the context of this University's research expectations and teaching duties.

5.5.3. Size and Composition of the Set of External Evaluators

The school determines the size and composition of the set of external evaluators as well as the process for identifying possible evaluators. One example of a system that provides a balanced set of reviewers is that the candidate provides a set of four potential external evaluators from which the school picks two. The school then selects two more external evaluators who are unknown to the candidate.

5.5.4. Confidentiality of External Evaluator Identities

To assure candid external evaluations, the identities of external evaluators and, except for references in other evaluative bodies' letters, the content of their evaluations must be kept confidential. To this end, letters from external evaluators are to be removed from application materials before these are returned to candidates.

5.6. Other Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation from outside personnel are allowed, but only if placed in the original dossier prior to its submission to the school. Such letters should be clearly marked so that they are not confused with letters solicited from external reviewers.

5.7. Probationary Period

5.7.1. Tenure-Track Faculty

5.7.1.1. *Promotion to Assistant Professor*

No minimum number of years of service is required for candidates to be promoted to the rank of assistant professor.

5.7.1.2. *Promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor*

In cases involving promotions from assistant professor to associate professor, candidates normally serve at least five years in the lower rank. An application for promotion occurs during the sixth year of service in the lower rank and an approved promotion is effective at the beginning of the seventh year.

Under exceptional conditions, it is possible for an individual with qualifications far exceeding school guidelines to receive consideration for early promotion. Early promotion may also occur when credit for prior service was awarded at the time of hire.

5.7.1.3. *Promotion from Associate Professor to Professor*

The standard probationary period for promotion from associate professor to professor is five years. In the fifth (or later) year of service at rank, the candidate may apply for promotion from associate professor to professor, with an approved promotion effective at the beginning of the following academic year. In exceptional cases, it is possible for an individual with qualifications far exceeding school guidelines to receive consideration for early promotion. Generally, eligibility for early promotion may be granted prior to the fifth year in rank.

5.7.1.4. *Tenure Application*

Unless credit for time served at another institution has been awarded during the hiring process, faculty must apply for tenure in their sixth year of service with the award becoming effective at the beginning of the following academic year (i.e., 7th year). Faculty members who are unsuccessful in applying for tenure will receive a terminal contract.

5.7.1.5. Exceptions to the Probationary Period

5.7.1.5.1. Extension of Probationary Period

Candidates may request an extension of the probationary period in one-year increments in exceptional cases of personal circumstances beyond either the candidate's or the University's control. The application for an extension of the probationary period, including the reasons for the application, are confidential, although the approval of an extension may be made public.

Circumstances that warrant an extension of the probationary period include, but are not limited to, the following: becoming a parent (birth or adoption), significant responsibilities for the care of an immediate relative (spouse/domestic partner, parent, child), death in the immediate family (spouse/domestic partner, parent, child), serious medical conditions or disability, professional impediments, and prestigious external commitments.

5.7.1.5.2. Process for Extending the Probationary Period

The candidate submits a written request with a rationale for the extension to the school director. The school director prepares a letter supporting or opposing the request and submits that letter and request to the college dean. The dean prepares a letter supporting or opposing the request and submits both letters and the request to the Provost. A final decision on the request is rendered by the Provost.

5.7.1.5.3. Credit for Prior Accomplishments

A maximum of five years credit may be awarded towards the probationary period for prior service at other institutions of higher education if specified in the individual's contract at the time of employment. Such credit is granted only to an individual who possesses exceptional professional qualifications and achievements. Generally, credit is limited to up to two years for faculty appointed to the rank of assistant professor, three to five years for faculty appointed at the rank of associate professor, and five years for faculty appointed at the rank of professor.

5.7.1.5.4. Waiver of Probationary Period

Faculty may be hired with a rank higher than assistant professor should circumstances and the candidate's record warrant it. Similarly, IHL policy permits the award of tenure at the time of hire. The University has a vested interest in attracting the best candidates to all levels of the University. Given that some candidates may be tenured at other institutions and in keeping with IHL policy 403.0101, tenure may be granted to individuals who have held tenure at their previous institution. However, this option should be used with care. Awarding tenure at the time of hire may be more frequently appropriate for hires with administrative duties to avoid putting them in the position of evaluating those who will later evaluate their own tenure application.

The relevant school promotion and tenure committee must be consulted, with adequate time to review the candidate's qualifications, regarding the award of either higher rank or tenure at the time of hire. Any institutional appointments waiving the probationary period for either promotion or tenure must be evaluated by the candidate's school during the hiring/negotiation process, and tenure for these faculty must be approved by the President.

5.7.2. Promotion in Teaching-Track Positions

A five-year probationary period for a new assistant teaching professor or instructor provides time to demonstrate excellence in teaching and service prior to being promoted to the next rank. A notable exception to this probationary period applies to candidates whose initial appointment gave them credit for service prior to joining the University. Consistent with section 2.3.1.1. above, teaching track faculty may be promoted in an equivalent time frame to tenure-track faculty. In cases involving promotion from

assistant teaching professor to associate teaching professor, or instructor to lecturer, an application for promotion may occur during the sixth year of service (or later) in the lower rank, with an approved promotion effective at the beginning of the following academic year. The standard probationary period for promotion from associate teaching professor to teaching professor, or lecturer to senior lecturer, is five years. In the fifth (or later) year of service at rank, the candidate may apply with the promotion becoming effective at the beginning of the following academic year.

Individuals with qualifications far exceeding the guidelines may receive consideration for early promotion. However, non-tenure-track faculty do not have any mandate to move towards promotion unless that candidate so desires. Given the nature of non-tenured positions, promotion should be considered a desirable goal rather than a mandate. In particular, non-tenure-track promotable faculty at the University are allowed to remain at the University even if there is no promotion from assistant teaching professor to associate teaching professor or from instructor to lecturer.

5.8. Tenure and Promotion Review Process

Annual evaluation must be linked with a faculty member's progress towards promotion and tenure. To that end, the criteria for evaluation set forth in promotion and tenure standards must be aligned with Board policy and school criteria used in annual evaluations.

Specific details regarding the process for applying for promotion or tenure, including the preparation of the application, can be found on the [Provost's website](#). Candidates must prepare and submit their applications no later than the deadline published on the Provost's calendar. Candidates who do not prepare and submit tenure applications when required will receive terminal contracts.

5.8.1. Evaluators

5.8.1.1. *Evaluative Role*

Every evaluator or committee in the promotion and tenure review process serves in an advisory capacity to subsequent reviewers. At each level, reviewers evaluate the application for promotion and tenure on the basis of the materials submitted by the candidate, the promotion and tenure expectations of the candidate's home unit(s), and the written evaluations submitted at previous levels of review. Each level also reviews the previous level's decision for substantive or procedural discrepancies.

Every evaluative level will provide a written recommendation including a rationale for the recommendation and (committees only) vote count (for-against-abstain) to the subsequent reviewers. Separate letters must be written for each candidate evaluated. For interdisciplinary candidates appointed to multiple units within a single college, the school directors' recommendation will be co-written by all involved school directors and signed jointly. For interdisciplinary candidates appointed to multiple units in multiple colleges, the deans' recommendation will be co-written and signed by all relevant deans. Copies of these written recommendations will be provided to the candidate by the respective committee chair or university officer.

5.8.1.2. *Evaluative Levels and Actions*

The President is advised on personnel recommendations by the administrative heads of the University's academic units, the Provost, the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the deans, and the college promotion and tenure committees. Advice from the Vice President for Research, General Counsel, and by the other vice presidents may be solicited by the President in matters that are within their administrative jurisdiction. The advice rendered by University officers or committees does not limit the legal authority or responsibility of the President for all personnel decisions.

Review of applications for promotion or tenure occurs at each institutional level of the University in the following sequence: the candidate's school promotion and tenure committee, the school director (or a joint letter from school directors in the case of interdisciplinary faculty and the pro tem school director in the case of University Libraries), the college promotion and tenure committee, the dean of the college in which the candidate's school resides (or a joint letter from deans from all relevant colleges in the case of interdisciplinary faculty), the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, Provost, and President.

Because promotion and tenure processes often coincide for tenure-track faculty, the composition of the promotion and tenure committees may be similar, but all processes should be separate. The committees are discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 of this Handbook.

5.8.1.2.1. The School

The candidate's school director first confirms the eligibility of candidates for promotion in academic rank or tenure and then convenes the school promotion and tenure committee to consider the qualifications of candidates. Upon a candidate's dossier submission, the school director verifies that the submission is complete, ready for review by the school committee, and uploads the confidential external evaluator letters, if applicable, which remain inaccessible to the candidate until the final promotion and tenure determination is made. The director may be invited, after a majority vote via secret ballot by the members of the committee, to attend promotion and tenure proceedings and provide information.

The school promotion and tenure committee must base its deliberations on the standards for promotion or tenure mandated by the Board, those adopted by the University, and those of the school and college. The committee submits a written report to the school director supporting or opposing promotion or tenure. The recommendation must include the rationale and vote count of the committee. In cases when votes are not unanimous, the written evaluation must reflect within the same document the opinions of both positions. Acting on behalf of the faculty, the chair of the school promotion and tenure committee must sign the recommendation.

Upon receipt of the school promotion and tenure committee's written reports, school directors must review reports for substantive or procedural discrepancies or inconsistencies with annual performance reviews. In the event of any discrepancies or inconsistencies, the director will reconvene the committee and direct that the discrepancies or inconsistencies be addressed.

The school director then prepares an independent written recommendation either concurring or disagreeing with the recommendations of the school promotion and tenure committee and submits both reports to the college promotion and tenure committee no later than the date published on the Provost's calendar. A copy of the reports is retained in the candidate's personnel file. The candidate is provided copies of both reports at the time they are submitted to the college promotion and tenure committee.

University Libraries faculty will elect a pro tem school director from among the tenured department heads to fulfill the responsibilities of school director in the review process. The elected UL pro tem school director fulfills the role of the academic school directors in the pre-tenure, tenure and promotion process only. The UL pro tem school director may not sit as a member of the school, college, or University promotion and tenure committees.

5.8.1.2.2. The College

Recommendations generated at the school level are reviewed by the college promotion and tenure committee and dean before being submitted to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

The college promotion and tenure committee reviews all materials and then votes on the candidate's application. The chair of the committee submits written recommendations, vote, and rationale to the dean, providing a copy to the school director, chair of the school promotion and tenure committee, and candidate at the same time that it is submitted to the dean. In cases when votes are not unanimous, the written evaluation must reflect within the same document the opinions of both positions.

Deans must review and evaluate all materials and recommendations submitted up to this point and submit to the Provost a separate recommendation along with all evaluative materials no later than the date specified on the Provost's calendar. The dean will send a copy of the evaluative letter, including rationale, to the chair of the respective college promotion and tenure committee, school director, chair of the school tenure and promotion committee, and candidates at the time that it is submitted to the Provost.

5.8.1.2.3. The University

5.8.1.2.3.1. University Promotion and Tenure Committee

The Provost submits the dossiers, including all written recommendations and any supplemental materials previously generated in the review process, of faculty members being considered for promotion in rank and the award of tenure to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee reviews and evaluates all materials and then votes. The chair of the committee submits a written recommendation, including rationale and vote, to the Provost. In cases when votes are not unanimous, the written evaluation must reflect within the same document the opinions of both positions. The chair simultaneously forwards a copy of the letter to the dean, chair of the promotion and tenure committee, school director, chair of the school promotion and tenure committee, and to the candidate.

5.8.1.2.3.2. Provost

The Provost reviews all application materials and recommendations, submitting written recommendations to the President. The Vice President for Research assists the Provost in these matters and may submit independent recommendations to the University President. At this time, the Provost also sends copies to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, deans, college promotion and tenure committees, school directors, school promotion and tenure committees, and to candidates.

If the Provost disagrees with recommendations of both the college promotion and tenure committee and the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the Provost will remand the case to the school promotion and tenure committee, providing in writing the rationale for the disagreement. The school promotion and tenure committee then reconsiders the matter *de novo*, based upon the issues raised by the Provost and all other relevant evidence. The matter will proceed in the same manner as an original application for promotion or tenure, except that it will not be subject to remand by the Provost. Copies of the evaluative letters written by the school promotion and tenure committee, the school director, the dean, and the University Promotion and Tenure Committee in response to remands from the Provost will be forwarded to the candidate when the letters are forwarded to the next evaluative level.

5.8.1.2.3.3. President

In reviewing the recommendations of subordinate evaluators and committees, the President has the discretion to obtain and review any additional evidence of probative value and to interview any party, including candidates.

Presidential decisions will be communicated in writing to candidates. Promotion in academic rank or the award of tenure occur only after the President has granted it in writing and the faculty member has

received written notice of the promotion or award of tenure. Negative presidential decisions regarding the award of tenure or promotion are final unless the candidate appeals to the Board.

Faculty who wish to appeal the decision of the University President regarding the award of tenure or promotion need to appeal to the Board. Faculty have 30 calendar days to do so, effective from the date of notification by the University President. Appellant should address appeals to the Commissioner of the IHL and follow the procedures outlined in section 403.0105 of the Policies & Bylaws of the IHL Board of Trustees.

5.8.1.3. Confidentiality of Review Proceedings

Because of the sensitivity of the reviews in question, deliberations by all advisory evaluators and committees must be strictly confidential with access limited only to committee members, staff, and administrators involved directly in the proceedings.

5.8.2. Candidate's Right to Update Application Materials and Provide Rebuttals

Materials in applications may not be removed during the evaluation process. However, candidates for promotion or tenure do have the right to withdraw their applications at any time.

Candidates may add information and materials to their applications up until the time the school promotion and tenure committee completes its evaluation of the candidate.

Because there can be situations during the course of the promotion or tenure application process that could positively affect the candidate's chances of success (e.g., an additional article accepted for publication), the candidate can provide updates via written memo to the evaluative body currently reviewing the promotion and tenure applications by submitting the material to the respective Dean's office. These updates must be limited to the material already mentioned in the original application and must be properly documented.

Except when the Provost remands a case to the school, college and University committees for further review consistent with section 5.8.1.2.3 above, promotion and tenure applications are a unidirectional processes and may not be referred back to a previous evaluative committee or individual once a decision has been rendered.

However, candidate rebuttals to recommendations made by the evaluative officers and committees are permitted at the following levels: (1) after the school promotion and tenure committee's and the school director's letters have been submitted, (2) after the college promotion and tenure committee's and the dean's letters have been submitted, and (3) after the University Promotion and Tenure Committee's letter has been submitted. If the candidate wishes to provide a rebuttal, it must be done within ten working days of the receipt of the relevant letters. Rebuttal letters must be submitted through the candidate's respective Dean's office which then directs the rebuttal to the appropriate university office. A university staff or administrator will then place the rebuttal letter immediately after the referenced evaluative letter. Candidates do not place their rebuttal letters in their application. Rebuttals from other individuals are not permitted.

5.8.3. Interdisciplinary Contributions

Schools should incorporate evaluative measures that facilitate interdisciplinary efforts of faculty in teaching, service, and research/creative activities while recognizing that there are faculty for whom interdisciplinary collaborations are not feasible, suitable, or appropriate.

Chapter 6. Resignation, Non-renewal, Progressive Discipline, and Termination

6.1. Resignation

The University President is authorized by the Board of Trustees to accept resignations and to determine the effective date of voluntary termination of employment. Resignation of employment by a faculty member shall constitute resignation and relinquishment of all rights and privileges of employment, including rank and tenure.

6.2. Non-renewal of Contracts

While the Board of Trustees usually renews the annual employment contracts of tenured faculty in the absence of specified circumstances, the annual employment contracts of non-tenured faculty are renewable entirely at the discretion of the Board upon the recommendation of the President. The contract of a non-tenured faculty member shall not be considered renewed until approved by the Board, expressed in its minutes, and the faculty member has received written notification of renewal from the President.

In the event of non-renewal, the University must inform the affected member of the corps of instruction in writing according to the following schedule: not later than March 1 during the first year of service; not later than December 1 during the second year of service; and not later than September 1 after two or more years of service. Members of the corps of instruction who are notified of the non-renewal of their contracts prior to or on the dates mentioned in above are entitled to serve the remainder of the academic year through the end of the spring semester. If notified after the dates mentioned above members of the corps of instruction are entitled to serve the remainder of the academic year through the spring semester and are offered a terminal contract for the following academic year.

6.3. Faculty Progressive Discipline

6.3.1. Introduction

Faculty discipline at the University takes various forms depending on the nature of the infraction. Some, for example, Title IX infractions and criminal conduct, are covered by policies governing all University employees and are discussed in the Employee Handbook. Others are covered by their own policy, for example, scholarly misconduct.

6.3.2. Policy Statement

The progressive discipline policy covers circumstances not addressed in other University policies; it applies to the corps of instruction as well as visiting faculty. This policy addresses workplace situations requiring immediate attention but not necessarily meriting initiation of proceedings leading to the termination of employment. This policy does not cover contumacious conduct, malfeasance, inefficiency, cause, Title IX violations, allegations of scholarly misconduct, or criminal conduct. Examples of conduct covered by this policy include, but are not limited to, violations of University protocols or policies, failure to perform assigned duties, misuse of financial resources, misuse of facilities, excessive absenteeism, improper supervision of graduate assistants, or inappropriate behavior leading to an unproductive learning and working environment.

In general, school directors, in consultation with deans, are responsible for implementing the progressive discipline policy. The parties involved in the progressive discipline process should maintain confidentiality when possible.

6.3.3. Procedures

The procedures below outline the possible steps that can be taken when administering progressive discipline. However, some situations merit an alternate point of entry in the progressive discipline process. Any situation that is deemed severe, yet correctable, might start at either Step 2 (reprimand) or Step 3 (censure) depending on the severity of the offense. Multiple issues arising from the same faculty member may be considered collectively. Multiple issues being considered collectively may merit an alternate point of entry in the progressive discipline policy. The progressive discipline procedures do not guard against termination of employment for situations deemed severe, leading to an unsafe working environment, or as defined by IHL or other institutional policies.

6.3.3.1. *Step 1: Verbal warning*

In a private meeting, the school director communicates the issue to the faculty member, why the issue is a concern, and the expected corrective actions to be taken by the faculty member. The verbal warning is to be corrective and non-punitive. The faculty member must be given a date for reevaluation of the situation and must be notified that failure to resolve the problem within the indicated time frame will result in a written reprimand as described in Step 2. The school director will identify this step as a verbal warning and summarize the meeting in an email to the faculty member, which does not go into the faculty member's human resource (HR) file. The faculty member may respond to the email to address any inaccuracies in the meeting summary.

6.3.3.2. *Step 2: Written reprimand*

The school director may initiate this step if the faculty member fails to resolve the situation identified in Step 1 within the indicated time frame for reevaluation. The school director may also initiate Step 2 as the entry point for progressive discipline for situations deemed too severe to begin with a verbal warning.

The written reprimand must include: (1) a detailed description of the situation, (2) any previous steps taken by the school director to communicate the situation with the faculty member, (3) a description of why the situation merits a written reprimand, (4) a description of what the faculty member must do to correct the situation, (5) the timeline by which the situation is to be reevaluated, and (6) any actions that might occur if a resolution is not achieved. The school director is to mention in the written reprimand that such action may include moving to Step 3 (censure) or initiation of proceedings leading to the termination of employment (if appropriate). When possible, the written reprimand is to be delivered to the faculty member in person by the school director, and a copy is also to be placed in the faculty member's HR file. The school director may also send an electronic copy to the faculty member in addition to the hard copy as well as a copy to the dean.

The faculty member may request a dean's review of the written reprimand within five working days of receiving the hard copy of the written reprimand. The dean to whom the school director reports has five working days to initiate a review of the merits of the reprimand and notify the parties by email. The dean can uphold the reprimand, reject the reprimand as an inappropriate discipline, or call a meeting which would include the faculty member and school director to obtain more information before making a final decision. The dean's decision is final at this stage of progressive discipline.

A copy of the written reprimand, the dean's decision (if applicable), and the school director's reevaluation (if applicable) are to be placed in the faculty member's HR file. The written reprimand is to be corrective and non-punitive in that it is not made public and does not result in formal sanctions. In the event of a dean's review, no written reprimand will be added to the faculty member's HR file until the review is completed. Faculty have the right to include a letter of rebuttal to accompany the written reprimand.

6.3.3.3. *Step 3: Censure*

The school director may initiate this step if the faculty member fails to resolve the issue outlined in Step 2 within the indicated time frame for reevaluation. The school director may also initiate Step 3 as the entry point for progressive discipline for situations deemed too severe to begin with a written reprimand.

Censure is the final step of progressive discipline and is to include sanctions that may be punitive and non-private. Failure to achieve resolution of the situation at the censure stage can result in the initiation of proceedings leading to the termination of employment.

In consultation with the dean, the school director composes a letter of censure to the faculty member that must include: (1) a detailed description of the situation, (2) a reason the situation merits censure, (3) the sanctions that are to be imposed on the faculty member, (4) the corrective actions the faculty member must make to address the situation, (5) the timeline by which the situation is to be reevaluated, and (6) a statement that failure to resolve the situation can result in the initiation of proceedings leading to the termination of employment. When possible, the signed letter of censure is to be delivered to the faculty member in person by the school director, and a copy is to be delivered to the dean to whom the school director reports. The school director may also send an electronic copy to the faculty member in addition to the hard copy.

Sanctions may include but are not limited to, reassignment of teaching duties, suspension, reassignment of research or service commitments, loss of committee chair privileges, or loss of university-approved travel privileges.

The faculty member may request review by the Provost within five working days of receiving the letter of censure. The Provost has five working days to initiate a review of the letter of censure merits and notify the parties by email. The Provost can either uphold the letter of censure or reject the letter of censure as an inappropriate discipline. The Provost can elect to obtain additional facts by calling a meeting which would include the faculty member, school director, and Provost. The decision of the Provost is final. In the event of a Provost's review, no letter of censure will be added to the faculty member's HR file until the review is completed.

A copy of the letter of censure, the request by the faculty member for the Provost's review (if applicable), the Provost review (if applicable), and the reevaluation (if applicable) are to be placed in the faculty member's HR file. Due to the nature of sanctions, censure may generally be known within the University community, but administrators involved should not communicate the details more than necessary. Should the faculty member satisfactorily meet the conditions outlined in the letter of censure, the school director will compose a letter of resolution and provide a copy to the faculty member and place a copy in the faculty member's HR file. Faculty have the right to include a letter of rebuttal to accompany the letter of censure.

Censure is the final step of the progressive discipline process, and failure to resolve the situation at this stage may result in the initiation of proceedings leading to termination of employment at the University per the provisions stipulated below.

6.3.4. Other Potential Impacts of Progressive Discipline

Progressive discipline procedures could impact promotion and tenure proceedings and could have an impact on the annual evaluation process.

6.4. Termination

6.4.1. Board of Trustees

The Board has the statutory authority to suspend or terminate the employment of any member of the faculty, including tenured faculty members, at any time for financial exigencies as declared by the Board, or in the event of the termination, suspension, or reduction of programs, academic units, or administrative units by the Board. Tenured faculty members terminated or suspended because of financial exigencies as declared by the Board or because of suspension or reduction of programs, academic units, or administrative units as approved by the Board are entitled to employment continuation for 9 to 12 months from the date of notification, consistent with existing employment contract terms.

The Board has the statutory authority to dismiss any member of the faculty of the University, including tenured faculty members, at any time, with or without the recommendation of the President, for malfeasance, inefficiency, contumacious conduct, or cause. The employment contracts of parties dismissed for malfeasance, inefficiency, contumacious conduct, or cause may be terminated by the Board at any time with the dismissed party retaining no right to continued employment for any period of time. Pursuant to Board policy, at the President's discretion, the parties against whom the University has initiated termination proceedings may be placed on leave without pay, and such parties may be reassigned or relieved of teaching duties, assignments, appointments, and privileges for a specified period of time. However, the Board's authority to dismiss tenured faculty members or non-tenured faculty members prior to the expiration of the term of appointment on such terms is subject to institutional due process procedures, which requires that the affected faculty member be given notice of the proposed action and be granted a hearing before an impartial institutional body.

6.4.2. Definitions of Criteria

Board mandated terms that might lead to the initiation of termination proceedings are defined as follows:

6.4.2.1. *Malfeasance*

Malfeasance is misconduct that adversely affects, interrupts, or interferes with the performance of faculty member's duties or that adversely affects, interrupts, or interferes with that of other institutional faculty or administrative personnel. Examples of malfeasance pertinent to faculty and ex officio faculty include, but are not limited to, the repeated failure to perform assigned duties or responsibilities, intellectual dishonesty, and ethical violations as proscribed in other university policies.

6.4.2.2. *Inefficiency*

Inefficiency is a repeated failure to demonstrate competency in the contracted terms of employment, which in the case of faculty and ex officio faculty equates with performance substantially below standards and/or criteria governing assigned duties or responsibilities. Dismissal proceedings on grounds of inefficiency should be initiated only after the faculty member has been given written notice and afforded both reasonable university resources and an opportunity to redress the stated source of inefficiency within a reasonable, enumerated time.

6.4.2.3. *Contumacious Conduct*

Contumacious conduct is the refusal to comply with a legitimate, authorized directive of an academic or administrative authority or the refusal to comply with the policies of the Board or the policies of the University.

6.4.2.4. *Cause*

Cause means fair and honest reasons, regulated by good faith on the University's part, that are not trivial, arbitrary, capricious, pretextual, or unrelated to university needs or goals. Specific examples applicable to

faculty and ex officio faculty include, but are not limited to, the falsification of any university record, such as information concerning prior or current academic records, performance or qualifications for employment, promotion, or tenure; theft or misappropriation of funds, property, services, or other resources belonging to the University, its employees, students, or visitors; violations of the United States Code or Mississippi Code; and use of professional authority to exploit, harass, or discriminate against others.

6.4.3. Confidentiality

University employees charged with supervision of academic personnel may discuss personnel actions of academic personnel only with those individuals who have a legitimate need to know, including those individuals with supervisory authority over the affected academic personnel member, HR, and General Counsel. The principle of confidentiality shall be observed by all participants in the termination process.

6.4.4. Procedure for the Termination of a Faculty Member Prior to the Expiration of the Contract Term or for Termination of a Tenured Faculty Member

6.4.4.1. *General*

The following procedures shall apply in all cases in which the University proposes to terminate a tenured faculty member or proposes to terminate a non-tenured faculty member prior to the expiration of the term of appointment, for malfeasance, academic inefficiency, contumacious conduct, or cause. These procedures do not apply to cases in which the appointment of a non-tenured faculty member has expired or will expire by its terms, and the University elects not to renew or extend the term of appointment. These procedures do not apply to cases in which the Board elects to exercise its statutory authority to suspend or terminate the employment of faculty members for financial exigencies as declared by the Board or in cases where the Board elects to exercise its statutory authority to terminate, suspend, or reduce programs, academic units, or administrative units.

6.4.4.2. *Initial Recommendation for Termination*

Any institutional officer or advisory body to whom the President has delegated relevant supervisory authority may recommend to the President that termination proceedings be initiated regarding a faculty member for malfeasance, inefficiency, contumacious conduct, or cause. However, only the Board or the President may initiate proceedings that might lead to termination of employment of a faculty member.

6.4.4.3. *Initial Presidential Review*

If, in the President's judgment, substantial evidence exists supporting a recommendation for the termination of a faculty member, the President will notify the faculty member by certified mail of the intention of the University to initiate formal termination proceedings. If, in the President's judgment, substantial evidence does not exist to support a recommendation for the termination of a faculty member, the President will close the matter and notify the faculty member by certified mail.

6.4.4.4. *Notice of Termination Proceedings*

In the event the President decides to initiate termination proceedings, the President will notify the faculty member by certified mail of the intention of the University to initiate formal termination proceedings. The notice will include the following: a detailed statement of the grounds for termination; notice of the faculty member's right to formally contest the charges in a hearing before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee; notice of the faculty member's right to be advised by legal counsel during the hearing; notice of any suspension of pay or change of duties pending the conclusion of the matter; and notice that the faculty member has 14 working days from the date of receipt of the notice to contest the charges and request a hearing in writing before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

6.4.4.5. Failure to Contest

In the event the faculty member does not contest the charges in writing within 14 working days from the date of receipt of the written notice, the faculty member's employment will be terminated with forfeiture of all subsequent procedural rights.

In the event the faculty member contests the charges but does not request a hearing in writing, the right to a hearing is waived and the matter will be contested on the record before the President without a hearing.

6.4.4.6. Hearing

If the faculty member contests the charges and requests a hearing in writing in the specified timeframe, the President shall notify the University Promotion and Tenure Committee within 10 working days from receipt of the request and the matter will proceed according to the following procedures:

6.4.4.6.1. Notice of Hearing

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair will give the faculty member and the President written notice of the hearing's time and place at least 20 working days prior to the date of the hearing.

6.4.4.6.2. Representation

In the hearing, the faculty member will represent him/herself and the President will appoint an institutional officer, who is not an attorney, to represent the University. The faculty member may appoint an advisor, who is not an attorney, to represent the faculty member in the hearing and plead on behalf of the faculty member. Either party may retain legal counsel for the exclusive purpose of providing advice. However, in no event shall legal counsel for either party be permitted to examine witnesses or to plead before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Counsel or advisor selection and compensation is the responsibility of the party desiring legal representation.

If either party intends to be advised by legal counsel or if the faculty member chooses to have an advisor at the hearing, that party must notify the other party and the University Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair at least 10 working days prior to the hearing date. If either party fails to give timely notice of legal or advisory representation, that party will not be entitled to be advised by legal counsel or an advisor at the hearing.

6.4.4.6.3. Waiver of Hearing

If, at any time prior to the hearing, the faculty member decides to waive the right to a hearing and respond to the charges in writing only, the faculty member must give written notice to the President and University Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair. Both parties shall then have 10 working days from receipt of the notice to submit written position statements to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair. The University Promotion and Tenure Committee will then evaluate all available evidence, including the written statements of both parties, vote on the matter, and submit a written majority opinion and if applicable, a written minority opinion to the President, Provost, and faculty member.

6.4.4.6.4. Witnesses

Not later than 10 working days prior to the hearing, the parties must exchange a written list of witnesses that each party expects to call to testify at the hearing and a summary of the testimony expected from each witness. Witnesses who are not so identified may not testify before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

6.4.4.6.5. Evidence

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee will not be bound by legal rules of evidence in the hearing. The committee may admit any credible evidence of probative value that it deems relevant to the issues. The committee must base its decision upon reliable and credible evidence. If the hearing involves allegations of incompetence, the testimony must include that of professionally qualified institutional faculty members and may include other relevant scholars' testimony.

6.4.4.6.6. Cross-Examination of Witnesses

Both parties and advisors, but not legal counsel for either party, may cross-examine all witnesses.

6.4.4.6.7. Burden of Proof

The University shall bear the burden of proving the grounds for termination by a preponderance of the evidence.

6.4.4.6.8. Hearing Closed

The hearing will be closed to the public.

6.4.4.6.9. Findings and Conclusions

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee will reach its decision by majority vote. Within 10 working days after the hearing's conclusion, the committee will submit its recommendation to the President, with a copy to the Provost, and the faculty member that will contain (1) a written account of the committee's vote, the vote constituting a recommendation to the President; (2) a written majority opinion, including the rationale therefore; (3) a written minority opinion, if applicable, including the rationale therefore; (4) the hearing's recording; and (5) the hearing's transcript.

6.4.4.6.10. Transcript of Hearing

The hearing before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee will be recorded and transcribed by a certified court stenographer, and a transcript will be made at the University's expense. The faculty member may request a copy of the recording and transcript. However, the faculty member shall be responsible for the cost of the copy of the transcript and for making appropriate financial arrangements with the stenographer.

6.4.4.7. *Provost's Recommendation*

The Provost shall review the University Promotion and Tenure Committee recommendation and all evidentiary materials. The Provost will prepare a separate recommendation to the President either concurring with or dissenting from the University Promotion and Tenure Committee's decision. The Provost will simultaneously transmit the Provost's recommendation and the written rationale to the President, University Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the faculty member.

6.4.4.8. *Presidential Review*

If, upon review, the President concurs with a recommendation for termination by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, or should the President determine that the faculty member should be terminated despite the University Promotion and Tenure Committee's recommendation to the contrary, then the President will notify the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and the faculty member by certified mail of the intent to recommend termination to the Board. The written notification letter should include notification to the faculty member of the right to appeal the President's decision to the Board in accordance with applicable Board policy.

If, upon review, the President does not concur with a recommendation for termination by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, or should the President concur with the University Promotion and

Tenure Committee's recommendation against termination, then the President shall inform the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and the faculty member by certified mail of the President's intention to (1) dismiss all charges or (2) implement institutional action in the form of sanctions less than termination.

In any event, when the decision of the President is contrary to the recommendation of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the President should provide the grounds for disagreement in the notification letter.

6.4.4.9. Presidential Recommendation for Termination

In the event the President decides to recommend termination to the Board, the President will transmit to the Board all evidence, including the recording and transcript of the hearing before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, together with the presidential recommendation.

6.4.4.10. Board Appeal

In the event the faculty member submits an appeal to the Board, the faculty member shall simultaneously submit a copy of the appeal to the President. An appeal may only take place after the faculty member has exhausted all administrative remedies at the institutional level.

Chapter 7. Grievances and Appeals

7.1. Grievance Issues Covered in this Chapter

The faculty employment grievance procedure applies to annual performance reviews, pre-tenure reviews, personnel actions involving adjustments in compensation, denial of sabbatical, and violations of academic freedom. More generally, it covers allegations of the violation, misinterpretation or misapplication of a rule, policy or procedure in relation to personnel policies, procedures, or practices including teaching assignments, working hours, release time, general working conditions, nonacademic leave, employment benefits, etc. The faculty employment grievance procedure does not apply to the denial of promotion and/or tenure. Likewise, the faculty employment grievance procedure does not address other issues, such as sexual harassment, discrimination, and reasonable accommodations, as these are addressed in the Employee Handbook.

7.2. Filing Grievances

7.2.1. Initiating a Grievance

Faculty grievance proceedings are initiated when an employee submits a written claim to the chair of the school's Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) or school director. The claim must be supported with objective evidence, alleging that a specified rule, policy, or procedure has been violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied. The claim must be submitted within 10 working days of the occurrence that gave rise to the grievance or 10 working days from when the facts pertaining to it became known or should have been known to the faculty member.

7.2.2. School Response and Conference

Upon receipt of a grievance, the school's FEC committee or school director will invite the involved parties to a conference at the earliest date convenient to both parties, to attempt to informally resolve the grievance. At the conclusion of the conference, the chair of the school's FEC or school director will prepare a written memorandum of the grievance, including any agreement reached, and provide a copy to the involved parties within 10 working days.

7.2.3. Decanal Review

Should the school conference fail to result in resolution, or if a faculty member is dissatisfied with the resolution, the aggrieved party may, within 10 working days, request in writing that the dean convenes the College Promotion and Tenure Committee for a formal grievance review of the submitted documented evidence.

In this event, the College Promotion and Tenure Committee will recuse all members holding academic appointment in the same school as the aggrieved party. The recused members will neither attend the meeting nor vote. The College Promotion and Tenure Committee will review (a) the original claim of the aggrieved party, (b) the pertinent policy, (c) the written response of the school's FEC or director to the original grievance, (d) all evidence relating to the grievance, (e) the written memorandum of the school conference with the aggrieved party, and (f) any additional written evidence provided by the aggrieved party. Upon completion of the formal review, the College Promotion and Tenure Committee will vote and render a written judgment on the merits of the grievance to the dean. The judgment of the committee will include a majority opinion and a minority opinion, if any. Upon review, the dean will render a written opinion on the merits of the grievance, including any remedial action deemed necessary, and submit it to the chair of the College Promotion and Tenure Committee, to the school FEC or director, and to the grievant.

7.2.4. Provost Review

The aggrieved party may request further institutional review of the claim by the Provost within 10 working days of receipt of the dean's decision. In such cases, the Provost will request, and the dean will provide, complete records of all prior proceedings; and the Provost will provide those records to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, which will review all written evidence previously submitted, vote, and submit its recommendation to the Provost. The Provost may agree or disagree with the recommendation of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and may interview the grievant. At the conclusion of the review, the Provost will inform the grievant, the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the dean, the College Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the school FEC or director of the decision by certified mail.

7.2.5. Presidential Review

Dissatisfied parties may appeal the Provost's decision to the President within 10 working days of receipt of the Provost's decision. The President may review the grievance on the basis of the written evidence submitted, request additional evidentiary materials, or request the testimony of the grievant or any other parties. The grievant will be notified of the President's decision in writing by certified mail.

7.2.6. Board Appeals

Pursuant to Board Policy, institutional grievances may not be appealed to the Board.

7.3. Scholarly Misconduct

Faculty who wish to appeal decisions regarding scholarly misconduct should consult the [Policy on Scholarly Misconduct](#).

7.4. Appeal of Promotion and Tenure Decisions

Faculty who wish to appeal the decision of the President regarding the award of promotion or tenure need to appeal to the Board. Faculty have 30 calendar days to do so effective from the date of notification by the President. An appellant should address his/her appeal to the Commissioner of the IHL and follow the procedures outlined in section 403.0105 of the Policies & Bylaws of the IHL Board of Trustees.

Appendix A. Workload Allocation Guidelines

General Workload Guidelines

- Course load allocation is based on the equivalent of four 3-hour courses per semester. Each course is assigned a percentage that is determined in consultation with the faculty and director and signed by both to acknowledge completion of the process and receipt of the assignment.
- Intersession or summer courses may or may not be included in regular teaching load depending on the needs of the program and the individual faculty member.
- Teaching-track faculty, instructors, visiting faculty, professors of practice, and clinical faculty generally teach 4 courses per semester.
- Tenure-track faculty who are required to engage in research/creative activities should receive the equivalent of one 3-hour course load reallocation to allow time for this work. Further, course load reallocations may be made based on the complexity/scope and productivity of an academic unit (for example, course reallocations for chairing multiple dissertation committees or mentoring students in scientific lab work). Finally, faculty may receive an adjusted course load (fewer or more courses) based on their level of productivity in research/creative activity.
- Assigned course load or allocation of teaching (or service at the discretion of the school) as a percentage of total workload should take into account student mentorship activities not directly associated with classroom instruction. At a minimum, course loads or teaching workload allocation should take into account time and effort associated with direction of undergraduate honors, graduate, and post-doctoral students. Dissertation and thesis courses may warrant a reduction in teaching load if the faculty member can demonstrate significant work in directing the students enrolled in these hours. Dissertation and thesis hours in and of themselves do not warrant a reduction in course load.
- Assigned course load or allocation of teaching as a percentage of total workload should also take into account other factors that may increase time devoted to teaching activities:
 - The nature of the course: lab, studio, practicum, or similar courses (courses whose actual contact hours are not accurately reflected by the credit hours of the course).
 - The enrollment size of the course, especially those courses taught without additional support for grading and course management.
 - Off-campus activities associated with course delivery (e.g., clinical supervision in the field, student field trips, travel to and from campuses).
 - The development and implementation of new courses or other curricula, especially the development and implementation of team-taught courses.
 - Faculty involvement in intensive teaching development activities (e.g., ACUE Course in Effective Teaching Practices) where these activities are not compensated by the development program.
- Significant service contributions (in quantity of time or quality of contribution) to the program, school, college, University, or profession may warrant reallocation of workload from either teaching or research/creative activities. The faculty member is responsible for demonstrating that the time and effort required for one or more service activities exceeds the typical service workload and warrants extra consideration for workload reallocation. Serving on committees without demonstration of significant contribution does not automatically warrant reallocation.

- For a faculty librarian (University Libraries), teaching load is determined through librarianship activities, which may or may not include classroom instruction, rather than number of courses.

Jointly-Appointed Faculty

If a faculty member is jointly appointed, workload allocation should be agreed to by the faculty member in consultation with directors of both schools.

Administrator Workload

- School directors are generally expected to teach a minimum of one class per year. Associate deans above the school director level holding faculty rank are normally expected to teach one class per year. Associate directors are generally expected to receive a reassignment of one course per semester during their service. Depending upon the scope and breadth of responsibilities, however, more or fewer courses could be required to be taught by these administrative faculty.
- Faculty administrators are expected to remain current in their respective field and demonstrate some contribution to research in their field. However, as it is recognized that faculty administrators have significant administrative duties that impact their ability to sustain a program of research/creative activity, they should not be evaluated with the same expectations as the tenure-track faculty. General expectations for research productivity should be established each year between the faculty administrator and the dean, or in the case of an associate director, with the FEC and school director. If the faculty administrator meets these expectations, they should receive a minimum evaluation of “meets expectations” in the category of research/creative activity.
- Administrative duties are separate from service. Significant service contributions (in quantity of time or quality of contribution) to the University or profession should allow for reallocation of workload from either teaching or research/creative activities. It is the responsibility of the faculty administrator to demonstrate that a service activity is significant and requires extra consideration for workload reallocation. If the service is to the program, school, or college, it is the responsibility of the faculty administrator to demonstrate how the service is separate from their administrative duties. Serving on committees without demonstration of contribution does not automatically result in reallocation.

Circumstantial adjustments to workload allocation

Circumstantial adjustments to a faculty member’s workload allocation (e.g., any unexpected or sudden adjustments in workload due to unforeseen circumstances such as the departure of a faculty member which leaves a gap in the curriculum that must be covered, commitments as part of a new external funding agreement, need to participate in a significant service activity) should:

- Be negotiated between the faculty member and the school director (in consultation with the dean as necessary);
- Be documented and signed or electronically approved by both the school director and the faculty member;
- Include a defined period of time for the adjusted workload allocation; and
- Hold a provision that if the affected faculty member disagrees with the proposed circumstantial workload allocation, an appeal pursuant to the grievance procedure outlined in the Faculty Handbook can be made, which can also serve as a mechanism to appeal for the expiration date of the re-allocated responsibilities.

Appendix B. Sample Annual Evaluation Rubric

The following is offered as a sample of a possible annual evaluation rubric. Schools may individualize this to the expectations for their academic units. For example, if applications for internal/external funding is not pursued in a unit, they could adjust the rubric accordingly.

TEACHING				
	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Comments
Coursework	Coursework (development, materials, and assessments) does not reflect the standard performance level identified within the unit or identified by appropriate university groups, (e.g. online steering committee).	Coursework (development, materials, and assessments) reflects the standard performance level identified within the unit or identified by appropriate university groups, (e.g. online steering committee).	Coursework reflects innovative development which may include service learning, active learning, honors theses, SPUR projects, etc. consistent with school directives and exceeding the unit expectations.	
Course delivery	Course delivery (attendance, course load, syllabi, grading deadlines, etc.) is not performed according to the university calendar and guidelines.	Course delivery (attendance, course load, syllabi, grading deadlines, etc.) is performed according to the university calendar and guidelines.	Course delivery exceeds unit and university guidelines by the addition of independent studies, thesis or dissertation coursework, etc. added to existing load.	
Student teaching evaluations	Teaching evaluations conducted by students do not reflect the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Teaching evaluations conducted by students reflect the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Teaching evaluations conducted by students exceed the standard level of performance level identified within the unit.	
Peer teaching evaluations	Teaching evaluations conducted by peers do not reflect the standard performance level identified within the unit	Teaching evaluations conducted by peers reflect the standard performance level identified within the unit	Teaching evaluations conducted by peers exceed the standard performance level identified within the unit.	
Innovative teaching	Teaching evaluations and/or peer reviews reflect a lack of change or inclusion of relevant material in the course experience	Teaching evaluations and/or peer reviews reflect the use of new materials, new approaches to engage students	Teaching evaluations and/or peer reviews show engaged learning based on innovative teaching methods	
TOTAL SCORE:				
3/5 in Exceeds Expectations with 0 in Does Not Meet Expectations = Exceeds Expectations				
3/5 in Does Not Meet Expectations with 0 in Exceeds Expectations = Does Not Meet Expectations				
Collegiality in Teaching Statement: (provide 1-2 sentences describing collegial efforts through teaching.				

RESEARCH/CREATIVE ACTIVITIES				
	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Comments
Participation in research/creative activities	Participates or demonstrates continuous effort in research/creative activities at a rate lower than the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Participates in research/creative activities by initiating new activity and/or demonstrating continuous effort on existing activity as reflected within the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Participates in research/creative activities by initiating new collaborative interdisciplinary activity and/or demonstrating continuous effort on existing interdisciplinary activity exceeding the standard performance level identified within the unit.	
Dissemination of research/creative activities	Disseminates work through unit identified channels (e.g., peer-reviewed journals, books, performance, etc.) at a rate lower than the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Disseminates work through unit identified channels (e.g., peer-reviewed journals, books, performance, etc.) as reflected within the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Disseminates work through unit identified channels (e.g., peer-reviewed journals, books, performance, etc.) at a rate that exceeds the standard performance level identified within the unit.	
Applications for internal/external funding	Submits application for internal/external funding of research/creative activities at a rate lower than the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Submits application for internal/external funding of research/creative activities as reflected within the standard performance level identified within the unit. (e.g., unit may define expectations as annual, bi-annual, tri-annual submissions, etc.)	Procures internal/external funding of research/creative activities exceeding the standard performance level identified within the unit.	
TOTAL SCORE: 2/3 in Exceeds Expectations with 0 in Does Not Meet Expectations = Exceeds Expectations 2/3 in Does Not Meet Expectations with 0 in Exceeds Expectations = Does Not Meet Expectations				
Collegiality in Research/Creative Activities Statement: (provide 1-2 sentences describing collegial efforts through research/creative activities).				

SERVICE				
	Does Not Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Comments
Institutional committees	Serves on appointed/elected committees at the school, college, and university level at a rate lower than the standard performance level identified within the unit or does not attend committee meetings to represent the unit.	Serves on appointed/elected committees at the school, college, and university level as reflected within the standard performance level identified within the unit; attends meetings and contributes to the needs of the committee.	Serves on appointed/elected committees at the school, college, and university level at a rate exceeding the standard performance level within the unit; attends meetings, completes a leadership role for the committee or sub-committee.	
Professional organizations	Contributes to their identified field of study through membership and participation in professional organizations within their field internationally, nationally, regionally, and/or statewide at a rate lower than the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Contributes to their identified field of study through membership and participation in professional organizations within their field internationally, nationally, regionally, or statewide as reflected within the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Contributes to their identified field of study through membership, participation in, and committee service on professional organizations, publications, activities within their field internationally, nationally, regionally, or statewide exceeding the standard performance level identified within the unit.	
Campus activities and community service	Facilitates growth of the University/college/school through active participation in University campus activities (i.e., Eagles Spur, recruitment, retention, etc.) and community service related to their profession at a rate lower than the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Facilitates growth of the University/college/school through active participation in University campus activities (i.e., Eagles Spur, recruitment, retention, etc.) and community service related to their profession as reflected within the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Facilitates growth of the University/college/school through active participation in University campus activities (i.e., Eagles Spur, recruitment, retention, etc.) and community service related to their profession exceeding the standard performance level identified within the unit.	
Student mentorship	Facilitates growth in their field of study through formalized mentorship of students and/or other faculty, service on student committees to include graduate examinations and dissertations as well as undergraduate honors theses, delivery of independent study courses, etc. at a rate lower than the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Facilitates growth in their field of study through formalized mentorship of students and/or other faculty, service on student committees to include graduate examinations and dissertations as well as undergraduate honors theses, delivery of independent study courses, etc. as reflected within the standard performance level identified within the unit.	Facilitates growth in their field of study through formalized mentorship of students and/or other faculty, service on student to committees to include graduate examinations and dissertations master's theses, and undergraduate honors theses, etc. exceeding the standard performance level identified within the unit.	
TOTAL SCORE:				
3/4 in Exceeds Expectations with 0 in Does Not Meet Expectations = Exceeds Expectations				
3/4 in Does Not Meet Expectations with 0 in Exceeds Expectations = Does Not Meet Expectations				
Collegiality in Service Statement: (provide 1-2 sentences describing collegial efforts through service activities).				

To be completed by evaluator:

NOTEWORTHY ACTIVITIES AND REMARKS	
Evaluator may list any activities they identify as noteworthy or include other remarks for the academic year	
Teaching	
Research/Creative Activities	
Service	

Appendix C. Sample Annual Evaluation Rating Criteria

The content here includes examples of criteria that could be used or modified by schools to develop expectations for faculty performance in the categories of teaching, research/creative activities, and service. The examples below do not constitute an exhaustive list, but instead are intended for reference during the development of school criteria.

Meets Expectations

Examples of expectations for teaching could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Development of courses consistent with school directives.
- Good scores on student course evaluations.
- Good scores on peer-review evaluations.
- Direction of undergraduate Honors student thesis projects or SPUR projects.
- Direction of graduate student thesis or dissertation projects.
- Demonstration of course breadth and periodic improvements through a teaching portfolio.

Examples of expectations for research/creative activities could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Publication of peer-reviewed journal articles.
- Submission of a book draft as part of a contract with a publisher.
- Development and submission of a proposal for external funding.
- Administration of an externally funded grant.
- Presentation of research at national or international conferences.
- Production and/or direction of dance or theatrical performances.

Examples of expectations for service to the University and professional communities could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Participation in student recruitment and retention initiatives.
- Peer review of manuscripts for academic journals.
- Membership in university or college committees.
- Editorship for an academic publishing company or academic journal.
- Session organization at a regional, national, or international conference.
- Serving in a disciplinary cluster or school in one or more unfunded (i.e., no stipend) or uncompensated (i.e., no course release) capacities (e.g., undergraduate or graduate coordinator).
- Participation in sanctioned performances, showings, or outreach programs
- Committee or board appointments serving the State or other entity approved by the school director.

To complement standards for meeting expectations, schools may elect to designate standard workload allocation percentages for teaching, research/creative activities, and service for tenure-track and teaching-track faculty as well as adjust expectations in accordance with the established standard workload allocation.

For example, if a school (or disciplinary cluster) with a standard workload allocation of 40% teaching, 40% research/creative activities, and 20% service establishes one published article per year as the expectations for research/creative activities of tenure-track faculty, and a tenure-track faculty member is allocated a 60% teaching, 20% research/creative activities, and 20% service workload for one year, then that member will meet expectations if evidence is presented that considerable progress was made on a

manuscript designated for peer review but was not published that year. Further, if the 60/20/20 workload allocation were to be maintained for two years, then only one published article would be required to meet expectations for research/creative activities for that duration. For accreditation standards, colleges may have standards for research/creative activities that inform the school's allocation for tenure-track faculty and for other faculty in the Corps of Instruction.

Does Not Meet Expectations

Assignment of "Does Not Meet Expectations" should be made for faculty who are unable to produce evidence for meeting annual expectations documented by their academic unit.

Exceeds Expectations

Examples for exceeding expectations for teaching could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Innovative development and successful implementation of service learning or active learning courses consistent with school directives.
- Very high scores on student course evaluations (e.g., ≥ 1 standard deviation of the school mean).
- Very high scores on peer-review evaluations (e.g., ≥ 1 standard deviation of the school mean).
- Direction of substantially more undergraduate Honors student thesis projects or SPUR projects than needed to meet school expectations.
- Direction of substantially more graduate thesis or dissertation projects than needed to meet school expectations.
- Demonstration of superior course breadth or major improvements through a teaching portfolio.

Examples for exceeding expectations for research/creative activities could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Publication of peer-reviewed journal articles in excess of school expectations.
- Publication of a book with an internationally-recognized publisher.
- Successful acquisition of external funding in excess of school expectations.
- Presentation of research as a keynote speaker at national or international conferences.
- Production and/or direction of a dance or theatrical performance at an internationally-recognized venue.
- Creation of critically acclaimed works of art at an internationally-recognized showing.

Examples for exceeding expectations for service could include, but are not limited to the following:

- Initiation of an outreach program that definitively resulted in recruiting ## students.
- Peer-review of manuscripts for academic journals well in excess of school expectations.
- Participation in a proposal-review board at an established national funding agency.
- Editor-in-chief responsibilities for a peer-reviewed journal.
- Serving as President of Faculty Senate or Chair of the Undergraduate or Graduate Councils.
- Lead organizer of a traveling regional, national, or international conference.
- Direction of a University-sponsored research center or outreach program.
- Chair of a committee or board serving the State or other entity approved by the school.

Noteworthy Activities

Examples of noteworthy activities or remarks could include, but are not limited to the following:

Achievements

- Faculty member A jointly developed a new interdisciplinary course with faculty member B that attracted ## students and resulted in addition of ## new majors to the program.
- Faculty member served as Chair of the ... Committee.
- Faculty member received an award from the American Society for ...for excellence in creativity.
- Faculty member was co-author on a research article published in..., which is the top peer-reviewed journal in the discipline.
- Faculty member authored and submitted two research proposals to the National Institute of ... and two research proposals to the National Academy of ..., all of which were unfunded but received promising comments for re-submission.
- Faculty member received an invitation to participate in a summer workshop to develop strategies for developing education programs in schools in Mississippi.
- Faculty member is exceptionally collegial in or outside of the classroom; exemplified by ..., ..., and ...

Deficiencies

- Faculty member has received multiple complaints about being absent from scheduled office hours.
- Faculty member is irresponsive to e-mail communications within a reasonable amount of time (e.g., within three business days).
- Faculty member did not contribute to any research proposal submissions. [In disciplines in which regular proposal activity is expected.]
- Faculty member consistently exhibits non-collegial and inappropriate behavior in and/or outside of the classroom; exemplified by ..., ..., and ... (see Promotion & Tenure guidelines 2.3).

Appendix D. Approved Changes to the Faculty Handbook

2024-2025 Academic Year

All proposals available from Faculty Handbook Committee including formal acceptances of proposals by the President.

Sections with changes: **Bold** changes, ~~Strikethrough~~ are deletions.

Chapter 1 Changes

The University Faculty Handbook Committee proposes changes to the University Faculty Handbook concerning 1.8.2 Council of Directors on November 11, 2024, Second Vote December 9, 2024

Have its language changed to: (**Changes in BOLD**) (Deletions in ~~Strikethrough~~)

1.8.2 Council of Directors

Directors of schools fulfill certain administrative and evaluative responsibilities; thus, they should not serve on faculty governing bodies. The Council of Directors (CoD) ensures that administrative faculty have a means of communicating with administrators. The CoD will include all school directors and a representative from the University Libraries. ~~The full CoD will meet with the Provost monthly.~~ An elected executive committee of the CoD will serve as the primary point of contact between directors and the Provost.

The University Faculty Handbook Committee proposes changes to the University Faculty Handbook concerning 1.8.6 Ombuds on November 11, 2024, Second Vote December 9, 2024

Have its language changed to: (**Changes in BOLD**) (Deletions in ~~Strikethrough~~)

1.8.6. **Faculty** Ombuds

The Faculty Ombud is a confidential resource for faculty and provides a means of informal dispute resolution for faculty at the University. The Faculty Ombud provides confidential, independent, impartial, and informal assistance to all faculty. The Faculty Ombud supplements, but does not replace, formal grievance processes, investigative systems, and appeals processes. The Faculty Ombud does not advocate for any side, either the faculty or the administration, and instead maintains impartiality in all concerns. The purpose of the Faculty Ombud is to facilitate communication, ensure that policies are followed, and encourage all parties to implement the University's policies and practices fairly. The Faculty Ombud is available for use by all faculty at any campus of the University, including online faculty, full-time and part-time, tenured or not, including administrative faculty.

~~University Ombuds are faculty members who act at the request of the University President or Provost to conduct independent and impartial investigations in such matters as progressive discipline and termination proceedings involving faculty. University Ombuds do not function as advocates or representatives for faculty or the University but are advocates of fair processes. Two standing ombuds will be selected each academic year. At the beginning of the academic year, each dean of the degree-granting colleges will nominate five faculty members of professorial rank to the ombuds candidate pool.~~

~~In making their selections, the deans will give due consideration to diversity. The two ombuds will be selected by the Provost, in consultation with the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, from the pool of candidates nominated by the deans of the degree-granting colleges.~~

Chapter 2 Changes

None

Chapter 3 Changes

None

Chapter 4 Changes

The University Faculty Handbook Committee proposes changes to the University Faculty Handbook concerning Chapter 4 – Annual Evaluation of Faculty Performance, on April 14, 2025, Second Vote May 12, 2025

Have its language changed to: **(Changes in BOLD)** (Deletions in ~~Strikethrough~~)

Chapter 4. Annual Evaluation of Faculty Performance

4.1. Introduction

Annual evaluations of work performance are mandatory for academic personnel at the University. The evaluation framework serves to ensure effectiveness in teaching, research/creative activities, and service by providing a common structure for annual evaluations. This structure includes the allocation of workload and periodic opportunities for professional development. Additionally, annual evaluations inform decisions for tenure, promotion, and merit-based salary adjustments.

The annual evaluation framework is oriented toward proactive engagement between faculty members and their peers and supervisors. The annual evaluation process is meant to stimulate feedback among faculty, school directors, and deans in order to realize maximum potential, effectively allocate resources, and fairly arbitrate appeals made by faculty members. The process is aimed at maximizing potential and supporting the University mission.

Flexibility, clarity, transparency, efficiency, and fairness are key attributes of the evaluation framework. Schools are largely responsible for developing work performance criteria and expectations, which are to be consistent with college expectations, clearly articulated, in writing, and made readily available to faculty and administration.

Work performance criteria are designed to promote achievement in teaching, research/creative activities, and service. The three-tier evaluation system is intended to be efficient and effective and is based on meeting expectations established by academic units. ~~Schools are responsible for designating faculty workload allocation percentages that align with guidelines suggested below where flexibility exists for adjustments as necessary.~~ **School directors, or the ad hoc school director in University Libraries, are responsible for designating faculty workload allocations. Allocations should be based on the school level policy and procedures documents and Appendix A: Workload Allocation Guidelines.**

4.2. Annual Evaluation Framework

~~The annual evaluation framework serves as the primary structure for setting annual objectives and allocating resources for faculty to achieve professional goals and progress toward promotion and tenure.~~

~~School directors work with faculty to establish professional objectives for the year and evaluate how objectives align with school, college, and institutional visions. Annual evaluations provide the opportunity to determine the extent to which the prior year's objectives were met and to set aspirational targets for the year ahead. Although objectives are set annually, discussions about progress towards objectives should occur as needed, for example when a major objective is attained early, some significant obstacle to fulfilling an objective arises, or a new opportunity presents itself that cannot be postponed to the next evaluation year.~~

~~Decisions for obligating authority for annual faculty evaluations are made at the school level and are based on the governance option chosen, see 1.10.2 above~~

4.23. Workload Allocation

Annual evaluations of faculty performance are tied to types and proportions of work activities throughout a given academic year, **including course load, research productivity, and service commitments**. Allocation of workload should not be static but should balance the needs of a program or school and the professional goals of the faculty member; while maintaining the standards set forth by the school, college, and University and supporting achievement in all three categories of evaluation. The annual evaluation process should include a discussion of goals and workload allocation for the upcoming year in each of the three categories of evaluation. Workload should be clearly defined to promote transparency in allocation decisions and expectations for performance.

In developing workload allocations, **the school director, or the ad hoc school director in University Libraries**, should ensure instructional functionality of degree programs; support innovative modes of instruction; promote student success and involvement; encourage progress in research/~~and~~ creative activities; accentuate strengths of disciplinary clusters; foster interdisciplinary engagement; support professional development opportunities for faculty; and serve the needs of the school, college, University, professional organizations, and communities.

Workload allocation should be established between the school director and the faculty member in consultation with a program coordinator or dean as appropriate. Workload allocation is finalized by the school director in consultation with the college dean as appropriate. Workloads must be documented and **acknowledged** ~~signed~~ by both parties to **complete** ~~acknowledge completion of~~ the process and ~~receipt of the assignment and~~ approved by the dean. Other members of a Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) should not be directly involved in decisions regarding workload allocation.

Course load allocation, **a subset of overall workload allocation**, ~~is~~ based on the equivalent of four 3-hour courses per semester. **Schools should define equivalents in school policies and procedures documents**. Each course is assigned a percentage determined in consultation with the faculty and director **as defined in school policies and procedures documents**. ~~For guidelines more specific than those listed below, refer to Appendix A. Deans and directors, or any other administrator responsible for determining workload allocation, should also consult the workload policy in the Employee Handbook.~~

Faculty with any expectations for research/creative activities should receive a reduction in course load in order to meet expectations for those research/creative activities. Assigned course load or allocation of teaching (or service), at the discretion of the school **director and approval by the dean**, should consider student mentorship activities not directly associated with classroom instruction and other factors that may increase time devoted to teaching activities.

Service contributions ~~(to the program, school, college, University, or profession)~~ requiring a time commitment beyond the usual expectation for the school may warrant a reallocation of workload from either teaching or research/creative activities. This reallocation is particularly relevant for academic

programs with few faculty members to sustain essential functions (e.g., annual reporting, academic advisement) or support strategic initiatives requiring service.

Some situations may warrant adjusting a faculty member's workload allocation. Examples include unforeseen circumstances, such as unexpected increases in enrollment or the departure of a faculty member which leaves a gap in the curriculum that must be covered; **a faculty development plan**; commitments created by new external funding agreements; or the need to participate in a significant service activity. **In these instances, the workload reallocation should be documented.**

Workload allocation should be aligned with expectations for the identified role (teaching track, ~~pre-tenure/tenured track~~) for which the faculty member has been employed, such that decisions for promotion or tenure are based upon criteria appropriate for that role. See Chapter 5 for more information on promotion and tenure.

4.3. Annual Evaluation Framework

The annual evaluation framework serves as the primary structure for setting annual objectives and allocating resources for faculty to achieve professional goals and progress toward promotion and tenure.

Submitted annual activity reports are reviewed by the school director and/or Faculty Evaluation Committee (FEC) in accordance with the governance model adopted annually by the school faculty. Faculty annual activity reports should include notation of responsibilities and reflections of annual productivity in teaching, research/creative activities, and service. Annual evaluations provide the opportunity to determine the extent to which the prior year's objectives were met and to set aspirational targets for the year ahead. Although objectives are set annually, discussions about progress towards objectives should occur as needed, for example when a major objective is attained early, some significant obstacle to fulfilling an objective arises, or a new opportunity presents itself that cannot be postponed to the next evaluation year.

Decisions for obligating authority for annual faculty evaluations are made at the school level and are based on the governance option chosen, see 1.10.2.

4.4. Faculty Annual Evaluation Process

~~4.4.1. Annual Activity Report~~

All academic personnel must submit annual activity reports to the school director **by the date noted in the Provost's calendar, typically at the beginning of February.** ~~by February 1.~~ These reports include a summary of professional activities in the areas of teaching, research/creative activity, and service during the year evaluated. **The annual activity report is submitted and evaluated in a process that moves through the governance option adopted by the school faculty.**

~~If governance option 2 or 3 was chosen by the school, the director distributes the activity reports to appropriate members of the FEC for review.~~ Each member of the **FEC committee** is evaluated by the other members of the committee. School directors and associate deans are evaluated for all work-related categories, including administrative performance, by the dean and not by the other members of the FEC. However, evaluations of directors and associate deans in regards to teaching and research/creative activities are to be based on specifications outlined in the relevant school-level documents. Associate directors are reviewed by the FEC in the areas of teaching, research/creative activities, and non-administrative service while administrative performance is evaluated exclusively by the director.

4.4.2. Evaluation Report

Depending on the governance option chosen, the school director or FEC writes annual evaluation reports for each person evaluated. Each person is to be rated in the three categories of teaching, research/creative activities, and service based on the following rating categories.

4.5. Faculty Evaluation Guidelines

Teaching, research/creative activities, and service are evaluated annually for each faculty member according to the following ratings categories: “does not meet expectations,” “meets expectations,” and “exceeds expectations.” Schools are responsible for determining and documenting reasonable criteria for meeting expectations in association with **assigned workload for the review period.** ~~allocation guidelines.~~ These criteria require approval from the school director and the dean before being made publicly available through the Office of the Provost. The criteria must be approved at all levels and formally established in writing before faculty are held accountable to those standards. Separate categories of “collegiality” and “engagement” should not be added to the traditional three categories of faculty performance. Instead, academic units should develop clear definitions of teaching, research/creative activities, and service, in which collegiality and engagement are reflected.

4.5.1. Expectation Rating Categories

Given the wide diversity of subjects offered at the University, schools are best suited to assess faculty contributions and are responsible for determining and documenting expectations for each of the three categories of evaluation. These expectations can be subsumed within a detailed rubric (see **Appendix B** for an example) or a more simplified disclosure of standards that serve as a baseline for achievement. Further, schools should clearly articulate and document circumstances that warrant assignment of “does not meet expectations” and “exceeds expectations” (see Appendix C for examples). Evaluative criteria require approval from school directors and deans before being made publicly available through the Office of the Provost.

4.5.1.1.Meets Expectations

Faculty performance expectations should promote high levels of achievement facilitating student success and ~~profession~~**professional** contributions consistent with the University mission. Meeting expectations implies that faculty achieve articulated and measurable professional objectives and maintain continuous career advancement, including progress toward promotion or tenure (see Appendix C for examples). Faculty are also expected to contribute to a culture supportive of students, colleagues, and units. Meeting expectations is more than achieving a minimally acceptable level of performance to avoid contractual termination.

While not a guarantee of success, meeting expectations in annual evaluations is an essential element of a successful path to promotion or tenure.

4.5.1.2.Does Not Meet Expectations

Assignment of does not meet expectations should be made for faculty who are unable to produce evidence of having met objectives established in the prior year. Quarterly or mid-year meetings between school director and faculty member are highly recommended for all faculty with categories rating “does not meet expectations.” Faculty who meet objectives early in the year but do not recalibrate them in consultation with their school directors also are not meeting expectations for faculty performance.

4.5.1.3. ~~4.1.3.~~ Exceeds Expectations

Assignment of exceeds expectations should be reserved for faculty who demonstrate excellence far beyond professional objectives set for the year, for achievement of highly ambitious objectives, or for a high level of contributions deemed especially complementary to the program, school, college, or the University vision. This designation should be reserved for faculty who provide evidence of high performance in teaching, research/creative activities, or service. When a faculty member achieved more than school expectations but not enough to merit assignment of exceeds expectations, a specific mention of achievement should be included in the noteworthy activities and remarks section (~~see 4.5.1.3 below~~) of the annual evaluation report (see Appendix C for examples).

Faculty are expected to contribute significantly in their professional roles. Therefore, a high percentage of faculty in a school who exceed expectations suggests that school directors should examine ~~goal setting~~ **goal setting** and work with faculty to adjust to a higher aspirational level.

4.5.1. ~~4.2.~~ Considerations for Online Instruction

Due to the unique nature of the online learning environment, online teaching requires its own set of evaluation benchmarks. While specific assessment benchmarks may vary from one academic unit to another, each unit should develop online teaching evaluation criteria that meet or exceed standards set through the Online Teaching and Learning at USM policy.

4.5.1. ~~5.3.~~ Noteworthy Activities and Remarks

Annual evaluation reports should include a separate section for noteworthy activities and remarks for evaluators to mention specific achievements or deficiencies that might not otherwise be discernible from evaluation ratings (see Appendix C for examples). Additionally, activities considered exemplary of interdisciplinary collaboration, intensive professional development, awards, etc. are appropriate for inclusion in this section. Documented activities and remarks can be used alongside the ratings for promotion and tenure decisions, merit-based raises, or other important personnel decisions. Noteworthy activities and remarks are not intended to be a comprehensive list of annual faculty achievements or deficiencies, but instead to disclose aspects of a faculty member's performance that evaluators consider worth mentioning or to clarify assignment of a particular rating.

4.5.2 Faculty **Annual** Evaluation Meetings

The annual evaluation process follows a specific pathway which can involve meetings with the FEC and/or School Director. Based upon the governance option selected, the faculty member may have one or more meetings with the FEC and Director. These meetings offer opportunities to review activities from the previous year, for faculty to discuss and finalize professional objectives and goals for the year ahead, and to request necessary resources with their directors.

Evaluation meetings should be scheduled **annually based on the Office of the Provost's Calendar for annual evaluations for faculty**. ~~between February 15 and May 1.~~

The topics for the meeting include discussing the basis of the evaluation, allowing the faculty member the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings, **and finalizing professional objectives for the following year.** ~~and reviewing any recommended changes in faculty workload for the coming year.~~

Prior to acknowledging receipt of the annual evaluations, faculty may request an evaluation meeting as outlined above. Faculty also may appeal the results of their annual evaluations if they disagree with the assigned ratings or written comments from the evaluators. If the response remains unsatisfactory to the faculty member and efforts to resolve issues are unsuccessful at the school level, an appeal can be initiated in accord with the grievance procedure outlined in Chapter 7. In this case, the faculty member should acknowledge receipt of the annual evaluation prior to initiating the grievance process. Faculty member acknowledgment does not signify agreement with the evaluation, only receipt.

~~Schools will determine an internal timeline to accommodate the entire annual evaluation process, including the FEC review and evaluation period, when faculty members receive the reports of their annual evaluation, and when meetings with FEC and/or school director occur.~~ Annual evaluation meetings are required for all unpromoted tenure-track faculty, any faculty who receives a rating of “does not meet expectations” in any domains, and any faculty who requests such a meeting. Annual evaluation meetings are recommended for any faculty going up for promotion in the following academic year. For all other faculty, the meetings are optional and up to the discretion of the school’s policies. In schools where the evaluation is completed by the committee and the director (option 2) the meetings can include the committee and the director or the director only, depending upon the preference of the faculty member.

4.5.3. Transmittal to the Dean

Governance option 1: The school director submits signed evaluations to the dean.

Governance option 2: The committee chair, after obtaining signed concurrence or dissent from each committee member, submits signed evaluations of the FEC to the dean.

Governance option 3: The committee chair, after obtaining signed concurrence or dissent from each committee member, submits the committee’s evaluations to the school director. Those evaluations with which the school director concurs are formally approved by the director’s signature and transmitted to the dean. If the school director dissents from any FEC evaluations, the director may prepare independent evaluations for those faculty and transmit them, along with the evaluations of the FEC (with dissent noted by the school director’s signature) to the dean with a copy sent to the faculty member and to the chair of the FEC.

Upon request by the Office of the Provost, annual summaries by academic unit or faculty rank are to be provided by colleges to facilitate assessment of evaluation metrics and to ensure consistent application of evaluation standards across the University.

4.5.4. Formal Development Plans

A formal development plan for improvement is initiated by the school director ~~and FEC~~ after a faculty member receives: (1) a second consecutive assignment of does not meet expectations in one of the three categories of faculty workload (teaching, research/creative activities, service) or (2) assignment of does not meet expectations in at least two categories in the same year. In addition to specific goals in the deficient areas, the development plan should specify the resources, training, and services that the faculty member needs to return to satisfactory productivity.

A faculty member’s workload should be reviewed by the school director as part of the development plan. If reweighting of workload obligations might solve the deficiency, it should be done as part of the process. For example, late-career faculty members who are doing less research might be assigned a 4/4 teaching schedule, expanded service obligations, and fewer research expectations. This approach may be the best way to support tenured faculty later in their careers who are still meeting expectations in two evaluative areas but not in the third.

Having a development plan in place does not mean that a tenured faculty member is on post-tenure review (PTR). A development plan is a proactive step to prevent the need for PTR. The development plan should follow the guidelines established in the annual evaluation process.

Chapter 5 Changes

None

Chapters 6 Changes

The University Faculty Handbook Committee proposes changes to the University Faculty Handbook Committee concerning 6.3.2, Policy Statement, on December 9, 2024, Second Vote January 13, 2025.

Have its language changed to: (**Changes in BOLD**) (Deletions in ~~Strikethrough~~)

6.3.2. Policy Statement

The progressive discipline policy covers circumstances not addressed in other University policies; it applies to the corps of instruction as well as visiting faculty. This policy addresses workplace situations requiring immediate attention but not **necessarily** meriting initiation of proceedings leading to the termination of employment. This policy does not cover contumacious conduct, malfeasance, inefficiency, cause, Title IX violations, allegations of scholarly misconduct, or criminal conduct. Examples of conduct covered by this policy include, but are not limited to, violations of University protocols or policies, failure to perform assigned duties, misuse of financial resources, misuse of facilities, excessive absenteeism, improper supervision of graduate assistants, or inappropriate behavior leading to an unproductive learning and working environment.

In general, school directors, in consultation with deans, are responsible for implementing the progressive discipline policy. The parties involved in the progressive discipline process should maintain confidentiality when possible.

The University Faculty Handbook Committee proposes changes to the University Faculty Handbook concerning 6.3.3.3. Step 3: Censure on April 14, 2025, Second Vote June 9, 2025.

Have its language changed to: (**Changes in BOLD**) (Deletions in ~~Strikethrough~~)

6.3.3.3. Step 3: Censure

The school director may initiate this step if the faculty member fails to resolve the issue outlined in Step 2 within the indicated time frame for reevaluation. The school director may also initiate Step 3 as the entry point for progressive discipline for situations deemed too severe to begin with a written reprimand. Censure is the final step of progressive discipline and is to include sanctions that may be punitive and non-private. Failure to achieve resolution of the situation at the censure stage can result in the initiation of proceedings leading to the termination of employment.

In consultation with the dean, the school director composes a letter of censure to the faculty member that must include: (1) a detailed description of the situation, (2) a reason the situation merits censure, (3) the

sanctions that are to be imposed on the faculty member, (4) the corrective actions the faculty member must make to address the situation, (5) the timeline by which the situation is to be reevaluated, and (6) a statement that failure to resolve the situation can result in the initiation of proceedings leading to the termination of employment. When possible, the signed letter of censure is to be delivered to the faculty member in person by the school director, and a copy is to be delivered to the dean to whom the school director reports. The school director may also send an electronic copy to the faculty member in addition to the hard copy.

Sanctions may include but are not limited to, reassignment of teaching duties, suspension, reassignment of research or service commitments, loss of committee chair privileges, or loss of university-approved travel privileges.

The faculty member may request review by the Provost within five working days of receiving the letter of censure. The Provost has five working days to initiate a review of the letter of censure merits and notify the parties by email. The Provost can either uphold the letter of censure or reject the letter of censure as an inappropriate discipline. The Provost can elect to obtain additional facts ~~using an ombuds or~~ by calling a meeting which would include the faculty member, school director, and Provost. The decision of the Provost is final. In the event of a Provost's review, no letter of censure will be added to the faculty member's HR file until the review is completed.

A copy of the letter of censure, the request by the faculty member for the Provost's review (if applicable), the Provost review (if applicable), and the reevaluation (if applicable) are to be placed in the faculty member's HR file. Due to the nature of sanctions, censure may generally be known within the University community, but administrators involved should not communicate the details more than necessary. Should the faculty member satisfactorily meet the conditions outlined in the letter of censure, the school director will compose a letter of resolution and provide a copy to the faculty member and place a copy in the faculty member's HR file. Faculty have the right to include a letter of rebuttal to accompany the letter of censure.

Censure is the final step of the progressive discipline process, and failure to resolve the situation at this stage may result in the initiation of proceedings leading to termination of employment at the University per the provisions stipulated below.

The University Faculty Handbook Committee proposes changes to the University Faculty Handbook concerning 6.4.4. Procedure for the Termination of a Faculty Member Prior to the Expiration of the Contract Term or for Termination of a Tenured Faculty Member on April 14, 2025, Second Vote June 9, 2025.

Have its language changed to: **(Changes in BOLD)** (Deletions in ~~Strikethrough~~)

6.4.4. Procedure for the Termination of a Faculty Member Prior to the Expiration of the Contract Term or for Termination of a Tenured Faculty Member

6.4.4.1. General

The following procedures shall apply in all cases in which the University proposes to terminate a tenured faculty member or proposes to terminate a non-tenured faculty member prior to the expiration of the term of appointment, for malfeasance, academic inefficiency, contumacious conduct, or cause. These procedures do not apply to cases in which the appointment of a non-tenured faculty member has expired or will expire by its terms, and the University elects not to renew or extend the term of appointment. These procedures do not apply to cases in which the Board elects to exercise its statutory authority to

suspend or terminate the employment of faculty members for financial exigencies as declared by the Board or in cases where the Board elects to exercise its statutory authority to terminate, suspend, or reduce programs, academic units, or administrative units.

6.4.4.2. Initial Recommendation for Termination

Any institutional officer or advisory body to whom the President has delegated relevant supervisory authority may recommend to the President that termination proceedings be initiated regarding a faculty member for malfeasance, inefficiency, contumacious conduct, or cause. However, only the Board or the President may initiate proceedings that might lead to termination of employment of a faculty member.

6.4.4.3. Initial Presidential Review

If, in the President's judgment, substantial evidence exists supporting a recommendation for the termination of a faculty member, the President will **notify the faculty member by certified mail of the intention of the University to initiate formal termination proceedings. If, in the President's judgment, substantial evidence does not exist to support a recommendation for the termination of a faculty member, the President will close the matter and notify the faculty member by certified mail.** ~~submit all evidentiary materials and relevant information to the Provost and request a preliminary investigation by an ombudsman.~~

6.4.4.4. Ombuds Review

~~The Provost will request that an ombuds conduct an inquiry of all allegations, interview relevant parties, review relevant documents, and confer with other institutional officers. The ombuds may conduct interviews with the faculty member and seek a resolution of the matter pending presidential approval. The ombuds will submit a written report with recommendation and all supporting documentation to the President and submit a copy to the faculty member.~~

6.4.4.5. Presidential Action

~~Upon review of the ombuds's written recommendation, the President will proceed with one of three courses of action: (1) closure of the case with no further institutional action, (2) implementation of 47 institutional action consistent with the terms of resolution that have been agreed upon with the faculty member, or (3) initiation of formal institutional termination proceedings.~~

6.4.4.6. Notice of Termination Proceedings

~~In the event the President decides to close the case with no further institutional action, the President will notify the faculty member by certified mail.~~

~~In the event the President decides to implement institutional action consistent with the terms of resolution agreed upon with the faculty member, the President will notify the faculty member by certified mail of the resolution's official terms and implement those terms.~~

In the event the President decides to initiate termination proceedings, ~~or the faculty member fails to honor the agreed upon resolution terms,~~ the President will notify the faculty member by certified mail of the intention of the University to initiate formal termination proceedings. The notice will include the following: a detailed statement of the grounds for termination; notice of the faculty member's right to formally contest the charges in a hearing before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee; notice of the faculty member's right to be advised by legal counsel during the hearing; notice of any suspension of pay or change of duties pending the conclusion of the matter; and notice that the faculty member has

14 working days from the date of receipt of the notice to contest the charges and request a hearing in writing before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

6.4.4.57. Failure to Contest

In the event the faculty member does not contest the charges in writing within 14 working days from the date of receipt of the written notice, the faculty member's employment will be terminated with forfeiture of all subsequent procedural rights.

In the event the faculty member contests the charges but does not request a hearing in writing, the right to a hearing is waived and the matter will be contested on the record before the President without a hearing.

6.4.4.68. Hearing

If the faculty member contests the charges and requests a hearing in writing in the specified timeframe, the President shall notify the University Promotion and Tenure Committee within 10 working days from receipt of the request and the matter will proceed according to the following procedures:

6.4.4.68.1. Notice of Hearing

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair will give the faculty member and the President written notice of the hearing's time and place at least 20 working days prior to the date of the hearing.

6.4.4.68.2. Representation

In the hearing, the faculty member will represent him/herself and the President will appoint an institutional officer, who is not an attorney, to represent the University. The faculty member may appoint an advisor, who is not an attorney, to represent the faculty member in the hearing and plead on behalf of the faculty member. Either party may retain legal counsel for the exclusive purpose of providing advice. However, in no event shall legal counsel for either party be permitted to examine witnesses or to plead before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. Counsel or advisor selection and compensation is the responsibility of the party desiring legal representation.

If either party intends to be advised by legal counsel or if the faculty member chooses to have an advisor at the hearing, that party must notify the other party and the University Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair at least 10 working days prior to the hearing date. If either party fails to give timely notice of legal or advisory representation, that party will not be entitled to be advised by legal counsel or an advisor at the hearing.

6.4.4.68.3. Waiver of Hearing

If, at any time prior to the hearing, the faculty member decides to waive the right to a hearing and respond to the charges in writing only, the faculty member must give written notice to the President and University Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair. Both parties shall then have 10 working days from receipt of the notice to submit written position statements to the University Promotion and Tenure Committee Chair. The University Promotion and Tenure Committee will then evaluate all available evidence, including the written statements of both parties, vote on the matter, and submit a written majority opinion and if applicable, a written minority opinion to the President, Provost, and faculty member.

6.4.4.68.4. Witnesses

Not later than 10 working days prior to the hearing, the parties must exchange a written list of witnesses that each party expects to call to testify at the hearing and a summary of the testimony expected from each witness. Witnesses who are not so identified may not testify before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee.

6.4.4.68.5. Evidence

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee will not be bound by legal rules of evidence in the hearing. The committee may admit any credible evidence of probative value that it deems relevant to the issues. The committee must base its decision upon reliable and credible evidence. If the hearing involves allegations of incompetence, the testimony must include that of professionally qualified institutional faculty members and may include other relevant scholars' testimony.

6.4.4.68.6. Cross-Examination of Witnesses

Both parties and advisors, but not legal counsel for either party, may cross-examine all witnesses.

6.4.4.68.7. Burden of Proof

The University shall bear the burden of proving the grounds for termination by a preponderance of the evidence.

6.4.4.68.8. Hearing Closed

The hearing will be closed to the public.

6.4.4.68.9. Findings and Conclusions

The University Promotion and Tenure Committee will reach its decision by majority vote. Within 10 working days after the hearing's conclusion, the committee will submit its recommendation to the President, with a copy to the Provost, and the faculty member that will contain (1) a written account of the committee's vote, the vote constituting a recommendation to the President; (2) a written majority opinion, including the rationale therefore; (3) a written minority opinion, if applicable, including the rationale therefore; (4) the hearing's recording; and (5) the hearing's transcript.

6.4.4.68.10. Transcript of Hearing

The hearing before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee will be recorded and transcribed by a certified court stenographer, and a transcript will be made at the University's expense. The faculty member may request a copy of the recording and transcript. However, the faculty member shall be responsible for the cost of the copy of the transcript and for making appropriate financial arrangements with the stenographer.

6.4.4.79. Provost's Recommendation

The Provost shall review the University Promotion and Tenure Committee recommendation and all evidentiary materials. The Provost will prepare a separate recommendation to the President either concurring with or dissenting from the University Promotion and Tenure Committee's decision. The Provost will simultaneously transmit the Provost's recommendation and the written rationale to the President, University Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the faculty member.

6.4.4.810. Presidential Review

If, upon review, the President concurs with a recommendation for termination by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, or should the President determine that the faculty member should be terminated despite the University Promotion and Tenure Committee's recommendation to the contrary, then the President will notify the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and the faculty member by certified mail of the intent to recommend termination to the Board. The written notification letter should include notification to the faculty member of the right to appeal the President's decision to the Board in accordance with applicable Board policy.

If, upon review, the President does not concur with a recommendation for termination by the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, or should the President concur with the University Promotion and Tenure Committee's recommendation against termination, then the President shall inform the University Promotion and Tenure Committee and the faculty member by certified mail of the President's intention to (1) dismiss all charges or (2) implement institutional action in the form of sanctions less than termination.

In any event, when the decision of the President is contrary to the recommendation of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, the President should provide the grounds for disagreement in the notification letter.

~~6.4.4.11. Final Institutional Review—~~

~~In the event the President decides to recommend termination to the Board, then the President will notify the faculty member by certified mail of the right to request in writing final institutional review on the record within 10 working days of receipt of the notice.—~~

~~A request for final institutional review must identify specific procedural issues for review exclusively on the record. The committee will not undertake to make its own judgment on the merits of the case but will make a determination of whether the institutional due process procedures were followed and the decision was not arbitrary or capricious.—~~

~~The reviewing body will be the University Termination Review Council, a body composed of five faculty members of professorial rank who will be chosen by lot, from the pool of ombuds candidates. The ombuds may not serve on the Council. In no case may a person serve on the Council if that person has been a party to any facet of the termination process to be reviewed or if that person has an unduly close personal or professional relationship with the faculty member. In the event of recusal of a member, a replacement member will be drawn from the remaining pool.—~~

~~The University Termination Review Council will, by majority vote, select a chair and review on the record all procedural matters specifically identified by the faculty member. The committee shall then reach a decision by majority vote on whether there are any procedural irregularities or whether the decision was arbitrary or capricious. The committee will then submit a written report and recommendation to the President, with a copy to the faculty member, which identifies the vote count and both the majority and minority opinions of the committee.—~~

~~6.4.4.12. Final Presidential Decision—~~

~~Upon review of the report of the University Termination Review Council, the President may elect to conduct a final interview with the faculty member, or with any other parties, and may seek any other relevant evidence, afterward informing the faculty member by certified mail of the decision to: (1) dismiss all charges, (2) implement institutional action consistent with the resolution's terms agreed upon with the faculty member, or (3) recommend termination to the Board.—~~

6.4.4.913. Presidential Recommendation for Termination

In the event the President decides to recommend termination to the Board, the President will transmit to the Board all evidence, including the recording and transcript of the hearing before the University Promotion and Tenure Committee, together with the presidential recommendation.

6.4.4.1014 Board Appeal

In the event the faculty member submits an appeal to the Board, the faculty member shall simultaneously submit a copy of the appeal to the President. An appeal may only take place after the faculty member has exhausted all administrative remedies at the institutional level.

Chapter 7 Changes

None

Appendix Changes

None