Graduate Council Minutes  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
September 19, 2016

The Graduate Council met at 3:00 p.m. on September 19, 2016, in McCain Library, Room 203 with Dr. Janie Butts, Chair of the Graduate Council, presiding.

The following voting members were present: Dr. Wendy Atkins-Sayre, Dr. Bret Becton, Dr. Leisa Flynn, Dr. Monika Gehlawat, Dr. YanLin Guo, Dr. Grant Harley, Dr. Lilian Hill, Dr. Susan Hrostowski, Dr. Tom Lansford, Dr. Sarah Morgan, Dr. Bonnie Nicholson, Dr. Ras Pandey, Dr. Kyna Shelley, Dr. Amy Slagle and Dr. Alexandra Valint.

The following voting members were represented by proxies to constitute a quorum: Dr. Monika Gehlawat for Dr. Jonathan Barron.

The following non-voting members were present: Dr. Karen Coats, Dr. Diane Fisher for Dr. Ann Blackwell, Dr. Douglas Masterson for Dr. David Hayhurst, Mr. Greg Pierce, Dr. Bill Powell, Ms. Alesha Sink, Dr. Eric Tribunella for Dr. Maureen Ryan and Dr. Kathy Yadrick for Dr. Michael Forster.

The following guests were present: Ms. Desira Bailey, Ms. Linda Bass, Ms. Jennifer Culley, Dr. Tom Hutchinson, Ms. Kathryn Lowery, Dr. Juawice McCormick, Dr. Amy Miller, Ms. Dawn Porter and Dr. Julie Reid.

1.0 Call to Order  
Dr. Butts called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2.0 Adoption of Agenda  
Dr. Butts presented the agenda with for approval. Dr. Pandey moved and Dr. Morgan seconded a motion to approve the agenda. The motion passed.

3.0 Approval of Minutes  
Dr. Butts presented the April 18, 2016 minutes for approval. Dr. Morgan moved and Dr. Pandey seconded a motion to approve the April 18, 2016 minutes for approval. The motion passed.

Dr. Butts presented the May 9, 2016 minutes for approval. Dr. Shelley moved and Dr. Morgan seconded a motion to approve the May 9, 2016 minutes for approval. The motion passed.

4.0 Course and Program Proposals  
4.1 College of Arts & Letters – No Business  

4.2 College of Business – No Business
4.3 College of Education and Psychology
Department of Child and Family Studies
Dr. Butts presented the request to modify SCS 610, SCS 611, SCS 612, SCS 616, SCS 617, SCS 618 and SCS 711. Dr. Hrostowski moved and Dr. Shelley seconded a motion to approve the modifications as a group. The motion passed. Dr. Atkins-Sayre moved and Dr. Shelley seconded a motion to approve the modifications of SCS 610, SCS 611, SCS 612, SCS 616, SCS 617, SCS 618 and SCS 711. The motion passed 17-0.

Dr. Butts presented the request to modify CD 650. Dr. Hrostowski moved and Dr. Shelley seconded a motion to approve the modification of CD 650. The motion passed 17-0.

Dr. Butts presented the request to modify FAM 601. Dr. Morgan moved and Dr. Hill seconded a motion to approve the modification of FAM 601. The motion passed 16-1.

Dr. Butts presented the request to modify the School Counseling and Guidance M.Ed. program. Dr. Shelley moved and Dr. Atkins-Sayre seconded a motion to approve the modification of the School Counseling and Guidance M.Ed. program. The motion passed 17-0. The program will be classified as a hybrid program instead of fully online.

4.4 College of Health – No Business

4.5 College of Nursing – No Business

4.6 College of Science and Technology
School of Ocean Science and Technology
Dr. Butts presented the request to add COA 545. Dr. Hill moved and Dr. Morgan seconded a motion to approve the addition of COA 545. The motion passed 17-0.

Dr. Butts presented the request to add COA 641. Dr. Hrostowski moved and Dr. Slagle seconded a motion to approve the addition of COA 641. The motion passed 17-0.

Dr. Butts presented the request to add COA 642. Dr. Shelley moved and Dr. Becton seconded a motion to approve the addition of COA 642. The motion passed 17-0. Council requested the syllabus be modified to include the required paper as part of the presentation rubric.

5.0 Officers Report
5.1 Chair – Dr. Janie Butts
No report.

5.2 Chair-Elect – Dr. Leisa Flynn
No report.
6.0 Standing Committee Reports
6.1 Bylaws Committee – Dr. Leisa Flynn
No report.

6.2 Credentials Committee – Dr. Lilian Hill
Dr. Hill submitted the Credentials report for September 2016 for approval. The report was approved. (see attached)

6.3 Election Committee – Dr. Chaoyang Zhang
No report.

6.4 Policies and Procedures Committee – Dr. Bonnie Nicholson
No report.

6.5 Program Review Committee – Dr. Kyna Shelley
No report.

7.0 Liaisons to University Committees
7.1 Assessment Committee- Dr. Leisa Flynn
No report.

7.2 Teaching Evaluation Committee – Dr. Bonnie Nicholson
No report.

7.3 Strategic Planning Committee – Dr. Bonnie Nicholson
No report.

7.4 Online Learning Steering Committee – Dr. Jennifer Lemacks
No report.

8.0 New Business
8.1 Provost’s Office Academic Master Plan Listening Sessions
Dr. Butts reported that a listening session for the Academic Affairs Master Plan was conducted and presented a document of the finding to Graduate Council. Council discussed the document and made suggestions. These suggestions will be submitted to the Provost for consideration. (see attached)

8.2 Modification of Online Policy
Dr. Butts presented a draft to Council of changes made to the Online Policy. Kathryn Lowery discussed the changes with Council and stated further changes to the policy will be presented at a later time. Dr. Hill moved and Dr. Nicholson seconded a motion to approve the changes made to the Online Policy. The motion passed 17-0. (see attached)
8.3 Revision of AC/GC Proposal Guidelines
Dr. Butts presented a draft to Council of changes made to the AC/GC Proposal Guidelines. Kathryn Lowery discussed the changes with Council which include changes to the following forms.
1. Revision of Online Course Proposal form
2. Revision of Online Program Proposal form
3. Revision of Add a Course Proposal form
4. Revision of Modify a Course Proposal form

Dr. Slagle moved and Dr. Hill seconded a motion to approve the changes made to the AC/GC Proposal Guidelines and corresponding forms. The motion passed 17-0. (see attached)

8.3 Modification of Academic Integrity Policy
Dr. Butts presented a draft to Council of changes made to the Academic Integrity policy. Dr. Amy Miller discussed the changes being made with Council. Dr. Shelley moved and Dr. Hill seconded a motion to approve the changes made to the Academic Integrity policy. The motion passed 17-0. (see attached)

8.5 Modification of the Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline Policy
Dr. Butts presented a draft to Council of changes made to the Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline policy. Dr. Amy Miller discussed the changes being made with Council. Dr. Morgan moved and Dr. Shelley seconded a motion to approve the changes made to the Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline policy. The motion passed 17-0. (see attached)

8.6 Graduate Student Senate Report
No report

8.7 Dean’s Report
Dr. Coats presented a report to Council. (See attached)

9.0 Announcements

10.0 Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2016 at 3:00. The deadline for submitting materials to the Graduate School for the Agenda is Friday, September 30, 2016.
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<th>Course Title</th>
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<td>SCS 610</td>
<td>Foundations, Organizations and Administration of Guidance. Face to face format.</td>
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<td>SCS 611</td>
<td>Career Development and Information Services. Face to face format.</td>
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<td>Counseling Theory and Practice. Face to face format.</td>
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<td>Individual Analysis and Group Testing. Face to face format.</td>
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<td>SCS 618</td>
<td>Group Processes for School Counselors. Face to face format.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Group Processes for School Counselors. Face to face and online correspondence format. Effective spring 2017.</td>
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Modify: SCS 711 Theory and Practice of Consultation.
Face to face format.

To: SCS 711 Theory and Practice of Consultation.
Face to face and online correspondence format.
Effective spring 2017.

Modify: CD 650 Theories in Child Development.

To: CD 650 Theories in Child Development.
Course Description. Effective fall 2017.

Modify: FAM 601 Program Evaluation and Assessment.

To: FAM 601 Program Evaluation and Assessment.
Course Description. Effective fall 2017.

Modify: School Counseling and Guidance Services M.Ed.
36 hours. Face to face format.

To: School Counseling M.Ed.
48 hours. Face to face and online correspondence format.
Effective fall 2017.

**College of Science and Technology**

*School of Ocean Sciences and Technology*

Add: COA 545 Sirenian Biology.

Add: COA 641 Stable Isotope Ecology.
3 hours. Face to face lecture instruction mode. Effective spring 2017.

Add: COA 642 Early Life History of Marine Fishes.
3 hours. Face to face lecture instruction mode. Effective spring 2017.
Revisions: approved
a. Online Policy change at The University of Southern Mississippi (17-0 approved)
b. Academic and Graduate Councils Guidelines for Proposals changes (17-0 approved)
   1. Revision of Online Course Proposal form
   2. Revision of Online Program Proposal form
   3. Revision of Add a Course Proposal form
   4. Revision of Modify a Course Proposal form
c. Academic Integrity Policy change (17-0 approved)
d. Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline policy changes (17-0 approved)
DATE: Sept. 19, 2016 (3 & 5 yr. Review)
TO: Graduate Council
FM: Graduate Credentials Committee
RE: Graduate Faculty Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Recommendation Status</th>
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<td>Flake, Erica (3 yr. Review)</td>
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</table>

Credentials Committee
Dr. Lilian Hill, Chair
DATE: September 19, 2016
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<td>Boyd, Joseph C.</td>
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Report Approved by:
Credentials Committee
Dr. Lilian Hill, Chair
### Graduate Council’s Feedback During the AMP Listening Session

**September 19, 2016 GC Meeting**

Some of the items on the AMP initiated a long discussion about concerns, as well as what the Graduate Council members see as action plans. Dr. Coats, Dr. Powell, Dr. Flynn, and I worked to steer the discussion away from the action plans for now. We explained they would be involved with the action plans soon. Specific areas of concern or suggestions are below in red in Items 2 and 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Planning Priorities</th>
<th>Academic Master Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Support student success to foster retention, progression and graduation.</strong></td>
<td>1a. Implement a comprehensive student success and retention effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1b. Provide deliberate intervention for underprepared and/or underperforming students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1c. Identify, evaluate, and remove challenges to progression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1d. Target recruitment of populations likely to succeed at Southern Miss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1e. Promote opportunities to further enhance the quality of students’ educational experiences at Southern Miss.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**2. Promote teaching, research, and creative excellence.**

The GC suggested that items 2.a., b., & c. should have language that includes the words faculty and students.

The GC also thinks that items 2.a., b., & c. need to be further examined and clarified.

- 2a. Expand the depth and breadth of funded research and creative programs.
- 2b. Increase the quality and the quantity of scholarly research and creative output.

The Graduate Council made a suggestion here for a possible action plan: The Graduate School Dean has some funds for graduate students to attend conferences and teach professionalism to others. They want this to be an action plan item and did not want this thought lost, so I am documenting it here.

- 2c. Develop infrastructure to promote and reward excellence in teaching.

The GC would like to include the word research here, not just teaching, but research and teaching.

The members want to add a 2.d. Language should include to enhance support for faculty research.

| 3. Strategically expand undergraduate and graduate enrollment. | 3a. Expand current and new high-interest degree programs with growth potential. |
| | 3a.1. Evaluate regularly for demand and potential |
| | 3b. Develop intentional, targeted marketing and recruitment strategies. |
| | 3c. Explore alternative course delivery for instructional flexibility. |
| | 3d. Revise 2009 Strategic Enrollment Plan to inform and implement the new plan. |
| | 3e. Coordinate enrollment and admissions with academic affairs. |

<p>| 4. Strengthen economic and community partnerships. | 4a. Grow commercialization activities that move technological research initiatives from the laboratory to the business incubator and ultimately to new businesses in the marketplace. |
| | 4b. Utilize faculty and staff expertise effectively to form community partnerships. |
| | 4c. Promote strategic economic development that will attract businesses to the region and utilize academic research to bolster the local and state economy. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Planning Priorities</th>
<th>Academic Master Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4d. Promote social capital development by creating and extending community partnerships focused on social, cultural and recreational engagement and opportunity; highlight the university’s significant role in improving and enhancing quality of life in Mississippi and local communities.</td>
<td>4e. Leverage all partnerships to enrich student learning opportunities (internships, job shadowing, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Invest in faculty and staff to maximize their potential.</td>
<td>5a. Identify, invest in, honor and celebrate our academic program strengths.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5b. Provide and sustain competitive packages to recruit high quality faculty and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5c. Provide opportunities and infrastructure to retain high quality faculty and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Promote a culture of inclusiveness of people and ideas</td>
<td>6a. Hire, retain, and develop strong, diverse faculty and staff whose talents align with institutional priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6a.1. Build development and compensation programs to recruit/retain the best faculty and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The GC members suggest more definition and clarity to the thought of supporting diversity, what that really means when we say diversity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6b. Utilize faculty and staff expertise well and foster collaboration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6c. Model inclusiveness in and across curriculum and other educational programs, e.g. Honors Forum (intellectual diversity).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Enhance physical, technological, and financial infrastructure to support our mission, vision, and values.</td>
<td>7a. Direct resources to initiatives that grow revenue and incentivize that growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7b. Facilitate communication between academic affairs and other units in order to allow academic affairs to drive infrastructural changes, procedure and policy changes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7c. Develop technology facilitating a process of continuous quality improvement in academic affairs (e.g. gather qualitative and quantitative data and statistics for program review, support technology that allows for ease in communication and teaching among virtual and physical campuses, etc.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7d. Focus on enhancing learning environments and modalities when renovating or modifying existing, and adding new academic facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Improve efficiency and effectiveness of institutional processes and systems.</td>
<td>8a. Catalogue practices, procedures, and systems and review for effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8b. Evaluate policies to reduce duplication and improve consistency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8c. Provide technology and training to generate savings at all levels.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Council
FROM: Amy Chasteen Miller, Associate Provost
DATE: July 25, 2016
SUBJECT: Online Learning Approvals
CC: Dr. Steven R. Moser, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
     Dr. Tom Hutchinson, Director, Office of Online Learning

The Office of Online Learning was established on July 1, 2016 to enhance services to faculty teaching online, students taking courses online, and programs that have or plan to offer online degrees. In the upcoming year, we will address a variety of issues related to online learning policies and practices, in part due to our membership in NC-SARA and the requirements that carries. Currently, we have an effective approval process for both online courses and online programs. It is crucial that the Office of Online Learning is connected to this approval process for several reasons:

- We are required to train all faculty teaching online, per NC-SARA and our own “Online at Southern Miss” policy (https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-lec-001).
- The Office of Online learning maintains a list of all current fully online degree programs, which we need to keep updated.
- New online degree programs should only be approved if we have the infrastructure and resources in place to support effective course delivery and student advising.

Given these needs, we request some adjustments to the approval form and process for online courses and programs:

1. Proposals to offer a course or program online should be accompanied by a memo or email from Dr. Tom Hutchinson indicating that the Office of Online Learning is able to provide any resources that the proposal indicates are necessary and beyond the scope of the unit.
2. Proposals to offer a course or program online should include a space to indicate acknowledgement that all faculty teaching online must complete training and adhere to the Online at Southern Miss policy.
3. The Office of Online Learning should be contacted if and when programs are approved for fully online delivery so that their database can be updated.

We are proposing that these changes go into effect in Spring 2017. Thank you for your consideration.
ONLINE at SOUTHERN MISS

Policy Statement

The University of Southern Mississippi began the eLearning Initiative in the spring of 2009. This initiative is focused on developing additional fully online degree programs to increase enrollment, improve student satisfaction, and raise retention and graduation rates at Southern Miss. The project encompasses many aspects of launching a successful online program including marketing and outreach efforts, faculty training and support, course scheduling and development, upgrading program and business processes, and sustaining growth.

We currently have undergraduate programs, graduate programs, hybrid/executive format programs, certificate programs, and a supplemental endorsement. In addition to our online degree programs, we offer a wide variety of fully online classes.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

This policy is required for the effective communication of university policies regarding Online Learning at Southern Miss.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

All members of The University of Southern Mississippi community.

Website Address for this Policy

www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-lec-001
# 1.0 Definitions

**SACS-COC Definition of Distance Education**

For the purposes of the Commission on College’s accreditation review, distance education is a formal education process in which the majority of the instruction (interaction between students and instructors and among students) in a course occurs when students and instructors are not in the same place.

**IHL Definition of Distance Learning**

Distance learning may be defined as “institutionally based formal education where the learning group is separated and where interactive communication systems are used to connect instructors, learners, and resources” (*The Quarterly Reviews of Distance Education*) or “the acquisition of knowledge and skills through mediated information and instruction, encompassing all technologies and other forms of learning at a distance” (*United States Distance Learning Association*).

Presently, a *course* is considered to be a distance learning course when at least fifty (50) percent of the course is available via technology-based instruction while a *program* is considered to be a distance learning program when at least fifty (50) percent of the program is available via technology based instruction.

**Undergraduate Fully Online Program**

All courses listed in the degree plan are available online, either through USM or MSVCC. This includes all GEC categories, major area of study requirements, and any additional requirements. A student would not have to take a face-to-face course to complete this degree. Admission to an undergraduate fully online program may be restricted to a certain cohort. A student who is admitted to a fully online program is given an online campus code in the student program panel in SOAR.

**Undergraduate Hybrid Online Major Area of Study**

Fifty (50) percent or more of courses listed under Major Area of Study Requirements in the degree plan are available online. Only courses offered by the program’s department/school should be listed under major Area of Study Requirements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Hybrid Online</td>
<td>Fifty (50) percent or more of courses listed under a Curriculum Requirement in the degree plan are available online. This includes, but is not limited to, General Education Curriculum, BBSA Requirements, BA Requirements, and Teacher Licensure Requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General or College Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Fully Online Program</td>
<td>All courses listed in the program’s Plan of Study are available online through USM. A student would not have to take a face-to-face course to complete this degree. A student who is admitted to a fully online program is given an online campus code in the student program panel in SOAR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Hybrid Online Plan of Study</td>
<td>Fifty (50) percent or more of courses offered by the program’s department/school and listed in the program’s Plan of Study are available online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Hybrid Online General</td>
<td>Fifty (50) percent or more of courses listed under a Curriculum Requirement in the Plan of Study are available online. This includes, but is not limited to, Research Tools and Dissertation Support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Executive Format Program</td>
<td>A graduate program developed especially for working executives, managers, and professionals. Executive programs generally require professional work experience for entrance and students may be admitted as a cohort. Courses are delivered through intensive campus meetings (weekends or several full days once a month, for example) and online communications. An Executive Format Program can have fifty (50) percent or more of courses offered online or less than fifty (50) percent of courses offered online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Executive Format Program</td>
<td>Fifty (50) percent or more of courses offered by the program’s department/school and listed in the program’s Plan of Study are available online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Online classification)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Executive Format Program</td>
<td>Less than fifty (50) percent of courses offered online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Alternative Delivery classification)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate and Graduate Fully</td>
<td>All courses listed in the certificate’s curriculum are available online through Southern Miss. A student would not be required to take a face-to-face course to complete this certificate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Certificate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Undergraduate and Graduate Hybrid online Certificate</strong></td>
<td>Fifty (50) percent or more of the courses listed in the certificate curriculum is available online.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Executive Format Student</strong></td>
<td>A student enrolled in an Executive Format Program.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Web Supplement Course** | A course with less than fifty (50) percent online component. In SOAR, web supplement courses are coded as follows:  
  a) *Campus*-Hattiesburg or Gulf Coast  
  b) *Location*-Hattiesburg, Gulf Park, Keesler, Gulf Coast Research Center, Stennis, etc.  
  c) **Instruction Mode-C-5**  
  Web Supplement (Departments do NOT enter the instruction mode for these classes. Instructors complete and submit the Course Supplement Request Form found at: http://www.usm.edu/elo/csrf/. Once the request is received in LEC, a course shell is created and the instruction mode is changed and a course attribute of web supplement is added.)  
| **Hybrid Online Course** | A course with fifty (50) to ninety-nine (99) percent online component. Student must either meet on campus or visit the campus at some point during the semester. In SOAR, hybrid courses are coded as follows:  
  a) *Campus*-Hattiesburg or Gulf Coast  
  b) *Location*-Online  
  c) **Instruction Mode-C-9**  
  d) **Class Note**-Online Hybrid |
| **Fully Online Course** | A course delivered one hundred (100) percent online. Students are not required to meet on campus or visit the campus at any point during the semester. In SOAR, hybrid online courses are coded as follows:  
  a) *Campus*-Online  
  b) *Location*-Online  
  c) **Instructional Mode**- CO Fully Online  
  d) **Class Note**-Online web referral |
| **Fully Online Student** | A student enrolled in a fully online program. |
| **Hybrid Online Student** | A student enrolled in a fully online course or a hybrid online course, but is not enrolled in a Fully Online program. A Hybrid Online Student may, in a given semester, be enrolled in all online courses. |
| **Executive Format Student** | A student enrolled in an Executive Format Program. |
2.0 **Infrastructure**

Blackboard is the online course management system used to deliver web-based distance learning courses and as a technology supplement for face-to-face taught courses. Through Blackboard, instructors may post course syllabi and other documents; incorporate online engagement tools (ex. Discussion boards, chat, announcements, file exchange, etc.); administer quizzes and examinations and post grades.

2.1 All online course material is delivered exclusively using the Blackboard learning management system, allowing instructors to take full advantage of a variety of technology tools with a user-friendly interface that meets accessibility standards for interoperability and access for learners with special needs. The Provost’s Office has compliance responsibility and authority to make sure no other learning management system is used, and monitors learning platforms used.

2.1.1 Southern Miss has invested and continues to invest support infrastructure for faculty and students using Blackboard learning support technology. We strive for consistency and quality in the student learning experience, rigorous standards and review, security of student information and grades, as well as maintaining a reasonable cost to support faculty training, instructional design, and course development services. We achieve this by standardizing the institution on a single, core set of e-learning technologies.

2.1.1.1 Compliance with technology standards are demonstrated through institutional indicators shown below.

2.1.1.2 Course Architecture Indicators: Blackboard architecture permits the online teacher to add content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities and accommodate traditional and non-traditional schedules.

2.1.1.3 User Interface Indicators: Faculty are expected to utilize the officially endorsed university template within the Blackboard LMS. The purpose of a university-wide template for online courses is to ensure a consistent experience for our students. The template promotes best practices in syllabus requirements, design of instruction, course structure and organization, learner support and resources, learner interaction and collaboration, effective use of course technology, and assessment and evaluation.

2.1.1.4 Faculty may use third party tools as an enhancement to their course, not as a replacement for their course. Faculty choosing to utilize third party tools
(publisher content, course cartridges, etc.) will work with the third party vendor and the Blackboard support staff in the LEC to migrate content directly into the Blackboard support staff in the Blackboard course shell or to develop an official portal through the Blackboard course shell to gain access to other content and teaching materials not developed by the instructor. See the institutional policy at (add URL once policy is posted on IR site).

2.1.1.5 Technology Requirements and Interoperability Indicators for LEC:

2.1.1.5.1 Hardware, Web browser and software requirements are specified.

2.1.1.5.2 Prerequisite skills in the use of technology are identified.

2.1.1.5.3 Appropriate content-specific tools and software are utilized.

2.1.1.5.4 Interoperability technical standards allow sharing content from different learning management systems into the Blackboard platform, which is used exclusively as the USM learning management system.

2.1.1.5.5 Interoperability technical standards ensure sharing of question, assessments and results with others.

2.1.1.6 Accessibility Indicators:

2.1.1.6.1 The course meets universal design principles, Section 508 standards and W3C guidelines to ensure access for all students.

2.1.1.6.2 Online textbooks used in a course meet nationally endorsed standards (NIMAS) for publishers to ensure distribution of accessible, alternative versions of textbooks and other instructional materials.

2.1.1.7 Technical Support Indicators:

2.1.1.7.1 LEC offers the instructors assistance with technical support and course management.

2.1.1.7.2 Student support is provided by BB Student Support Services. Contact information for 24/7 support can be found on the Learning Enhancement Center website at https://lec.usm.edu/ under Quick Links tab.

2.1.1.7.3 LEC offers orientation, intermediate and advance training.
3.0 Online Instructor Professional Development Program

The LEC provides an ongoing program of appropriate technical, design, and production support for instructors conducting courses online. The University of Southern Mississippi strongly encourages all online instructors to complete the LEC Blackboard Training Program prior to teaching an online course. Information regarding training and support for online faculty can be found at https://lec.usm.edu/faculty-help/

Instructors must demonstrate proficiency in the following areas prior to conducting online instruction:

3.1 System Understanding – Instructors are expected to independently manage an online course management system; post course syllabi and other course materials; incorporate online engagement tools (e.g., Discussion boards, chat, announcements, file exchange, etc.); administer quizzes and exams, and post grades.

3.2 Features/Capabilities – Instructors are expected to develop and maintain an awareness and understanding of the basic instructional functions, features, and capabilities of the current online learning management system utilized by The University of Southern Mississippi (Blackboard). Examples of useful functions, features, and capabilities include: Assignment Dropbox, Grade Book, Notes, and Assessment Manager.

3.2.1 Faculty should secure access to high-speed bandwidth connection for all class activities.

3.2.2 It is highly recommended to test all course-related technology prior to the start of the course.

3.2.3 When selecting technology, faculty should understand the purpose of that technology and implement as necessary within the course.

3.2.4 Contact Blackboard support personnel in the Learning Enhancement Center for assistance with any technology-related issues.

3.2.4.1 The University of Southern Mississippi professional development for online instructors may include, but is not limited to: learning communities, which allow instructors to work together in pairs or teams with opportunities for follow-up discussions to share information; online training modules; and face-to-face training; technology coaching or mentoring.
3.2.4.2 The online instructor professional development program shall address differences in learning styles and technical abilities. The professional development program shall incorporate collaborative learning activities and model effective teaching in an online environment.

3.2.4.3 Services are offered through the Learning Enhancement Center to: Office of Online Learning

3.2.4.3.1 Assist departments in the development of online courses and programs by providing high quality instructional design services, training, and marketing and recruiting services for fully online programs.

3.2.4.3.2 Provide adequate and appropriate training opportunities for faculty utilizing online learning tools opportunities for faculty utilizing online learning tools for both fully online and face-to-face courses.

3.2.4.3.3 Support University sanctioned online learning tools.

3.2.4.3.4 Provide a secure location and appropriate process for students to take proctored exams if required by the faculty of record. Proctoring policies are located at https://lec.usm.edu/proctoring/

3.2.4.3.5 Develop and maintain an online faculty listserv.

3.2.4.3.6 Communicate critical information through the online faculty listserv in a timely manner regarding changes in technologies, upgrades, outages, and other information affecting access to courses both by faculty and students.

3.2.4.3.7 Maintain a stable and consistent environment for the delivery of online courses in collaboration with iTech and Blackboard.

3.2.4.3.8 Research, review, implement, and support emerging technologies that may prove beneficial to faculty and students utilizing online learning.

3.2.4.3.9 Ensure access to 24/7 support through Blackboard Student Support Services.

found on the Office of Online Learning's web site.
3.3 Evaluation

3.3.1 Evaluations may include, but are not limited to: diagnostic, formative (ongoing sharing between participant and instructor), and summative (to summarize participant learning).

3.3.2 Online instructor professional development training and support programs are evaluated regularly by the Office of the Provost. Program assessment data are routinely compared to national research in five areas: 1) participant reaction to online professional development, 2) participant learning, 3) organizational support, 4) participant implementation, and 5) student impact.

3.4 Constraints/Compliance – Course developers must create online course materials in accordance with the University of Southern Mississippi’s established requirements and guidelines within this policy.

3.4.1 Online course instruction must satisfy or exceed the various accreditation criteria and policy statements of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges.

3.4.2 Online Courses will also meet the standards established by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) for course content, evaluation and management.

3.4.3 Use of the online Learning standard template is required when new courses are developed.

4.0 FACULTY/INSTRUCTOR

Each department ensures a sufficient number of faculty are qualified to develop, design, and teach online courses/programs. Faculty are expected to create content and features in online courses for which they serve as subject matter experts and which demonstrate comprehension of the distinct characteristics of online instruction including:

4.1 Following the established and published course schedule.

4.2 Having the course developed and ready for student access on the official first day of class.

4.3 Providing a welcome or informational message and/or video for students within the home page of the course.
4.4 Developing a comprehensive course syllabus designed around one or more required textbooks or cases, with the course syllabus available on the first day of class.

4.5 Adhering to the syllabus including course milestones, due dates, and critical course activities.

4.6 Setting forth expectations for both students and instructor in the syllabus to ensure that students understand what is expected of them and what they can expect of the instructor.

4.7 Articulating the academic requirements for the course, including course objectives, assignments, participation requirements, examinations, and evaluation rubrics. According to guidelines in the Faculty Handbook and provided by the Office of the Provost.

4.8 Developing instructional modules for the course, which include components of theory, practice, and assessment. These modules may be designed as weekly modules, two-week modules, or other appropriate module designs that adequately and appropriately deliver full content of the individual course over the full calendar of the semester. Recognizing the diverse disciplines offered through online learning, faculty may choose a variety of content delivery methods rather than modules or units within the Blackboard LMS. Instructional design assistance is available in the Office of Online Learning.

4.9 Conduct (that is, “teach”) the course within the scheduled time frame.

4.10 Developing or providing assessment instruments to measure the academic progress of students using multiple approaches.

4.11 Communicating any schedule adjustments.

4.12 Identifying and correcting inaccurate course content, confusing information and/or instruction, broken links, and other course design issues.

4.13 Using the Blackboard gradebook functions to manage course assignments, assessments, and grade entry. The university does not endorse the use of e-mail or third party software for assignment and assessment submission or documentation of official university records.

4.14 Ensuring that all documents posted to the Blackboard course have received appropriate copyright clearance or have been determined to qualify for academic fair use. Assistance for copyright and fair use policies is available through the University Libraries.
5.0 **Communication and Availability**

The faculty are expected to be available to the online learner for the duration of the course. Timely instructor feedback and communication is essential for the online learner in order to manage their learning experience. For this purpose, faculty should employ the email function embedded within the institutionally provided and supported LMS. In addition the instructor is expected to:

5.1 Post online office hours and be available during the designated times. The LEC can assist faculty with a variety of tools to make the office hours experience more personal and meaningful to both the faculty and student.

5.2 Clearly communicate student expectations.

5.3 Communicate instructor class schedule and availability, as well as response times to emails, discussion board activities, and other forms of communication where students will expect a response from the instructor.

5.4 Actively participate in course-related discussions, chats, and activities where appropriate. Remember, online learning is an active, engaged process, not an independent study course.

5.5 Regularly access the online course. Best practices suggest that faculty access the course at least every 24 to 48 hours.

5.6 Give prior notice to students and appropriate administrative/academic units if you are unable to log into the course, if you may be unavailable for an extended period of time, or if you experience any technical issues that would prohibit communication in, or instruction of, the course.

5.7 Feedback - Feedback on assignments and assessments is most helpful to students when it is provided promptly and when clear and concise language is used to explain the degree to which relevant course outcomes have been met. The instructor is expected to communicate to students when they can expect to receive graded feedback on assignments and exams, and whenever exceptions to announced and appropriate time frames for feedback occur.

5.8 Provide prompt feedback. Communicated to students when they can expect to receive graded feedback on assignments and exams.

5.9 Inform the student of when they can expect a response if the instructor cannot provide a detailed response when originally documented in the class schedule or syllabus.
5.10 Provide clear and concise feedback to explain the degree to which the student is achieving the course/lesson outcomes.

6.0 Electronic Curriculum and Instruction

Methods change, but standards of quality endure. The important issues are not technical but curriculum-driven and pedagogical. Decisions about such matters are made by qualified professionals and focus on learning outcomes for an increasingly diverse student population and faculty should consider and understand the following:

6.1 Quality outcome courses include clearly defined curriculum content, effective and easy-to-use ways for students to interact with and learn the content, and are designed to attract student interest.

6.1.1 Communication and Interaction indicators: The design of the course should provide opportunities for appropriate instructor-student interaction, including timely and frequent feedback about student progress. The course provides opportunities for appropriate student-student interaction to foster mastery and application of the material and a plan for monitoring that interaction.

6.1.2 Resources and Materials Indicators: The course provides opportunities for appropriate student interaction with the content to foster mastery and application of the material. Students have access to resources that enrich the course content.

6.1.3 Instructional Design Service: The Office of Online Learning provides instructional design services and online faculty members are encouraged to use these services to maximize delivery of their online course.

6.1.4 Course Management and Instruction: An effective online course should be examined as to the difference in presentation of learning strategies than used in a face-to-face course. The instructor is responsible for exercising demonstrated best practices in managing and teaching the class from start to finish. (refer to section 3.0 for a complete detailed list)

6.2 Consortia Partners and Contractors – Although important elements of a program may be supplied by consortia partners or outsources to other organizations, including contractors who may not be accredited, the responsibility for performance remains with the institution awarding the degree or certificate. It is the institution in which the student is enrolled, not its suppliers nor partners, who has a contract with the student. Therefore, the criteria for selecting consortia partners and contractor, and the means to monitor and evaluate their work, are important aspects of the program plan.
In considering consortia agreements, attention is given to issues such as assuring that enhancing service to students is a primary consideration and that incentives do not compromise the integrity of the institution or of the education program. Consideration is also given to the effect of administrative arraignments and cost-sharing on an institution’s decision-making regarding curriculum.

6.2.1 Performance expectations are defined in authorized University memoranda of understanding, contracts, and agreements. Conditions for contract termination are also defined.

6.2.2 Adequate quality control and curriculum oversight provisions are included in agreements concerning courseware.

6.2.3 Appropriate system reliability and emergency backup guarantees exist in agreements concerning technology services.

6.2.4 Provision for protection of confidentiality and privacy in services involving personally identifiable information included.

6.2.5 Assurances concerning qualification and training of persons involved in contact with students are defined, ranging from help desk to tutoring or counseling.

6.2.6 Articulation and transfer arrangements are applicable to courses offered via the consortium, which involve specific curricular decisions by the academic structures of the participating institutions.

6.3 Student Accessibility – In designing an electronically offered degree or certificate program, the institution provides a coherent plan for the student to access all courses necessary to complete the program, or clearly notifies the students of requirements not included in the electronic offering. Hybrid programs or courses, mixing electronic and on-campus elements, are designed to assure that all students have access to appropriate services.

6.3.1 Students are notified of program requirements by visiting https://online.usm.edu

6.3.2 If the institution relies on other University approved providers to offer program-related courses, students are informed of these courses by visiting https://online.usm.edu

6.3.3 The total online program is realistically available to students for whom it is intended. For example, the chosen technology is likely to be
accessible by the target student population and target students meet the parameters of program scheduling.

6.3.4 Students with a disability which qualifies under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations should contact The University of Southern Mississippi Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information. Disabilities covered by the ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities or chronic health disorders. Students can contact ODA at http://www.usm.edu/oda if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

7.0 Student Support

Colleges and universities have learned that the twenty-first century student is different, both demographically and geographically, from students of previous generations. These differences affect everything from admissions policy to library services.

7.1 Library and Learning Resources:

7.1.1 Students have access to and can effectively use appropriate library resources.

7.1.2 Access is provided to laboratories, facilities, and equipment appropriate to the courses or programs.

7.2 Student Services:

7.2.1 Students have adequate access to the range of services appropriate to support the programs offered through Online @ Southern Miss.

7.2.2 Students in Online @ Southern Miss programs have an adequate procedure for resolving their complaints, and the institution follows its policies and procedures.

7.2.3 Advertising, recruiting, and admissions information adequately and accurately represent the programs, requirements, and services available to students.

7.2.4 Documented procedures assure that security of personal information is protected in the conduct of assessments and evaluations and in the dissemination of results.
7.2.5 Students enrolled in Online @ Southern Miss courses are able to use the technology employed, have the equipment necessary to succeed, and are provided assistance in using the technology employed.

7.3 The institution recognizes that appropriate services must be available for students of electronically offered programs, using the working assumption that these students will not be physically present on campus. With variations for specific situations and programs, these services, which are possibly coordinated, may include:

7.3.1 Accurate and timely information about the institution, its programs, courses, costs and related policies and requirements.

7.3.2 Pre-registration advising.

7.3.3 Application for admission.

7.3.4 Placement testing.

7.3.5 Enrollment/registration in programs and courses.

7.3.6 Financial aid, including information about policies and limitations, information about available scholarships, processing of applications, and administration of financial aid and scholarship awards.

7.4 A sense of community is important to the success of many students. An ongoing, long-term relationship with Online @ Southern Miss students is beneficial to both student and institution. Strategies and practices to build community are implemented in Online @ Southern Miss programs as appropriate, through such actions as encouraging study groups, providing student directories (with the permission of those listed), including off-campus students in institutional publications and events, including these students in definitions of the academic community through such mechanisms as student government representation, invitations to campus events including graduation ceremonies, and similar strategies of inclusion.

8.0 Evaluation & Assessment

Both the assessment of student achievement and evaluation of the overall program take on added importance as new techniques evolve. For example, in asynchronous programs the element of seat time is essentially removed from the equation. For
these reasons, the institution conducts sustained, evidence-based and participatory inquiry as to whether Online @ Southern Miss programs are achieving objectives. The results of such inquiries are used to guide curriculum design and delivery, pedagogy, and educational processes, and may affect future policy and budgets and perhaps have implications for the institution’s roles and mission.

8.1 The following Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) Commission on Colleges policy standards apply:

8.1.1 Student Assessment – When examinations are employed (paper, online, demonstrations of competency, etc.), they take place in circumstances that include firm student identification. The institution otherwise seeks to assure the integrity of student work.

8.1.2 Guidelines for examination by proctor are on the Online @ Southern Miss website. Policies and procedures define faculty, student and LEC responsibilities for proctored exams, including but not limited to establishing student identity, assuring security of test instrument, administering the examinations, and assuring secure examinations and prompt evaluation.

8.1.3 If other methods are used to identify those who take the examination, how is identification firmly established? How are the conditions of the examination (security, time limits, etc.) controlled?

8.1.4 Does the institution have in place effective policies and procedures to assure the integrity of student work?

8.2 Institutional Assessment and Reporting.

8.3 Accreditation Measures/Self-Evaluation.

Review

The Director of the Learning Enhancement Center is responsible for the review of this policy every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

Forms/Instructions

N/A

Appendices
Related Information

N/A

History

Amendments: Month, Day, Year – summary of changes
01/31/12: Formatted for Institutional Policies website.
02/19/13: Formatted in template. Policy section renumbered. Minor editing of punctuation and usage throughout.
11/24/15: Reviewed and edited

References


**References (from Expectations Document)**


Authorization

RECOMMENDED BY:

[Signature]
Responsible University Administrator

[Signature]
Responsible University Officer

Date: 1/26/16

REVIEWED BY:

[Signature]
Director of Compliance and Ethics

[Signature]
Office of General Counsel

Date: 1/27/16

Date: 1/28/16

APPROVED:

[Signature]
President

Date: 2/1/16
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MEETING DATES

The Academic Council meets at 3:00 p.m. on the scheduled Monday of each month during the academic year except for holidays. The Graduate Council will meet at 3:00 p.m. on the third Monday of each month during the academic year except for holidays. The location of the meetings will be announced at the beginning of each academic year.

Graduate Council Calendar

Academic Council Calendar

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PROPOSAL DEADLINES

See the Academic Council Calendar and the Graduate Council Calendar for the dates proposals are due from colleges in advance of a specific council meeting.

A. COURSE PROPOSALS

The effective date of course proposals submitted to the Academic or Graduate Council shall occur before students have had a chance to register for the semester during which the course is to be offered.

Example:

1. Course proposals to be offered the following summer or fall semester should be approved by the Academic or Graduate Council by the end of February.

2. Courses scheduled for the spring semester should be approved by the Academic or Graduate Council by the end of September.

B. DEGREE PLAN/PLAN OF STUDY AND CERTIFICATE PROPOSALS

These proposals include Degree Plan/Plan of Study modifications, changes to admissions requirements, and course description modifications (including pre-requisites).

For changes to be reflected in the next year’s Undergraduate Bulletin, a proposal must be approved prior to or during the February meeting.

For changes to be reflected in the next year’s Graduate Bulletin, a proposal must be approved prior to or during the April meeting.

C. NEW DEGREE PROGRAMS, REORGANIZATIONS OF EXISTING PROGRAMS, & DEGREE PROGRAM NAME CHANGE PROPOSALS

The submission of proposals requiring IHL approval must adhere to the IHL calendar. Contact the Office of the Provost for more information. The Office of Institutional Effectiveness is also available to assist with IHL form questions.
DEFINITIONS

Course Inactivation: Course is removed from bulletin and SOAR but may be reinstated in the future.

Course Deletion: Course is removed from bulletin and SOAR and is never reinstated. The course number is never used again.

Program Suspension of Admission: Suspension of Admission is a temporary circumstance. Suspension of Admission includes temporary removing the offering at a teaching location or removing a mode of delivery. The Suspension of Admission to an emphasis area, certificate, or minor is an information-only item for the Councils.

Program Deletion or Inactivation: Deletion or Inactivation includes permanently removing an offering, removing the offering at a teaching location, or removing a mode of delivery. A program is first inactivated and then deleted when all enrolled students have completed the program. Program Inactivation requires a teach-out plan. Permanently removing a degree program requires IHL approval. SACSCOC notification or approval may be necessary (see USM Substantive Change policy http://www.usm.edu/provoit/usm-substantive-change-policy).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHO APPROVES WHAT CHART</th>
<th>DC/CC</th>
<th>REG</th>
<th>AC/GC*</th>
<th>PROV#</th>
<th>PRES</th>
<th>IHL</th>
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<td>New or Modified Academic Policies</td>
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<td>X***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DC/CC=department and college councils; REG=Registrar; AC/GC=Academic and/or Graduate Council; PROV=Provost; PRES=President; IHL=Institutions of Higher Learning

* The Professional Education Council must also approve proposals involving the university’s professional education unit.

** IHL notification required. All IHL proposals require submission of an IHL form.
IHL approval required. All IHL proposals require submission of an IHL form.

Modification of course descriptions that are limited to adding or deleting pre-requisite or co-requisite from within a college require approval at the college level only. They need not be approved by the Councils. College approval should be forwarded to the Councils in order to assure consistency and accuracy in the Bulletins and in SOAR.

Modification of course descriptions that include class standing, degree GPA, ACT score and other university level criteria will be reviewed by the Councils. Submitting departments should include proposed changes in the Course Description section of the “Modify a Course” form. Modifications approved by the Councils will be forwarded to the Registrar for implementation. Colleges approving intra-college modifications should forward their paperwork to the Councils. The Chair of the Councils will announce these modifications in their Chair report. Council will forward paperwork to the Registrar. Modifications to course descriptions are implemented in each fall semester when they are published in the University Bulletin. Mid-year changes cannot be accommodated.

The Provost receives a report on all actions taken by the Academic and Graduate Councils. (See Faculty Handbook – See Section 2.11.5 and Section 2.11.6)

General Suggestions for Preparing Proposals

1. Proposals affecting the undergraduate curriculum are sent to the Academic Council. Graduate course proposals are sent to the Graduate Council.

2. Identify appropriate Checklist for Proposal (See Table of Contents) Checklists available on Info Center

3. Departments should take care to check all proposals carefully for completeness and accuracy because even a minor error can delay council action on a proposal. For assistance in preparing proposals to Academic Council, contact the AC chair, and for proposals to Graduate Council, contact the Graduate School at 601-266-4269 GC chair.

4. Be sure to indicate (i.e., check either “yes” or “no”) whether an undergraduate proposal is part of the General Education Curriculum (GEC); the GEC includes writing intensive, speaking intensive, computer competency, and capstone courses. More information of GEC-related proposals is available below.

5. The Academic Council and/or Graduate Council must approve new degree, program, emphasis area, certificates, minors, and prefix proposals. Supporting documentation must include a rationale, a degree plan/plan of study, an assessment plan, and a statement from the University Librarian related to library/personnel requirements, and, if applicable, a statement from the Office of Online Learning related to resource requirements. IHL Board approval is required for new degrees, and new degree programs, and termination of degree programs.

6. Proposals requiring approval by the IHL Board and/or SACSCOC will need more time to clear the system. (See IHL calendar and USM Substantive Change policy http://www.usm.edu/provost/usm-substantive-change-policy). Once the proposal is approved by IHL, the department should work with the Office of the Provost to ensure all appropriate entities are notified of the implementation date.
   a. Addition or Deletion of a Certificate (notification only)
   b. Offering an Existing Degree Program by Distance Learning (notification only)
   c. Changing the CIP Code of an Existing Degree Plan/Plan of Study (notification only)
   d. Addition of a New Degree Program
e. Modification to Existing Degree Program
f. Modifications to Existing Academic Units
g. Addition of New Academic Unit

7. Transmittal of Proposals to the Councils

Department → College → Dean → [PEC] → Academic/Graduate Council → Provost → President → IHL

(See Who Approves What Chart)

The Professional Education Council (PEC) must approve all proposals related to teacher education courses and programs before Academic Council or Graduate Council review. Please note the PEC has a two-read system.

Proposals to initiate or modify Academic Policies may originate from an area outside an academic college. These proposals are to be submitted directly to Academic or Graduate Council.

8. All proposals are to be submitted in hard copy and in electronic format to the appropriate Council Chair by the deadline. (See Info Center pages for proper procedure.) College deans must attach and sign one single memorandum summarizing and approving their college council’s action and are required to submit the signed proposal checklist for each proposal submitted verifying it meets the standards outlined in the Guidelines for Proposals. A template for the cover memorandum is available. A dean’s signature attests that the proposals have gone through the appropriate departmental and college approval processes and are completed correctly. When submitting electronic materials, please submit each proposal as a separate file saved using a title which corresponds to that proposal as it appears on the memorandum (e.g., Add PSY 123: Proposal Development). Whenever possible, electronic proposal documents should be organized by file folders (e.g., one folder for each proposal which includes the memo, course/program proposal forms, additional attachments, syllabi. The Academic and Graduate Councils strongly recommend that a spokesperson of the department be present at the council meeting when a department’s proposals are being considered.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE COURSE PROPOSAL FORMS

The new Course Proposal Forms have features extended to Adobe Reader. These features allow Adobe Professional or Adobe Reader to be used to edit and save these forms. To use with either program, simply open the file, save the file to your computer, open the document again, complete all sections and click ‘save.’ All changes to the document will remain when it is re-opened. If this feature does not work on your computer, you will need to “print as PDF” before saving. (Click here to download latest version of Adobe Reader.)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH COURSE FORM FIELD

To: Choose either the Academic Council or the Graduate Council.

- For 400/500 level courses, use two separate forms, one for the undergraduate number (Academic Council) and another for the graduate (Graduate Council).

Through: Choose the name of the college curricular council or committee that approved the proposal.

From: Choose the appropriate unit type and specify the department from which the proposal originated.
**Effective Date:** The semester the proposal is to take effect.
- The summer semester is considered to be at the end of the academic year (e.g., “Summer 2010-2011” meets June through August 2011).
- Departments cannot modify, inactivate, or delete a course for an upcoming semester for which registration has already begun.

**Semester Credit Hours:** Semester credit hours are based on contact hours.
- One credit hour = 12.5 hours (750 minutes) in the classroom
- Three credit hour = 37.5 hours (2,250 minutes) of face-to-face contact with the student, which may include exam time.
- Laboratory contact minutes are at least twice those of lecture courses per credit hour.
- Activity Course contact minutes are at least twice those of lecture courses per credit hour.
- A one-semester hour of lab is at least 25 hours in most departments.
- In the rationale section, address how the credit hour weighting for the course meets the [U.S. Department of Education definition of a Credit Hour](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oip/cpht.html). See USM [Credit Hour Policy](https://www.usm.edu/registrar/policies-and-procedures/content/credit-hour-policy/).
  - Include both in-class time and out-of-class activities/study time. Online courses and courses taught in non-traditional formats will need to provide sufficient explanation for how the course will meet the Credit Hour definitions provided.

**Course Prefix:** Council(s) must first approve any new prefix. A rationale must be included in the comments section of the form to explain the need for the new prefix.

**Grading Method:** Select the appropriate grading method.
- 1= grades A through F (the usual method)
- 2= pass/fail
- 3= grades A through F or pass/fail

Graduate courses use the +/- grading system. Please note the usual restrictions on pass/fail courses, especially for graduate credit. (See the [Undergraduate Bulletin](https://www.usm.edu/registrar/) or [Graduate Bulletin](https://www.usm.edu/graduate-studies/)).

**CIP Code:** This code refers to the proper section and item of the [Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) manual](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/) published by the National Center for Educational Statistics.

**Bulletin Description:** The description of the course must take up no more than 264 spaces and include all prerequisites or co-requisites.
- Pre-/co-requisites should be listed first
- Every course proposal should include the current Bulletin description, whether it is being modified or not.

**Abbreviated Title:**
- The course title must be limited strictly to 19 spaces.
- Do not use periods in the abbreviations.
- Since the abbreviated title is the only one given in the Class Schedule Guide and on transcripts, it must be understandable to students and the public. The Councils reserve the right to request understandable course abbreviations.
- If course title is to be modified, be sure to change the abbreviated title also.

**General Education Curriculum:** All forms contain a line asking if the proposal affects the GEC (pertinent to undergraduate courses only). See [GEC section of the guidelines](https://www.usm.edu/academic-affairs/academic-affairs-portal/) for more information.
Consent required? Indicate whether students need to obtain departmental or instructor permission to register for this course.

May Students Enroll in More Than One Section within a Single Semester? Some courses, like those numbered 492 or 692, may have different sections represent distinct courses. If students can potentially enroll in more than one section of the course in a given semester, indicate “Yes.”

Recommended Section Size: Please indicate preferred section size.

Can This Course be repeated: A repeatable course can be taken more than once for credit.
- A variable topic course is one example where a course can be taken repeatedly as topics vary.
- Enter a number to limit the number of times the course can be repeated or enter a “U” if the course can be taken unlimited times.

IHL Method/Mode of Instruction Code: Designate one or more codes that describe the method of instruction for the course from the Instruction Mode Code Definitions. Important: Selecting the most appropriate code affects how the course is presented to students in SOAR and the representation of course student credit hour weighting for reporting purposes.
- Example: A new lecture course that will be offered both on campus and as an online course needs to be coded both CF and CO.

Rationale: In this section, please include your justification to add, modify, inactivate, or delete a course based upon assessment results.
- The justification must include more than a statement such as, “We studied the data and made this decision.”
- Please include numbers, statistics, and/or detail when describing the assessment results justifying course inactivation, addition or modification.
- Include a teach-out plan if inactivating courses required in active degree plans. Assessment results can include but are not limited to information generated from the following sources:
  - Program-level Assessment Reports
  - GEC Assessment Reports
  - Interviews with students, staff, and faculty about meeting a particular need
  - Curriculum committee decisions based upon overall program assessment
  - Documented poor course/program performance
  - Alumni or employer surveys stating that another course or course modification would be beneficial for the program
  - Documented inquiries (e.g. email, phone, office visit) into whether a particular course or program exists in another department
- A discussion of how the proposed changes meet the need indicated by assessment results would help council members determine the rationale for the proposed change.
- Include other information as needed, such as the rationale for a student credit hour weighting.

NEW COURSE PROPOSALS

Proposals to add a course require additional documentation; a draft syllabus is required. If this course is to be required in any degree plan, plan of study, certificate, or minor, an accompanying Degree Plan/Plan of Study modification proposal is expected. The second page of the Add a Course form includes text fields for the following:

1. A brief statement of the course objectives.
2. The nature of the intended student audience (e.g., major-only course, elective course, required course). Please provide justification for course level and include any prerequisites and/or level of preparation required for the course.

3. Titles and publication dates of suggested texts or required reading materials.

4. A list of the major topics and assignments.

5. Methods of testing or evaluation, including the manner of grade determination (e.g., weights attached to specific graded components).

6. If the instructional format differs from the traditional meeting schedule, please include in the rationale a statement on how this course will meet the required contact minutes. (Non-traditional format includes but is not limited to Mini Sessions, Executive Format, and Study Abroad). Provide a rationale for number of credit hours indicated on the course form based on U.S. Department of Education definition of a Credit Hour. Include both in-class time and out-of-class activities/study time. Online courses and courses taught in non-traditional formats will need to provide sufficient explanation for how the course will meet the Credit Hour definitions provided.

7. Graduate courses are to provide additional information related to research and literature. New course forms include the following question: If a graduate course, does this course provide an overview of the literature (yes/no; if no, then explain how the program meets SACSOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.2) AND does this course include a research component (yes/no; if no, then explain how the program meets SACSOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.2). Please see SACSOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.2 for reference.

8. The responses to the items above must include narrative information on the course (such information can be copied from the accompanying syllabus.)

Note: For Graduate Council consideration, a 500-level course for which a co-listed 400-level course is available, the proposal must also include a copy of the 400-level syllabus.

Note: Curriculum should reflect differences in rigor across degree programs within the same major.

If the instructional format is to be an online format, please complete the Online Course Approval Information form. This form directs departments to include in the proposal a required correspondence from the Office of Online Learning stating the office is able to provide any resources that the proposal indicates are necessary and beyond the scope of the unit.

Proposals for new courses that require special facilities or additional faculty (or that have other special requirements, such as restricted enrollment, off-campus components, or special laboratory needs) must address each of these issues in enough detail to allow council members to make an informed decision.

Any course overlap must be justified, and evidence of cooperation between the departments, schools, or colleges in which the overlap occurs must be provided.

Academic Council New Course Intercollegiate Requirement

The Academic Council Intercollegiate Committee ensures that new courses being proposed do not duplicate existing courses, and that adequate communication occurs between colleges if any proposed changes in courses are made in one college that will affect another college (i.e., increasing enrollment and decreasing enrollment). To
that end, the following are required for proposed course additions presented to AC if any duplicate or similar courses already exist:

- For any course change that affects another college, the chairs/directors and deans of the affected program must be notified of the proposal before the proposal is discussed in AC. A substantive, definitive response from the chairs/directors and/or deans of the programs to the AC chair and the chair of the Academic Council Intercollegiate Committee is required, stating whether the proposed change will have a significant negative effect. Chairs/directors and deans from the affected programs are encouraged to attend the AC meetings on the date the proposed course is being discussed if they have concerns about course duplication. Their presence will allow time and opportunity for discussion and planning before proposed courses are approved by the AC.

- The proposer of courses similar to an existing course shall provide:
  1. Clear and substantive reasons why the proposed course is needed
  2. A rationale differentiating the proposed course from existing similar courses
  3. Response from the chairs/directors and deans (typically an email exchange)

### COURSE INACTIVATION OR DELETION PROPOSALS

Proposals to delete or inactivate a course require the submission of a Course Deletion or Inactivation form. Note if this course is required in any degree plan, plan of study, certificate, or minor, an accompanying Degree Plan/Plan of Study modification proposal is expected. Adequate communication must occur between colleges if any proposed changes in courses are made in one college that will affect another college.

### COURSE MODIFICATION PROPOSALS

Proposals to modify a course require the submission of a Course Modification form. If the modification affects any degree plan, plan of study, certificate, or minor, an accompanying Degree Plan/Plan of Study modification proposal is expected. Adequate communication must occur between colleges if any proposed changes in courses are made in one college that will affect another college.

1. **COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**
   Changes in course descriptions for existing courses in the Bulletin must be brought before the Academic Council and/or Graduate Council.

   Modification of course descriptions that include class standing, degree GPA, ACT score and other university level criteria will be reviewed by the Councils. Submitting departments should include proposed changes in the appropriate section of the Modify a Course form.

   Modification of course descriptions that are limited to adding or deleting pre-requisite or co-requisite from within a college require approval at the college level only. They need not be approved by the Councils. Completed forms and College approval should be forwarded to the Councils in order to assure consistency and accuracy in the Bulletins and in SOAR. The council chair will report these edits in the Chair Report in order to assure consistency and accuracy in the Minutes, Bulletins and in SOAR.
The Registrar implements Course Modifications after approved by the Council approval. These will be forwarded to the Registrar for implementation. Colleges approving intra-college modifications should forward their paperwork to the Councils. The Chair of the Councils will announce these modifications in their Chair report. The Council will forward paperwork to the Registrar. Modifications to course descriptions are implemented in each fall semester when they are published in the University Bulletin. Mid-year changes cannot be accommodated.

2. COURSE NUMBER CHANGES
Before submitting a course number change proposal, programs should first contact the Registrar’s Office to receive a list of available course numbers. Inactive courses are not listed in the bulletin, but the numbers are not available for new courses.

3. COURSE PREFIX CHANGES
When changing a course prefix, a memorandum must be attached to explain the need for the new prefix. The appropriate council must first approve new prefixes. If prefix changes are occurring on a large scale (i.e., departmental name change), attach a list of all courses.

4. METHOD/MODE OF INSTRUCTION MODIFICATION
Use the Modify a Course form to modify or add a Method/Mode of Instruction Code (MIC) for a course. Note: Online delivery of existing courses must be approved by the Councils. To request the option that an established course have online sections, a department must indicate the appropriate MIC code and use the Online Course Information Approval form. This form directs departments to include in the proposal a required correspondence from the Office of Online Learning stating the office is able to provide any resources that the proposal indicates are necessary and beyond the scope of the unit. Departments must also indicate acknowledgement that all faculty teaching online must complete training and adhere to the Online at Southern Miss policy. The accompanying Checklist to this proposal also requires programs to provide the number of program credit hours that can be completed by Distance Education/Online delivery.

5. CREDIT HOUR CHANGES
When changing the credit hour weight for a course, provide a rationale for the change based on U.S. Department of Education definition of a Credit Hour. Include both in-class time and out-of-class activities/study time. Online courses and courses taught in non-traditional formats will need to provide sufficient explanation for how the course will meet the Credit Hour definitions provided.

6. ADDITIONAL COURSE MODIFICATIONS
Additional Course Modifications include changes to CIP Code, Course Title, and Grading Method.
All requests for changes in the General Education Curriculum (GEC), including computer competency, writing intensive, speaking intensive, and capstone, should be addressed to the membership of the Academic Council after the college curriculum committee, the dean, and if necessary, the PEC, approve the proposals. The council chair will refer these items to the General Education Committee for review before their presentation to the full Council.

Departments should review both the rationale and the structure of the GEC [GEC narrative and GEC Handbook] before submitting a GEC course proposal.

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**GEC 01-065 GUIDELINES**

The General Education Curriculum (GEC) of The University of Southern Mississippi is the result of a major revision that came after an intensive three-year study by the faculty. The General Education Curriculum was adopted in spring 2002 and went into effect fall 2003. The curriculum is designed to equip graduates with a broad range of knowledge and skills. Thus, while the degree program provides students depth in a given discipline, the general education curriculum should provide students with breadth among many disciplines. Another important component of the courses that comprise GEC 01-065 is that of a common experience. All students take ENG 101 and 102 (the first-year composition sequence), ENG 203 (World Literature), and HIS 101 or 102 (World Civilization) and choose from a focused list of options in science and mathematics, humanities, aesthetics, and social and behavioral sciences. In addition, courses in GEC 01-065 do not narrowly focus on skills, techniques, or procedures specific to a particular occupation or profession. In submitting a proposal for a course within GEC 01-065, proposers should be mindful of this philosophy.

In addition to philosophical considerations, assessment data supporting the need for the course (e.g., student learning outcome data, survey data, findings from the Periodic Assessment Review of the GEC Category) should be included in the proposal. The proposer should contact the Chair of the General Education Curriculum Assessment Committee to review the most recent Periodic Assessment Review of the category.

The GEC committee accepts submission for new courses into GEC 01-05 on a rotating schedule. New course proposals are accepted in the fall semester following completion of the periodic assessment review of the category.

### GEC SCHEDULE OF ACCEPTANCE OF PROPOSALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEC Category</th>
<th>Fall 2012</th>
<th>Fall 2013</th>
<th>Fall 2014</th>
<th>Fall 2015</th>
<th>Fall 2016</th>
<th>Fall 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEC 01 – Written Communication</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>GEC 02 – Natural Science and Mathematics</td>
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<td>GEC 03 – Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEC 04 – Aesthetic Values</td>
<td></td>
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<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>GEC 05 – Social and Behavioral Sciences</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>GEC 06 – Mathematics</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All proposals to add a course to GEC 01-065 should include a memo which states:

a. The proposed GEC 01-065 Category
b. A brief rationale for including this course in the GEC category

c. Assessment data supporting the need for the course (e.g., student learning outcome data, survey data, findings from the Periodic Assessment Review of the GEC Category)

d. The GEC student learning outcomes addressed in the course and a plan for assessing those outcomes

e. A sample syllabus to include:
   
   i. The content and objectives of the course

   ii. A few examples of course requirements, teaching approaches (methods), and learning activities that relate to the appropriate general education student learning outcomes

   iii. The extent and nature of the reading, speaking, and/or writing requirements for this course. (Note specific GEC requirements for each category in GEC Narrative.)

   iv. The type of tests and other devices (e.g., homework, themes, papers, notebooks, recitation) that will be used to evaluate students in this course. Include weights attached to specific graded components for the purpose of student edification

f. The equivalent Mississippi Junior College/Community College course for articulation agreements

New Courses

A department wishing to submit a new course for the GEC must complete the New Course Proposal Form and submit a memorandum and supporting documentation that addresses a-f above.

Existing Courses

A department wishing to add a course already in existence to the GEC should submit a memorandum and supporting documentation that addresses a-f above.

GEC 076-09 GUIDELINES

The University of Southern Mississippi employs a vertical, integrated general education model, in that the general education curriculum extends into upper-division courses and into a student’s degree program. Specifically, students complete courses designated by their degree programs in the areas of computer competency (GEC 06), writing-intensive (GEC 07), speaking-intensive (GEC 08), and capstone (GEC 09). Proposers should include findings from the last periodic assessment review and/or the last annual review of the category in their proposal.

The GEC committee annually accepts new course submission into GEC 076-09. (See Proposal Deadlines.)

All proposals to add a course to GEC 076-09 should include a memo which states:

a. The proposed GEC 076-09 category

b. A brief rationale for including this course in the GEC category

c. Assessment data supporting the need for the course (e.g., student learning outcome data, survey data, findings from the Annual or Periodic Assessment Review of the GEC Category)
d. The GEC student learning outcomes addressed in the course and a plan for assessing those outcomes

e. A sample syllabus to include:

   i. The content and objectives of the course
   
   ii. A few examples of course requirements, teaching approaches (methods), and learning activities that relate to the appropriate general education student learning outcomes
   
   iii. The extent and nature of the reading, speaking, and/or writing requirements for this course. (Note specific GEC requirements for each category in GEC Narrative.)
   
   iv. The type of tests and other devices (e.g., homework, themes, papers, notebooks, recitation) that will be used to evaluate students in this course. Include weights attached to specific graded components for the purpose of student edification
   
   f. The equivalent Mississippi Junior College/Community College course for articulation agreements
   
   g. If this course is to replace an existing GEC 076-09 course, the teach-out plan for students following previous and current bulletins

New Courses

A department wishing to submit a new course for GEC 076-09 should complete the Add a Course form and submit a memorandum and supporting documentation that addresses a-g above.

Existing Courses

A department wishing to add to GEC 076-09 a course already in existence should submit a memorandum and supporting documentation that addresses a-g above.

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The addition, deletion, suspension, and modification of degree programs, emphasis areas, certificates, and minors should be handled through a memorandum and supporting documentation to the members of the proper council(s), explaining in as much detail as necessary the reasons for, and nature of the action. Any addition, deletion, suspension, or modification of a Teacher Education Program must be approved by the Professional Educational Council (PEC) prior to submission to Academic Council or Graduate Council. SACSCOC notification may be required (see USM Substantive Change policy http://www.usm.edu/provost/usm-substantive-change-policy).

New Degree Programs

The approval process for developing new programs requires three steps:

1. Contact the Office of the Provost for the "IHL Intent to Offer a New Degree Program Form."
2. After receiving Provost and IHL approval to offer a new degree program, then supporting documentation listed below should be submitted to Academic or Graduate Council, and Professional Education Council, if required.
3. After receiving Council approvals, the proposal is sent to the Provost and President to be submitted to IHL for final approval.

Supporting documentation for new degree programs must include:

1. A copy of the IHL New Degree Program Proposal form. (Note the emphasis name should not be included as part of the program name on any IHL form.)
2. The official name of the program. Please note the naming convention: Program (Emphasis) Degree
3. The effective date (e.g., "Fall Semester 20xx-20xx"). (See Proposal Deadlines)
4. The program assessment plan, including proposed student learning outcomes and assessment measures (contact ie@usm.edu). The assessment plan should demonstrate differences in rigor across degree programs within the same major.
5. A data-informed rationale for the new degree program to include an evaluation of the program demand
6. Graduate programs should describe (1) how the literature of the discipline will be incorporated into the curriculum requirements and (2) how the students will be engaged in ongoing research or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.
7. The Degree Plan/Plan of Study (Please use the Degree Plan Template for undergraduate courses and the Plan of Study Template for graduate courses.)
8. For undergraduate degrees, the Semester Guide.
9. A copy of the IR Programs, Emphasis Areas, Minors, or Certificates Processing Form
10. A statement from the University Librarian regarding the impact such a program would have on library acquisitions.
11. A statement related to personnel and resource requirements, including faculty lines and graduate assistantships
12. The teaching site(s) where the face-to-face and/or hybrid program will be offered. The addition of any new teaching site beyond those listed here must receive prior approval of the Office of the Provost before any courses are offered: Hattiesburg, Gulf Park, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Keesler Air Force Base, Stennis Space Center, Magnolia Speech School. SACSCOC notification may be required (see USM Substantive Change policy http://www.usm.edu/provost/usm-substantive-change-policy).
13. If the new degree program includes online delivery of 50% or more of the courses, include the following items. Fifty percent of a program is defined as the availability of 50% or more of the program.
specific/major requirements in an online format, including those required courses that are only offered online by other departments. (See Eagle Learning Online at Southern Miss Policy and Procedures)  

- Submit the Online Program Proposal form. Fifty percent of a program is defined as the availability of 50% or more of the program-specific/major requirements in an online format, including those required courses that are only offered online by other departments. (See Eagle Learning Online Policies and Procedures)  
- The IHL form Declaration of Intent to Offer an Existing Degree Program by Distance Learning  
- A correspondence from the Office of Online Learning regarding the office’s ability to provide any resources that the proposal indicates are necessary and beyond the scope of the unit.  
- Acknowledgement that all faculty teaching online must complete training and adhere to the Online at Southern Miss policy.  
- Acknowledgement that all online instruction is to be delivered exclusively using the Blackboard learning management system.  
- Campus Code(s). The department will indicate all possible campus codes for the program. Please see Online at Southern Miss Policy for definitions. Departments are expected to adhere to the campus codes as listed in the IR Active Program Inventory.  
  i. Online 100%  
  ii. Hybrid Gulf Park (or Stennis or GCRL or Magnolia)  
  iii. Hybrid Hattiesburg  
  iv. Face-to-Face Gulf Park (or Stennis or GCRL or Magnolia)  
  v. Face-to-Face Hattiesburg

12. If the new degree program includes online delivery of 50% or more of the courses, the IHL form Declaration of Intent to Offer an Existing Degree Program by Distance Learning must also accompany the proposal.

New Emphasis Areas, Certificates, or Minors

New emphasis areas, certificates, or minors do not require IHL approval, but do require approval of the Councils. Supporting documentation includes:

1. The official name of the program with no abbreviations. Please note the naming convention: Program (Emphasis) Degree
2. The effective date (e.g., “Fall Semester 2014-2015”). (See Proposal Deadlines)
3. The emphasis area or certificate assessment plan including proposed student learning outcomes and assessment measures. The assessment plan should demonstrate differences in rigor across degree programs within the same major. If the proposed minor is a stand-alone minor, meaning there is no “parent” degree program, an assessment plan is required. (Contact je@usm.edu)
4. A data-informed rationale for the new program to include an evaluation of the program demand
5. Graduate programs should describe (1) how the literature of the discipline will be incorporated into the curriculum requirements and (2) how the students will be engaged in ongoing research or appropriate professional practice and training experiences.
6. The Degree Plan/Plan of Study (See links to Degree Plan Template for undergraduate plans; the Plan of Study Template for Graduate plans; the Certificate Template; and the Minor Template)
7. For undergraduate emphasis areas, the Semester Guide. (See Guidelines for Semester Guides)

- A statement from the University Librarian regarding the impact such a program would have on library acquisitions.
- The teaching site(s) where the program will be offered. The addition of any new teaching site beyond those listed here must receive prior approval of the Office of the Provost: Hattiesburg, Gulf Park, Gulf
Coast Research Laboratory, Gulf Coast Student Service Center, Keesler Air Force Base, Stennis Space Center, Magnolia Speech School. SACSCOC notification may be required (see USM Substantive Change policy http://www.usm.edu/provost/usm-substantive-change-policy).

10. A statement related to personnel and resource requirements, including faculty lines and graduate assistantships

14. If the new emphasis area, certificate, or minor includes online delivery of 50% or more of the courses, include the following items. (Fifty percent of a program is defined as the availability of 50% or more of the program-specific major requirements in an online format, including those required courses that are only offered online by other departments. See Online at Southern Miss policy)

   a. The Online Program Proposal form
   b. The IHL form Declaration of Intent to Offer an Existing Degree Program by Distance Learning
   c. A correspondence from the Office of Online Learning regarding the office’s ability to provide any resources that the proposal indicates are necessary and beyond the scope of the unit.
   d. Acknowledgement that all faculty teaching online must complete training and adhere to the Online at Southern Miss policy.
   e. Acknowledgement that all online instruction is to be delivered exclusively using the Blackboard learning management system.
   f. Campus Code(s). The department will indicate all possible campus codes for the program. Please see Online Policy for definitions. Departments are expected to adhere to the campus codes as listed in the IR Active Program Inventory.
      i. Online 100%
      ii. Hybrid Gulf Park (or Stennis or GCRL or Magnolia)
      iii. Hybrid Hattiesburg
      iv. Face-to-Face Gulf Park (or Stennis or GCRL or Magnolia)
      v. Face-to-Face Hattiesburg

9.11. Suspending Admission, Inactivating or Deleting Degree Programs, Emphasis Areas, Certificates, or Minors

Suspension of admission to a program includes temporarily removing the offering at a teaching location or removing a mode of delivery. Suspension of Admission does not require Council approval, but should be submitted for inclusion on the council minutes following approval at the college level.

Deletion or Inactivation includes permanently removing an offering; removing the offering at a teaching location; or removing a mode of delivery. Permanently removing an offering requires IHL approval. SACSCOC notification may be necessary (see USM Substantive Change policy http://www.usm.edu/provost/usm-substantive-change-policy).

Supporting documentation should include:

1. The official program name. (See IR Active Program Inventory)
2. The teaching site(s) where the program is currently offered.
3. For suspending admission, the date admission to the emphasis area will be suspended and an estimate of the date admission will resume.
4. For inactivating or deleting a degree program, a copy of the materials to be submitted to IHL. (Link to IHL Delete/Suspend Program form. The departments should also contact the Office of the Provost.)
5. A rationale including use of assessment results.
6. A teach-out plan to include the time-frame, the process for notifying students and faculty, for providing courses to allow current students to complete their degrees, and advising students as to their options.
7. Programs, Emphasis Areas, Minors or Certificates Processing Form [Contact ir@usm.edu]
Modification of Degree Programs, Emphasis Areas, Certificates, or Minors

RELOCATION/EXPANSION OF AN EXISTING PROGRAM

Examples of relocating or expanding an existing program include expanding a program to include both campuses; moving a Gulf Coast-only program to the Hattiesburg campus or moving a Hattiesburg-only program to the Gulf Park campus; and expanding a Gulf Park-only program to another teaching site.

Important Note: The addition of any new teaching site beyond those listed here must receive prior approval of the Office of the Provost before any courses are offered:

- Hattiesburg, Gulf Park, Gulf Coast Research Laboratory, Gulf Coast Student Service Center, Keesler Air Force Base, Stennis Space Center, Magnolia Speech School. SACSCOC notification may be required (see USM Substantive Change policy http://www.usm.edu/provost/usm-substantive-change-policy).

Supporting documentation for relocating/expanding an existing program includes:

1. the Programs, Emphasis Areas, Minors or Certificates Processing Form (Contact https://www.usm.edu/institutional-research ir@usm.edu)
2. A data-informed rationale for the new program to include an evaluation of the program demand and current assessment results
3. A statement related to personnel and resource requirements, including faculty lines and graduate assistantships
4. A discussion on proposed timing, frequency, and mode of curriculum offerings at the new site

OFFERING AN EXISTING PROGRAM BY DISTANCE LEARNING

If the modification of an existing program includes moving at least 50% of the program online, include the following items. (Fifty percent of a program is defined as the availability of 50% or more of the program-specific/major requirements in an online format, including those required courses that are only offered online by other departments. (See Online at Southern Miss Policy)

- The Online Program Proposal form
- The IHL form Declaration of Intent to Offer an Existing Degree Program by Distance Learning
- A correspondence from the Office of Online Learning regarding the office’s ability to provide any resources that the proposal indicates are necessary and beyond the scope of the unit.
- Acknowledgement that all faculty teaching online must complete training and adhere to the Online at Southern Miss policy.
- Acknowledgement that all online instruction is to be delivered exclusively using the Blackboard learning management system.
-Campus Code(s). The department will indicate all possible campus codes for the program. Please see Online Policy for definitions. Departments are expected to adhere to the codes as listed in the IR Active Program Inventory.
  i. Online 100%
  ii. Hybrid Gulf Park (or Stennis or GCRL or Magnolia)
  iii. Hybrid Hattiesburg
  iv. Face-to-Face Gulf Park (or Stennis or GCRL or Magnolia)
  v. Face-to-Face Hattiesburg

If the Online Program Proposal form is submitted, fifty percent of a program is defined as the availability of 50% or more of the program-specific/major requirements in an online format, including those required courses that are only offered online by other departments. (See Eagle Learning Online Policies and Procedures)
In addition to the forms required for the Academic and/or Graduate Councils, the IHL form Declaration of Intent to Offer a Degree Program by Distance Learning must also be prepared and accompany the proposal.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND PROGRESSION POLICY MODIFICATIONS

Modification of program requirements (including admission requirements) and progression policy require Council approval. These types of policies are typically found in the department’s narrative section of the bulletin.

RENAMEING OR CONSOLIDATING

Proposals to rename or consolidate degree programs require Council and IHL approval. Proposals to rename or consolidate emphasis areas, certificates, or minors require Council approval.

DEGREE PLAN/PLAN OF STUDY MODIFICATIONS

The Academic Council and/or Graduate Council must approve modifications to any Degree Plans/Plans of Study and Semester Guides (for undergraduate programs).

1. Supporting documentation must include:
   a. A memo which states a rationale for the changes
   b. The revised Degree Plan/Plan of Study (current Degree Plan/Plan of Study presented with red font markup edits clearly illustrating the proposed changes); include a confirmation of the total number of hours and indicate any changes in total degree hour requirements.

   —Undergraduate Degree Plans are found in the current online Undergraduate Bulletin on the Registrar’s website. Click the “Print Friendly Page” icon at the top of the degree plan.

   —Graduate Plans of Study are found on the Graduate School website.

   —Corresponding edits to the Undergraduate Semester Guide found in the Undergraduate Bulletin (see Guidelines for Semester Guides) and the program’s Articulation Plan found on the IE Info Center.

   —Effective date (Undergraduate Degree Plan changes occur once a year to coincide with bulletin publication; normally, Graduate Plan of Study changes occur once a year to coincide with bulletin publication.) For changes to be reflected in the next year’s Undergraduate Bulletin, a proposal must be approved prior to or during the February meeting. For changes to be reflected in the next year’s Graduate Bulletin, a proposal must be approved prior to or during the April meeting.

2. Adequate communication must occur between colleges if any proposed changes in courses are made in one college that will affect another college (i.e., increasing/decreasing enrollment). For any Degree Plan/Plan of Study change that affects another department or college:
   a. The chairs/directors and deans of the affected program must be notified of the proposal (submit email or other correspondence)
   b. A substantive, definitive response from the chairs/directors and/or deans of the program is required as supporting documentation, stating whether the proposed change will have a significant negative effect (submit email or other correspondence).

Chairs/directors and deans from the affected programs are encouraged to attend the AC meetings on the date the proposal is being discussed.
PROPOSALS FOR OFFERING A PROGRAM OR COURSES AT ANY LOCATION BEYOND THOSE LISTED HERE: HATTIESBURG, GULF PARK, GULF COAST RESEARCH LABORATORY, MAGNOLIA SPEECH SCHOOL, STENNIS SPACE CENTER.

SACSCOC defines a substantive change as “a significant modification or expansion of the nature and scope of an accredited institution.” The most common Substantive Changes at USM include:

- Initiating an off-campus (additional) site (site-based/classroom group instruction)
- Moving an approved off-campus instructional site within the same geographic area to serve essentially the same pool of students.

Link to USM Substantive Change Policy

(Checklist to be developed)

Commented [K19]: include link to new checklist

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ESTABLISHING OR TERMINATING A COLLABORATIVE, DUAL, JOINT, OR ARTICULATION AGREEMENT/PARTNERSHIP WITH AN OUTSIDE INSTITUTION

The national priority to sharply increase the percentage of Americans holding undergraduate degrees has resulted in a number of creative educational pathways to facilitate accomplishment of that goal. Examples of educational pathways include two-plus-two arrangements, dual admissions, consortia arrangements, degree completion arrangements, state-wide articulation arrangements, credit for work experience arrangements, diploma and certificate credits being converted into degree credits, and the like. Additionally, various “applied” undergraduate degrees are proliferating to meet the needs of career-minded students wishing to enter the work force directly after graduation. These educational pathways must be reviewed and approved by council to ensure quality and integrity and compliance with SACSCOC policy.

Proposals to initiate or terminate a collaborative, dual, joint, or articulation agreement/partnership with an outside institution should be presented to council in the form of a memo and should include the agreement and the Office of the Provost Contract/Consortia Agreement Review Form to include the Renewal Date and signatures of the Director, Dean, and General Counsel. To ensure periodic evaluation of the agreement against the mission of the institution, the Provost will determine if additional council review is necessary at the time of renewal.

Link to SACSCOC Policies:

**THE QUALITY AND INTEGRITY OF UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES**

**AGreements involving joint and dual academic awards**

(Checklist to be developed)

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ESTABLISHING OR MODIFYING ACADEMIC POLICIES

The institution publishes academic policies that adhere to principles of good educational practice. These policies are disseminated to students, faculty, and other interested parties through the Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins. Any additions to or revisions of academic policies must be approved by the Academic or Graduate Councils and the Provost prior to being published in the bulletin.

Proposals for academic policies can be initiated at the following levels: departments, colleges, various standing committees, special ad-hoc committees, student government, university Organizational Chart administrative units, Office of the Provost, Graduate School, Executive Cabinet, Academic Council, or Graduate Council.

Proposals initiated at the department or college level must be approved by college council and Professional Educational Council (if applicable) prior to submission to Academic or Graduate Council. Proposals initiated at other levels may submit proposals directly to Academic or Graduate Council. The council chairs will determine if additional approvals are necessary prior to council acceptance of the proposal. The Academic Standards Committee of the Academic Council reviews and recommends approval of new or revised policies and procedures affecting undergraduate education. The Policies and Procedures Committee of the Graduate Council reviews and recommends approval of new or revised policies and procedures for graduate study.

Academic Policy Proposals should be submitted in the form of a memo with all approval levels clearly identified and signed. Proposals should include a rationale, the proposed implementation date, and documentation to support the policy adheres to good educational practice. Policy revisions should include the current bulletin wording with the proposed edits clearly marked.
PROPOSALS FOR ACADEMIC UNITS

Modifications to units include renaming, reorganizing, deleting, and adding new degree-granting units. Council and IHL approval is required for renaming, reorganizing, and deleting degree-granting units. Proposals to add a new unit are presented to Councils for information and response; Provost, President and IHL approval are necessary. The addition, deletion, renaming, or consolidation of academic units should be handled through a memorandum and supporting documentation to the members of the proper council(s), explaining in as much detail as necessary the reasons for, and nature of the action.

Academic Unit proposals should include:

a. The official unit name

b. A rationale to include use of assessment results and, if applicable, discussion between colleges and campuses/teaching sites

c. The effective date (See Proposal Deadlines)

d. The appropriate IHL form:
   - New Academic Unit Proposal
   - Modifications to Existing Academic Unit Proposal (Renaming)
   - Modifications to Existing Academic Unit Proposal (Reorganization)
   - Modifications to Existing Academic Unit Proposal (Deletion)

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AWARENESS

Advertising, Student Recruitment, and Representation of Accredited Status - All publications should represent the official degree names and approved offerings of the university. Official degree names and offerings are posted in the Active Program Inventory found on the Institutional Research webpage. Accredited programs must accurately portray their accreditation status. Programs are not accredited by SACSCOC.

Homemade Degree Plans and Articulation Agreements – department web sites should link to the official degree plan and semester guide in the bulletin and the official articulation plan. Homemade degree plans and articulation plans are not to be posted. Note the verbiage “2+2” is outdated and should not be used.

Major Revisions to Degree Plans – departments planning major revisions to degree plans should first contact the Council Chairs and Institutional Effectiveness if an undergraduate degree and the Dean of Graduate School if a graduate degree. Proposals for major revisions to undergraduate degrees should be submitted in the fall semester to allow for sufficient time for council evaluation.
Online Course Approval Information

Please complete this form and attach to the appropriate add or modify course forms. NOTE: This form can be edited and saved with either Adobe Acrobat Professional or Adobe Reader.

Course Prefix & Number

Course Title

Describe the target student audience for this course (take into consideration the online delivery).

Is this course part of the GEC (including capstone, writing-intensive, & oral communication courses)?

Address the appropriateness of online delivery for this course.

Provide information about how this online course will be equivalent to the same or a similar course delivered in a face-to-face, classroom-based format. See explanations here.

Does course involve demonstration of performance-based skills (e.g., laboratory work, clinicals, practica, oral communication, etc.)

If yes, describe methods of content delivery
Provide information of how students will access course-related materials, support, and/or resources.
Check all that apply:

- Textbook
- Electronic reserve
- Physical reserve
- Paper-based
- Electronic
- Both
- Podcasts
- Instructor Notes
- Online Presentations
- Chat Logs
- Discussion Boards
- Physical reserve
- Instructor Notes
- Full-text online journals (For graduate course, provide titles of at least five full-text journals in the field available online)

Other (describe)

Provide evidence of appropriate training for faculty member teaching this course initially.
Check all that apply:

- Has taught using Blackboard before
- Has attended Blackboard training
- Has attended Live Classroom training
- Will attend Live Classroom training by ___/___/___
- Will be mentored by
- Other (describe)

Online at Southern Miss Policy requires all online instructors to complete the Office of Online Learning Blackboard Training Program prior to teaching online courses. (Include link to Policy)
Check here to indicate the department agrees to comply with this policy:

Online at Southern Miss Policy states that all online courses and programs must first contact the Office of Online Learning. Please include a correspondence with the proposal. (include link)

Check all that apply:

- Chat
- Discussion Boards
- Email
- Online Office Hours
- Telephone/cell phone
- Face-to-Face Sessions
- Live Classroom
- Collaborate
- Synchronous Sessions
- Whiteboard
- Other (describe)

Provide information concerning student-instructor and student-student interaction.
Check all that apply:

- Chat
- Discussion Boards
- Email
- Online Office Hours
- Telephone/cell phone
- Face-to-Face Sessions
- Live Classroom
- Collaborate
- Synchronous Sessions
- Whiteboard
- Other (describe)
Describe methods of student assessment/testing.
Check all that apply:

- Proctored quizzes/tests/exams
- Timed quizzes/tests/exams
- Open-book quizzes/tests/exams
- Written Projects/Papers
- Graded discussions
- Presentations
- Performance-based skills
- Participation
- Other (describe)
Prior to submission of the request to offer an entire degree program online, all online courses in the proposed (online) degree program must be previously approved by the appropriate faculty within the unit, the respective college curriculum committee(s) and the appropriate University Council (Graduate Council or Academic Council).

Courses for online delivery must comply with Rehabilitation Act Section 508.

Program approval must follow all IHL requirements for approval including submission of Library impact letter and other IHL forms for new programs/modifications for online delivery.

I. Policy Adherence

1. Online at Southern Miss Policy requires all online instructors to complete the Office of Online Learning Blackboard Training Program prior to teaching online courses. (Include link to Policy)

   Check here to indicate the department agrees to comply with this policy:

2. Online at Southern Miss Policy requires all online instruction to be delivered exclusively using the Blackboard learning management system. No other learning management system is to be used. (Include link to Policy)

   Check here to indicate the department agrees to comply with this policy:

II. Administration

1. What is the responsible academic unit(s) and college, with identified faculty responsible for administering the degree program?
2. What is the main purpose of offering this distance learning (online) degree program?
3. How does this compare to other similar programs at The University of Southern Miss? In the state? In the region?
4. What changes in faculty/staff are required to administer/teach this program?
5. How will these changes affect the other programs within the unit and college?

III. Determination of Program Need
1. Describe the process the faculty used to initiate and develop the online program, (include what assessment results have lead to proposing an online degree program).
2. How was it determined (what criteria was used) to offer this program online?
3. How many students must be enrolled to make the online program minimally viable?
4. What faculty/student ratio is anticipated for this online program?
5. How does this faculty/student ratio compare to the existing traditional program offered?
6. Will students be required to visit on campus? If yes, explain:
7. Will students be allowed to combine on-campus (face to face) AND distance learning (online) courses within this degree? If yes, explain:

IV. Student Performance and Security

1. How will student performance on assignments, exams, quizzes and final exams (including comprehensive exams) be administered and evaluated?
   a. Will students be required to come to campus for exams?
   b. Will students take online exams and how will they be administered?
   c. What are the procedures for selecting proctors, establishing student identity, assuring security of test instruments, administering exams, and assuring secure and prompt evaluation?
2. What are the research components of this online degree program?
3. How are research components evaluated?
4. How will the program handle General Education Curriculum requirement, oral communication components, capstone, and writing intensive areas related to the General Education Curriculum.
5. Submit assessment plan for program.

IV. Access and Use of Learning Resources

1. What mechanisms are in place to provide and assess students’ access to and use of appropriate, necessary, and relevant learning resources [facilities, laboratories, libraries, technical expertise, etc.] and how is this communicated to the student?
2. Does the program have the expectation that students may require access to and use of non-online resources to complete the program. Students may need to use physical resources (library or laboratory/clinical setting). If yes, explain:

VI. Faculty/Student Interaction and Mentoring
1. How will the program assure that each student is appropriately mentored, including advising, instructor-student and student-student interaction, interaction with major professor and other faculty, comprehensive examinations, thesis/research project advisement and oversight, and professional growth?
2. Describe the program that will be available to students online (e.g., program website, student handbook, etc) to furnish essential program information.

VI!. Milestones of Student Progress

1. What are the minimal criteria for assessing the progress of students' completion of the online program?
2. What mechanisms and/or procedures will assure that students make reasonable progress toward the completion of the online degree program?
3. What policies/procedures would apply to those students who do not demonstrate minimal progress toward completion of the program?

VII!. Faculty and Program Support Services

1. What are the minimal support services required to make the online program viable?
2. Describe support services available to those faculty members responsible for working directly and indirectly with students in the online program.
3. Submit Memo from the Office of Online Learning

Online at Southern Miss Policy states that all online courses and programs must first contact the Office of Online Learning. Please include correspondence with the proposal (include link).
Proposal to Add a Course

To: Select Council
Through: Select College  PEC (if indicated) □
From: Select Unit Type

Course Information:
Title: (limit to 50 spaces/characters) □

Does this request add a course to the General Education Curriculum including computer competency, writing intensive, speaking intensive, and capstone requirements? □ Yes □ No

If yes, mark category: □

The AC chair will refer all GEC items to the General Education Committee for review before presentation to the full Council.

Does this request affect a degree plan?  □ A modified degree plan must accompany the proposal. □ Yes □ No

If yes, please follow the instructions for modifying a degree plan.

Course Prefix: □ Course Number: □

CLP Code: □ Semester Credit Hours: □

Grading Method: Select Grading □

Abbreviated Title: (limit to 19 spaces/characters) □

Bulletin Description: (limit to 264 spaces/characters)

Effective semester for implementation:
Select Year □ Spring □ Fall □ Summer

Note: Course must be approved prior to early registration for the semester that the course is to be offered.

Recommended Section Size: □

Can this course be repeated for credit? □ Yes □ No  Total number of repeats allowed: □

Is consent required for students to take this course? □ Yes □ No

Is this course equivalent to (may be taken as) any other course(s)? □ Yes □ No

If yes, specify which course(s): □

IHL Method of Instruction Code(s): □
Note: The Online Course Approval Information form must accompany the Add a Course form for all new online courses. Online courses must be approved by the Academic and/or Graduate Councils. Upon approval, the course syllabus must be submitted to IHL via LEO. Office of Online Learning.

Explain how assessment results were used in the determination of this action.

Explain how credit weighting for the course meets the U.S. Department of Education definition of a credit hour (include both in-class and out-of-class expectations).

Additional Information for Proposal to Add a Course:
A brief statement of the course objectives:

The nature of the intended student audience:

Does this course require a textbook or other materials that must be purchased? Yes or No

Titles and publication dates of suggested texts or required reading materials:

Methods of testing or evaluation, including the manner of grade determination (e.g., weights attached to specific components):

A course outline listing major topics to be included in the course:
If a graduate course, does this course provide an overview of the literature? □ Yes □ No
If no, then explain how the program meets SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.2 in the narrative below.
If a graduate course, does this course include a research component? □ Yes □ No
If no, then explain how the program meets SACSCOC Comprehensive Standard 3.6.2 in the narrative below.
Please expand the "yes" answers in the narrative below

Attach a separate document to proposal if:

A) the new course requires special facilities, additional faculty, or other special requirements and/or
B) proposed course overlaps existing course.

A) Proposal for new course that requires special facilities or additional faculty (or that have other special requirements such as restricted enrollment, off-campus components, or special laboratory needs) must address each of these issues in enough detail to allow council members to make an informed decision.
B) Any course overlap must be justified. Evidence of cooperation between departments, schools, or colleges in which the overlap occurs must be provided.
Proposal to Modify a Course

To: Select Council

Through: Select College

PEC (if indicated)  ☐ Yes ☐ No

From: Select unit type

Current Course Information:

Title: (limit to 50 spaces/characters)

Course Prefix:  Course Number: 

Note: If proposal is to modify course to an online format, please complete the Online Course Approval Form.

Does this request affect a course in the General Education Curriculum including computer competency, writing intensive, speaking intensive, and capstone requirements?  ☐ Yes ☐ No  If yes, mark category:

The AC chair will refer all GEC items to the General Education Committee for review before presentation to the full Council.

Does this request affect a degree plan?  ☐ Yes ☐ No  If yes, please follow the instructions for modifying a degree plan.

Reason for Modification:

Indicate below ONLY the items to be modified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester Credit Hours</th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Proposed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grading Method</td>
<td>Select Grading</td>
<td>Select Grading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Number</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviated Title (19 char)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIP Code</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GEC Course</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Repeat for Credit</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
<td>☐ Yes ☐ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of completions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Method of Instruction Code</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Effective semester for implementation:  ☐ Fall ☐ Spring ☐ Summer  Select Year

Note: Course modification must be approved prior to early registration for the semester that the course is to be offered.

Current Bulletin Description including prerequisites (264 characters)

Proposed Bulletin Description including prerequisites (264 characters)
Does this course require a textbook or other materials that must be purchased? Yes or No
Academic Integrity Policy

Policy Statement

Academic misconduct involves deception to improve a grade, earn course credit, or complete a degree. It includes cheating, plagiarism, inappropriate acquisition or provision of information, conspiracy to cheat or plagiarize, lying about academic work, stealing academic materials, and unapproved multiple submissions of assignments.

Reason for Policy/Purpose

Academic misconduct is inconsistent with the scholarly mission of The University of Southern Mississippi and is not tolerated. Students who commit acts of academic misconduct as defined in the Academic Integrity Policy will incur academic sanctions as enumerated by the Policy.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

The entire University of Southern Mississippi community.

Website Address for this Policy

http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012

Definitions

Cheating - Unauthorized and inappropriate collaboration as defined by the instructor or proctor; giving or receiving (or attempting to give or receive) aid from any source without the consent of the instructor or proctor or in a manner inconsistent with course or program goals.
Plagiarism - The use of another person’s words or ideas without appropriate quotation or attribution; claiming or submitting for academic credit the work of another person.

Acquiring Information Inappropriately - The act of obtaining course assignments or examination questions or answers in ways or from sources not approved by the instructor or proctor (includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized use of the Internet).

Lying or Falsification of Data - Any statement of untruth in all matters related to the academic experience, including false claims of authorship; falsification of information, data, or results derived from or related to research or to laboratory experiments; the misrepresentation of information, data, or results by any means with intent to mislead administrators, faculty, or others acting as officials of the University.

Stealing or Defacing - The act of intentionally taking, transferring, defacing or destroying, without right or permission, any property related to the academic mission of the University.

Multiple Submission - The submission, more than once, without authorization by all instructors involved, of substantial portions of the same work, including oral reports or work submitted for retaken courses.

Conspiracy - The act of agreeing or planning with any person to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Policy/Procedures

1.0 The Agreement

1.1 In acknowledgement of the integrity policy, students--upon first formal enrollment in the University--must affirm the Integrity Agreement. Thereafter, it shall be understood that enrollment in a course constitutes affirmation of the following agreement:

As a member of the Southern Miss community, I will act with honor and integrity at all times. I will not engage in any act of academic misconduct, and I understand that such acts violate the Academic Integrity Policy and Student Honor Code and undermine the community of trust so important to the integrity of the University.
2.0 Imposed Sanctions

2.1 Instructors make the initial determination that the Academic Integrity Policy has been violated. When it is determined that a student has violated the policy, the instructor or proctor may impose the following sanctions based on the circumstances of the case:

2.1.1 Resubmission of work, lowered course grade, or any other course- or exam-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Faculty are encouraged to recognize that students are involved in a process of learning and not all violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are equal. The instructor may issue a reprimand or require the student to resubmit the assignment, complete an additional or different assignment, or take a new examination. The instructor may also assign a lowered course grade by assigning an “F” or “0” on the assignment or exam, thereby reducing the final grade.

2.1.2 The XF grade. The instructor may assign an XF for the course. That grade will be recorded on the academic transcript with the notation “failure due to academic misconduct.” The XF will be treated as an F for the purpose of calculating grade point average and class standing but cannot be replaced by retaking the course. The student may petition for removal of the “X” notation upon completion of an Academic Integrity Remediation Program specified by the Academic Integrity Officer (see Sections 3.0 and 8.0). In such cases, the XF will be replaced with an F and the student may then retake the course to replace the grade. Only one XF can be removed from the transcript during a six-year period.

2.2 Instructors must make every effort to meet with a student who commits academic misconduct to explain the following:

- the nature of the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (e.g., plagiarism; looking at another student’s work on an exam);

- the basis for believing the student has violated the policy (e.g., a Turnitin originality report, a description of a report made by someone who observed the academic misconduct);

- the penalty to be imposed; and

- the process for appeal, regardless of whether the penalty is a lower grade or an XF grade.
2.3 Students should not be disallowed from continuing to attend or participate in any class on the basis of academic misconduct alone before they have an opportunity for appeal. Students who appeal a decision of the instructor may continue to register for and attend classes until the appeal process is completed.

3.0 Automatic Sanctions for Undergraduate Students

3.1 Academic suspension: Undergraduate students with three XF grades will be placed on academic suspension.

3.1.1 A student placed on academic suspension may not enroll at The University of Southern Mississippi until one semester (fall, spring or summer) has passed.

3.1.2 The student may not transfer credits earned at any other university or college without prior written approval of the chair or director of the student’s current department or school and the dean of his or her college. Any credits earned contrary to this policy will not count toward graduation requirements at Southern Miss.

3.1.3 Readmission after the required suspension period requires reinstatement to the University through “the change of academic status” process initiated with the chair or director of the student’s current department or school and the dean of the college in which the student was enrolled as a major.

3.1.4 To gain readmission, the student must complete an Academic Integrity Remediation Program specified by the Academic Integrity Officer. With permission from the Academic Integrity Officer, the student may complete the Remediation Program during the semester following a suspension. Failure to complete the Program will result in re-suspension the next semester.

3.2 Expulsion: Undergraduate students with four or more XF grades will be expelled from the University.

4.0 Sanctions for Academic Misconduct in Graduate Programs

4.1 Students enrolled in a graduate program can be dismissed from the program and the University upon receipt of the first XF grade or after any instance in which academic misconduct has taken place.
4.2 Graduate students wishing to appeal a sanction for academic misconduct, including dismissal on the basis of academic misconduct, should file an appeal with the Academic Integrity Appeals Board.

5.0 Revocation of Degree

5.1 In egregious instances of academic misconduct, the University reserves the right to revoke a degree if it determines after the student has graduated that academic misconduct occurred in the completion of degree requirements. A former student whose degree is revoked has the same right of appeal as any student who has been assigned an XF grade.

6.0 Withholding Honors

6.1 Students with an XF grade at the time of graduation will be disqualified from graduating with academic honors, including Latin Honors.

7.0 Offenses Not Associated with a Course

7.1 In case of academic misconduct not directly associated with a course, such as program examinations or defenses of academic projects, the proctor, committee chair, or relevant academic administrator will be responsible for determining whether the Academic Integrity Policy has been violated and the sanction that is to be imposed. The same university representative will serve in the role of the instructor in cases of appeal.

8.0 The Academic Integrity Office

The Academic Integrity Office is entrusted with ensuring that the Academic Integrity Policy is publicized and fairly administered. Its jurisdiction is limited to the Academic Integrity Policy and does not extend to issues properly addressed by the Grade Appeals Committee or Student Government Association’s Judicial Board. It consists of the Academic Integrity Officer, the Academic Integrity Appeals Board, and any designated staff.

Because it guarantees that the policy is fairly administered, it may not assume an advocacy role for either students or faculty; however, it may advise participants on how to best secure their rights.

8.1.1 The Academic Integrity Officer is appointed by the Provost and may hold an additional academic or administrative role.
8.1.2 In addition to promoting Academic Integrity and disseminating the policy, the Academic Integrity Officer initiates an Academic Integrity Appeal upon submission of an Academic Integrity Appeal form, guarantees that all parties to an appeal have been notified and have access to relevant documents, and monitors the appeal process to ensure that the appropriate procedures have been followed. The Academic Integrity Officer may vacate a decision, but on procedural grounds only.

8.1.3 The Academic Integrity Officer also designates appropriate classes or modules to serve as the Academic Integrity Remediation Program, advises on the content of those classes or modules, and certifies that a student has completed the program. The Academic Integrity Officer may change an XF grade to an F if the student completes the required remediation program.

8.1.4 The Academic Integrity Officer submits annual reports to the Provost on the state of academic integrity at the University.

8.1.5 The Academic Integrity Officer, in consultation with the Academic Integrity Appeals Board, can propose to the Provost revisions or amendments to the Academic Integrity Policy and will seek approval of the changes through the appropriate university committees.

8.2 The Academic Integrity Appeals Board is a University Standing Committee composed of two students (one undergraduate and one graduate student) and three faculty members appointed by the Provost after seeking nominations from the Attorney General of the Student Government Association, the President of the Graduate Student Senate, and the President of the Faculty Senate.

8.2.1 Student board members serve one-year terms, and faculty board members serve staggered terms of two academic years. The Provost will also identify up to three alternate faculty members to serve as needed when regular faculty board members cannot attend a hearing.

8.2.2 The panel’s presiding officer, one of the three faculty members, is also chosen by the Provost.

8.2.3 The Academic Integrity Officer may not be appointed to the Appeals Board.

8.2.4 The primary mission of the Appeals Board is to create a community of trust and responsibility that ensures the highest standards of ethical academic conduct at the University.
8.2.5 All decisions of the Board are made by a majority vote of the quorum. The quorum is defined as at least three members of Board (no fewer than one of whom must be a student); during summer terms, the Provost may temporarily fill Board vacancies.

8.3 Together, the responsibilities of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board and Academic Integrity Officer are to:

- afford each student and faculty member full respect and every reasonable consideration;
- ensure that the facts of a case are given careful attention;
- allow open discussion and case discovery through an orderly but not unduly formal procedure;
- hold students to high standards of behavior; and
- contribute to the educational mission of the University and protect its academic reputation by ensuring integrity in all academic matters brought to its attention.

9.0 The Appeal Process

9.1 Students have an absolute right to due process and a fair, speedy appeal.

9.1.1 A student who wishes to appeal a penalty for academic misconduct, including an XF grade, must complete the Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form and complete the steps described below.

9.1.2 An appeal can occur immediately following notification of a sanction for academic misconduct, but the student must initiate the appeal procedure within 30 school days (excluding Saturday, Sunday, and official student holidays) of the beginning of the semester subsequent to the one in which the grade was awarded, or 120 calendar days after the issuance of spring semester grades, should the student not be enrolled during the summer term.

9.1.3 The appeal procedure is initiated when the student submits the Appeal Form to the Academic Integrity Officer. Students may begin the appeal process as soon as the instructor notifies the student regarding a sanction for academic misconduct. The student can appeal the sanction while the course is still in progress and does not need to wait until the final course grade is posted. (To appeal a grade unrelated to academic misconduct, the student must employ the standard grade appeal process).

Students in fully online programs should contact the Office of the Provost regarding the appeal procedure to follow.
9.1.4 The student must meet with the instructor and the chair of the department in which the course was taught to review the facts of the case. If the instructor is not a member of the University faculty at the time of the appeal, the student should meet with the chair.

9.1.5 The student has a right to request written documentation of the Academic Integrity Policy violation. The Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form should be signed by the instructor and chair to confirm meeting with the student unless the faculty member decides to rescind the XF grade.

9.1.6 The student should then submit the Appeal form to the Academic Integrity Office. Within five working days, the Academic Integrity Office should contact all parties informing them that a formal appeal has been initiated. All parties must submit any written materials they intend to present to the Academic Integrity Appeals Board within 30 days of being notified of an appeal.

9.1.7 An appeal hearing will be scheduled within 90 days of an appeal form being submitted to the Academic Integrity Office. All appeals are heard by the Academic Integrity Appeals Board, a University Standing Committee appointed by the Provost.

9.1.8 All parties to an appeal have a right to review the written material concerning the appeal that is submitted to the Academic Integrity Office. All parties have the right to speak on their own behalf. All parties have the right to seek advice (in accordance with FERPA regulations) and schedule witnesses who may speak in their defense as long as they have direct information pertaining to the Academic Integrity Policy violation. Character witnesses are not permitted and will be dismissed by the Board.

9.1.9 Upon hearing the case, the Board, by majority vote of a quorum, must determine if the academic integrity penalty was appropriately assigned based on the preponderance of evidence presented by all parties to the case. If the Board determines that the grade was inappropriately assigned, the Board is authorized to change the grade to an Incomplete and to require the faculty member to reassess the student’s academic work and submit a grade change.

9.1.10 The Academic Integrity Officer must inform all parties of the determination of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board within five working days of the hearing. The determination of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board is final and may not be further appealed except on procedural grounds.
9.1.11 The Academic Integrity Officer shall monitor the process and proceedings of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board. Either on his or her own initiative or after receiving a complaint from a party involved in an appeals hearing, the Academic Integrity Officer may vacate a decision if proper procedures were not followed and refer it back to the Academic Integrity Appeals Board for a rehearing. Decisions may be vacated only on procedural and not substantive grounds.

9.2 The appeal process described in this policy applies for grades earned for academic misconduct.

9.3 The Academic Integrity Appeals Board determines whether the charge of academic misconduct and the resulting penalty stand or whether the matter is returned to the faculty member to assign a grade based on the work completed.

9.4 Students wishing to appeal a grade that is unrelated to academic misconduct should use the grade appeal procedures described in the Grade Appeal Policy.

10.0 Hearing Procedures

10.1 Although Board decisions must be based on a full and fair hearing of the preponderance of evidence, Board hearings are not courts of law and do not necessarily follow standard courtroom procedures.

10.1.1 Students seeking to appeal an academic integrity violation penalty are encouraged to discuss an allegation with parents, guardians, legal counsel or any appropriate member of the University community.

10.1.2 A student’s legal counsel or other advisors may also be present at the hearing, and students may consult with them. However, there is no right of the accused to formal legal representation, and attorneys or other advisors may not directly or verbally participate in any enforcement proceedings.

10.2 In the event of an incapacitating illness, or some other documentable inability to represent him or herself, the student seeking an appeal or the faculty member whose grade is being appealed may choose, with the permission of the Academic Integrity Officer, another member of the University community as his/her surrogate during the proceedings.

10.2.1 A surrogate must be either an employee of the University or a student currently enrolled in the University.
10.3 Parties to the appeal may elect not to attend the hearings, but an absence must not impede the progress of a hearing and submitted evidence can still be reviewed.

10.4 The panel should attempt to be reasonable in the accommodation of the student or faculty member’s schedule and should not proceed in the event of his or her temporary, documented illness, unless a proxy has been appointed.

11.0 Duties of the General Faculty

11.1 It is the responsibility of each member of the University faculty to disseminate the Academic Integrity Policy in course syllabi. 

12.0 Responsibilities of the Entire University Community

12.1 The ultimate success of the Academic Integrity Policy depends on the development of a culture of academic integrity defined by basic values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Because the requisite culture and values require considerable time, resources, and effort, the University community must commit to promoting academic integrity as a defining characteristic of this institution.

13.0 Student Awareness

13.1 To ensure student awareness of the centrality of academic integrity to scholarship and the learning process, the University will set forth its Academic Integrity Policy in all appropriate official publications and in student and faculty orientation sessions.

14.0 Approval

14.1 The University of Southern Mississippi Academic Integrity Policy has been submitted to the following bodies for consideration:

Student Government Association
Faculty Senate
Graduate Council
Academic Council
Council of Chairs
Academic deans
Review

The Provost is responsible for the review of this policy every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

Forms/Instructions/Appendices

Appendix I: Implementation Plan
Appendix II: Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Instructions
Appendix III: Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form

Related Information/References

Portions of The University of Southern Mississippi Academic Integrity Policy were adapted from the following sources:


- The University of Mississippi Student Academic Conduct and Discipline: https://secure4.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara=1&policyObjidPara=10817696.

History

New Policy Origination Date – November 12, 2014

Amendments: N/A
Authorization

RECOMMENDED BY:

[Signature]
Responsible University Administrator

[Signature]
Date

REVIEWED BY:

[Signature]
Director of Compliance

[Signature]
Date

[Signature]
Office of General Counsel

[Signature]
Date

APPROVED:

[Signature]
President

[Signature]
Date

11/13/14

11/17/14

11/17/14

12/2/14
APPENDIX I: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Academic Integrity Officer and Appeals Board

The Provost will appoint an Academic Integrity Officer and the five-member Appeals Board. The Board will be a University Standing Committee.

The Academic Integrity Policy Affirmation in SOAR

The Academic Integrity Officer will work with the University Registrar to develop a mechanism in SOAR to notify all students about the Academic Integrity Policy and to permit students to indicate that they have read and understood the policy when students attempt to enroll for the first time.

Dissemination of the Academic Integrity Policy and Student Education

The Academic Integrity Officer will work with university personnel and the Student Government Association to ensure that the policy is included in all relevant university publications, to notify new and returning faculty about the policy, to provide support to faculty about how to reinforce academic integrity, and to educate students about the policy and about the importance of the values it represents.

Academic Integrity Remediation Program

The Academic Integrity Officer will work with Universities Libraries to develop and administer the Academic Integrity Remediation Program. The program will be designed to notify the Academic Integrity Officer when a student successfully completes the training modules.
APPENDIX II: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION APPEAL INSTRUCTIONS

Introduction

A student who wishes to appeal a penalty for academic misconduct, including an XF grade, must complete the steps described below. An appeal can occur immediately following notification of a sanction for academic misconduct, but the student must initiate the appeal procedure within 30 school days (excluding Saturday, Sunday, and official student holidays) of the beginning of the semester subsequent to the one in which the grade was awarded, or 120 calendar days after the issuance of spring semester grades, should the student not be enrolled during the summer term. The appeal procedure is initiated when the student submits the Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form to the Academic Integrity Office. (To appeal a grade unrelated to academic misconduct, the student must employ the standard grade appeal process.)

Procedure

• [ ] Fill in the information that is requested at the top of the Appeal Form, attached.

• [ ] On a separate page to be attached to the Appeal Form, summarize your reasons for believing that the sanction was imposed in error.

• [ ] Meet with the instructor and the chair of the department in which the course was taught to review the facts of the case. Provide them with a copy of your summary. If the instructor is not a member of the University faculty at the time of the appeal, the student should meet with the chair. The student has a right to request written documentation of the Academic Integrity Policy violation. The Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form should be signed by the instructor and chair to confirm meeting with the student unless the faculty member decides to rescind the XF grade.

• [ ] Submit the Appeal Form to the Academic Integrity Office. Within five working days, the Academic Integrity Office should contact all parties informing them that a formal appeal has been initiated. All parties must submit any written materials they intend to present to the Academic Integrity Appeals Board within 30 days of being notified of an appeal.

An appeal hearing will be scheduled within 90 days of an Appeal form being submitted to the Academic Integrity Office.
APPENDIX III: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION APPEAL FORM

NAME________________________ LOCAL TELEPHONE________________________

EMAIL________________________ ADDRESS_______________________________

CLASS: [ ] Freshman [ ] Sophomore [ ] Junior [ ] Senior [ ] Graduate Student

MAJOR________________________ ADVISOR______________________________

COURSE________________________ ______________________________________
   (Course Prefix, Section, Title)

SEMESTER FOR WHICH THE SANCTION WAS IMPOSED_______________________

INSTRUCTOR________________________ ___________________________________

SANCTION________________________ ______________________________________

Instructions: The student and instructor should sign the Appeal Form below once they have met to discuss the academic integrity violation penalty. The signatures below only indicate that a meeting has taken place to discuss the penalty. The student and instructor should each attach a summary of the incident leading to the penalty.

The chair should sign the Appeal Form below once he or she has met with the student and instructor. The chair’s signature only indicates that the meetings have taken place to discuss the penalty. The chair may attach comments concurring with the imposition of a penalty for violating the Academic Integrity Policy or supporting the student's appeal.

STUDENT SIGNATURE_____________________________________________________

INSTRUCTOR SIGNATURE________________________________________________

CHAIR SIGNATURE______________________________________________________
All changes are in the section called **General Academic Information**

**Add/Drop/Withdrawal**

Add to bottom:

Students who have violated the Academic Integrity Policy and who have been informed that they will receive an XF grade for the semester are not eligible to withdraw from a class. Instructors will deny requests any request for withdrawal. (See Academic Integrity below.)

**Grades**

Current:

F — indicates failure and carries no quality points

Revised:

F — indicates failure and carries no quality points

XF -- indicates failure due to academic integrity violation and carries no quality points

**Computation of Grade Point Averages**

Current:

An undergraduate student will be permitted to repeat courses for a total of twelve semester hours in order to improve his or her grade point average. The first twelve hours used shall stand. The grade for the second attempt will be used in grade point average calculations. This policy does not apply to courses for which a grade was assigned for reasons of academic dishonesty. Courses must be retaken at The University of Southern Mississippi. Students are free to retake additional courses, but all attempts will be included in the calculation of the GPA. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the provost. Prior to graduation, a request for an excessive repeat must be made by the student and recommended by the department and college dean before being considered by the provost. Excessive repeats will not be considered after graduation.

Revised:

An undergraduate student will be permitted to repeat courses for a total of twelve semester hours in order to improve his or her grade point average. The first twelve hours used shall stand. The grade for the second attempt will be used in grade point average calculations. This
policy does not apply to courses for which an XF grade was assigned for reasons of academic dishonesty. Courses must be retaken at The University of Southern Mississippi. Students are free to retake additional courses, but all attempts will be included in the calculation of the GPA. Exceptions to this policy must be approved by the provost. Prior to graduation, a request for an excessive repeat must be made by the student and recommended by the department and college dean before being considered by the provost. Excessive repeats will not be considered after graduation.

**Course Repeat and Grade Replacement**

Current:

Grade replacement is not automatic. Some departments and majors have degree progression requirements that prevent students from taking a course multiple times and students may not replace a grade awarded for academic dishonesty. Students who have retaken a class must submit a request to the Registrar's Office to have a grade marked as "Repeated". A successful request does not result in the recalculation of previously issued Dean's and President's Lists.

Revised:

Grade replacement is not automatic. Some departments and majors have degree progression requirements that prevent students from taking a course multiple times and students may not replace an XF grade awarded for academic dishonesty. Students who have retaken a class must submit a request to the Registrar's Office to have a grade marked as "Repeated". A successful request does not result in the recalculation of previously issued Dean's and President's Lists.

**Academic Suspension**

Add: Students who were suspended as the result of repeated violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are required to attend an Academic Integrity Remediation Program as specified by the Academic Integrity Officer. With permission from the Academic Integrity Officer, the student may complete the Remediation Program during the semester following a suspension. Failure to complete the Program will result in re-suspension the next semester.

**Academic Honesty**

Current:

When cheating is discovered, the faculty member may give the student an F on the work involved or in the course. If further disciplinary action is deemed appropriate, the student should be reported to the dean of students. In addition to being a violation of academic honesty, cheating violates the Code of Student Conduct and may be grounds for probation, suspension or expulsion. Academic dishonesty also
includes any submission of false documents such as add/drop forms, substitutions, special requests, etc. Students on disciplinary suspension may not enroll in any courses offered by The University of Southern Mississippi.

Revised:

I suggest we cut this section and the section on plagiarism that follows and replace it with the new section on Academic Integrity below.

**Plagiarism**

Current:

Plagiarism is scholarly theft, and it is defined as the unacknowledged use of secondary sources. More specifically, any written or oral presentation in which the writer or speaker does not distinguish clearly between original and borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Because students, as scholars, must make frequent use of the concepts and facts developed by other scholars, plagiarism is not the mere use of another’s facts and ideas. However, it is plagiarism when students present the work of other scholars as if it were their own work. Plagiarism is committed in a number of ways:

1. reproducing another author's writing as if it were one's own
2. paraphrasing another author's work without citing the original
3. borrowing from another author's ideas, even though those ideas are reworded, without giving credit
4. copying another author's organization without giving credit

Plagiarism is a serious offense. An act of plagiarism may lead to a failing grade on the paper and in the course, as well as sanctions that may be imposed by the student judicial system.

*Taken from Student Handbook*

Revised:

Cut this section and the section on “Academic Honesty” and replace with a new section on Academic Integrity. It should read:

All students at the University of Southern Mississippi are expected to demonstrate the highest levels of academic integrity in all that they do as stated in the university’s Academic Integrity Honor Code:

As a member of the Southern Miss community, I will act with honor and integrity at all times. I will not engage in any act of academic misconduct, and I understand that such acts violate the Academic Integrity Policy and Student Honor Code and undermine the community of trust so important to the integrity of the University.
Forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Cheating (to include copying from others’ work)
- Plagiarizing, which includes representing another person’s words or ideas as your own and failure to properly cite the source of your information, argument, or concepts
- Falsifying documents
- Disclosing test or other assignment content to another student
- Submitting the same paper or other assignment to more than one class without the explicit approval of all faculty members
- Collaborating with others on work without authorization

Engaging in any of these behaviors or supporting others who do so will result in academic penalties. If a faculty member determines that a student has violated our Academic Integrity Policy, sanctions range from being required to resubmit the work to receiving an “XF” grade for the course. The XF grade will appear on the student’s transcript with the notation “Failure due to academic misconduct.” Repeated acts of academic misconduct will lead to suspension and expulsion.

Students may petition to remove up to a single XF grade from their transcript by attending the Academic Integrity Remediation Program specified by the Academic Integrity Officer. Students who disagree with the faculty member’s determination that the Academic Integrity Policy was violated, may appeal the grade resulting from the violation of the Academic Integrity Policy. An appeal process that balances the rights of students with the University’s commitment to maintaining high academic standards has been established. To learn more about the University’s Academic Integrity Policy, including the appeals process, see https://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012

Students who have questions about how to adhere to the University’s Academic Integrity Policy are encouraged to discuss the policy with their instructors and can find more information online at https://www.usm.edu/success
MEMORANDUM

TO: Graduate Council
FROM: Amy Chasteen Miller, Associate Provost
DATE: July 25, 2016
SUBJECT: Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline Policy

CC: Dr. Steven R. Moser, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
    Dr. Anita Boykins, Associate Dean, College of Nursing
    Dr. Brigitte Burgess, Associate Dean, College of Business
    Dr. Jeff Hinton, Associate Dean, College of Education and Psychology
    Dr. Douglas Masterson, Associate Dean, College of Science and Technology
    Dr. Julie Reid, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Letters
    Dr. Kathy Yadrick, Associate Dean, College of Health

The Office of the Provost requests revision of the Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline Policy based on a review and recommendations from the Student Success Leadership Team (SSLT), composed of Associate Deans from each college who work on student success initiatives. This proposal was developed after working with the current policy and (in some cases) serving on the review committee over the past year and identifying problem spots that need to be addressed.

The SSLT worked for six months to develop this proposal and believes that these revisions to the policy would improve efficiency while maintaining the effectiveness of the process in meeting student and University needs.

The proposed new policy would go into effect in Spring 2017.

The current policy for Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline requires that requests for late withdrawal are reviewed by the Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline Committee on a monthly schedule. While each request includes an approval/disapproval vote by the Chair and Dean, the final decision on the late withdrawal request is based on the vote by the Committee.
The proposed revised policy recommends the following changes:

1. The form for Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline would be split into two forms: (1) University Withdrawal After the Deadline and (2) Petition to Drop a Course with a W After the Deadline. Each form specifies whether Chair and Dean for the student’s major or for the individual course needs to sign the request, a distinction that is not clear to students on the single form currently in use. As a result, the current form and process has brought about some confusion.

2. The Dean will serve as the final approval on the late W request, eliminating the need for a separate dedicated Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline Committee.

3. The student would submit and leave the form with the appropriate Chair; the form then would move from Chair to Dean and then to the Registrar, who processes the decision. Currently, the student submits the form directly to the Registrar, who sends the form to the Chair and Dean for their approval/disapproval votes; the Registrar then forwards the form to the Committee members and collects their votes to implement the decision.

4. A statement from the student’s advisor will be additionally required to notify the student of potential academic consequences of an academic withdrawal after the deadline on degree progression. This notification was the intent of the original policy but never implemented.

The new procedure will streamline the process, enable more timely approval/disapproval of late withdrawal requests, and greatly reducing the administrative work involved.

Due to the monthly meeting schedule, the current procedure has not been able to accommodate some academic withdrawals that require a quick decision (e.g., GPA-based scholarships/financial aid deadlines). Additionally, because of the high bar for seeking late withdrawals, they are necessarily based on unusual and often highly sensitive personal circumstances that students do not wish to share with a large committee of strangers but feel obligated to do so as the only way to obtain a late withdrawal. This pressure unnecessarily causes even further stress and vulnerability to students who have faced a personal crisis. Finally, Deans already have final approval authority to change grades to a W in various circumstances; the proposed revision would bring the approval for a W after the deadline in line with other situations where grade changes and withdrawals are granted.

Thank you for your consideration.

Attachments:

1) Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline Policy (proposed revision)
2) Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline Procedure Flowchart (proposed)
3) Drop a Course with a W After the Deadline Form (proposed revision)
4) University Withdrawal After the Deadline Form (proposed revision)
5) Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline Policy Statement and Request Form (current)
Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline (Late Term Withdrawal Without Academic Penalty)

Each semester the University publishes the deadline for withdrawing from classes without academic penalty (typically, the 50th day of the semester – see Academic Calendar), after which a letter grade is assigned for each enrolled course. In rare cases, students may experience extreme personal hardship beyond their control on or after the withdrawal deadline that hinders the continuation of their current class schedule, and they believe their best option is to withdraw from the University or from an individual course after the withdrawal deadline.

Students who seek a late term withdrawal must complete a Petition for Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline form. There are two versions of this form: one form to request withdrawal from the university (i.e., withdrawal from all classes for the semester) and another form to request to drop an individual course with a W. As part of the petition, a student must provide appropriate documentation, which supports the date and nature of the personal hardship and shows how it prevented successful completion of the semester or an individual course.

Policy Statement: This policy applies to the current semester only. Therefore, if a student believes that he/she may qualify for a late term withdrawal, the request should, ideally, be initiated prior to the end of the semester in which the hardship occurred. However, the University acknowledges that some hardships may prevent students from submitting a late term withdrawal request in a timely manner. Therefore, in order to give students a reasonable opportunity to complete the petition with required documentation, requests must be submitted no later than the last day of classes of the semester immediately following, regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled during that semester. For example, a student who experiences a hardship after the last day to withdraw without academic penalty during the Fall 2015 term, must submit the request and documentation no later than the last day of classes of the Spring 2016 term.

Before requesting an Academic Withdrawal After the Deadline, students should consider the following:

1. Students will not receive any refunds for withdrawn courses. Furthermore, withdrawing from a course or the university could affect a student’s future financial aid.
2. This policy is intended to assist students who have experienced a hardship that was beyond their control; it is not intended for students who failed to submit assignments or take exams as scheduled, simply chose not to attend class, and/or did not comply with published University dates and other guidelines.
3. Only those petitions that are submitted per the policy guidelines (i.e. received by the appropriate term deadline, completed form with appropriate signatures, documentation, etc.) will be considered.
4. Petitions are not granted automatically; each case is considered individually based on the evidence the student presents. Even if approved, petitions may take a few weeks to process through the various levels. Therefore, students should not expect their petition to have an immediate impact on their GPA or on their current academic status.
5. If the Petition for University Withdrawal After the Deadline from the University is approved, the student will receive a “W” grade for all courses approved during the term in question, except for those courses completed prior to the hardship or the last day to drop/withdraw without penalty (i.e. mini session, 8W1, etc.). If the Petition to Drop a Course with a W After the Deadline from a Class is approved, the student will receive a “W” grade for the individual course in question while grades for courses already completed will remain on the student’s transcript.
6. This policy does not apply to semesters or courses previously completed nor does it apply to future semesters or courses. If a student believes that extenuating circumstances existed that prevented their ability to make good grades during a previously completed term; please refer to the Administrative Withdrawal Policy in the Bulletin.
7. This policy does not apply to courses in which the student believes that the final grade in an individual course was incorrect, arbitrary, or assigned unfairly; please refer to the Grade Review Policy.
8. If students are unsure which policy applies to their circumstances, they should consult the Office of the Registrar or the dean’s office in their college.

After reviewing the entire policy statement and considerations above, if a student believes that they may qualify for an Academic Withdrawal after the Deadline, they should complete the appropriate petition form along with all required documentation.

- **Hattiesburg students** should submit a Petition for University Withdrawal After the Deadline form to the chair of their major department and a Petition to Drop a Course with a W After the Deadline form to the chair of department of the course.
- **Gulf Park students** should submit either type of petition form to the Office of the Associate Provost for the Gulf Park Campus, who will deliver the forms to the appropriate administrator for review.
- At both campuses, the chair (not the student) should forward the petition to the college dean within 10 business days, and the dean should forward the petition to the Registrar within 10 business days. The Registrar’s office will notify the student by email of the petition’s decision. For more information on academic withdrawal after the deadline, see [INSERT WHEN URL IS KNOWN].
PROCEDURE FOR
PETITION FOR ACADEMIC WITHDRAWAL AFTER THE DEADLINE

First, read the policy for academic withdrawal after the deadline, which is available [www.usm.edu/xxxx](http://www.usm.edu/xxxx).

Do you want to withdraw from ALL of your classes for the semester?

**YES:**
Use the form called "Petition for University Withdrawal After the Deadline."
Complete all the sections of the form, including assembling your documentation as required and checking each item off on the documentation checklist.

Are you a Hattiesburg or Gulf Park student?

**HATTIESBURG:**
Submit a Petition-for-University-Withdrawal-After-the-Deadline form to the chair of your major department, and leave the package with the chair to review.

You have now completed the procedure and must wait to be notified of a decision from the Registrar’s office.

**GULF PARK:**
Submit either type of form to petition for academic withdrawal after the deadline to the Office of the Associate Provost for the Gulf Park Campus, which will deliver the forms to the appropriate administrator for review.

You have now completed the procedure and must wait to be notified of a decision from the Registrar’s office.

**NO:**
Use the form called “Petition to Drop a Course with a W After the Deadline.” (A separate form is need for each individual class).
Complete all the sections of the form, including assembling your documentation as required and checking each item off on the documentation checklist.

Are you a Hattiesburg or Gulf Park student?

**HATTIESBURG:**
Submit a Petition-to-Drop-a-Course-with-a-W-After-the-Deadline form to the chair of the department of the course, and leave the package with the chair to review.

You have now completed the procedure and must wait to be notified of a decision from the Registrar’s office.

**GULF PARK:**
Submit either type of form to petition for academic withdrawal after the deadline to the Office of the Associate Provost for the Gulf Park Campus, which will deliver the forms to the appropriate administrator for review.

You have now completed the procedure and must wait to be notified of a decision from the Registrar’s office.

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**TO ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR THE GULF PARK CAMPUS:**
- For University Withdrawal, deliver to the department chair (or Gulf Park designee) of the student’s major.
- For Drop a Course with a W, deliver to the department chair (or Gulf Park designee) of the class from which the student wishes to withdraw.

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**TO CHAIR (OR DESIGNEE):**
Review the package, sign and indicate your decision on the form, and then forward the package to the Dean of your college within 10 business days. If you wish, you may attach your own statement to be included in the package.

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**TO DEAN (OR DESIGNEE):**
Review the package, sign and indicate your decision on form, and then forward the package to the Registrar’s office within 10 business days. If you wish, you may attach your own statement to be included in the package.
PETITION FOR UNIVERSITY WITHDRAWAL AFTER THE DEADLINE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. First, read the entire University policy for Withdrawal After the Deadline, available at usm.edu/registrar/xxxxx-xxxxxxx.

2. If you are attempting a late withdrawal from one or more classes but are NOT trying to withdraw from all classes, do not use this form. Instead, use the form called Petition to Drop a Course with a W After the Deadline.

3. Complete all parts of the petition described below. (a) If you are a Hattiesburg student, deliver the entire petition package to the chair of your major department. Leave the package with the chair to review, after which the chair will forward it to the dean. (b) If you are a Gulf Park student, deliver the entire package to the Associate Provost for the Gulf Park campus, who will forward the package to the appropriate administrator. (c) For all students, the Registrar’s office will notify you by email when your petition has been decided.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name ___________________________ Student ID ________ Email __________________________

Cell Phone ______________________ W Request Term __________________________ Year ________

Major During Term __________________________ College __________________________

HARDSHIP

Date(s) of Hardship __________________________

Nature of Hardship □ Death of immediate family member □ Accident/illness/hospitalization

□ Other __________________________

DOCUMENTATION

All requested documentation MUST be attached to this form in order for it to be valid. Forms sent to the Dean without proper documentation will be returned to the department.

□ Written personal statement detailing nature and circumstances of hardship

□ Third-party evidence which supports nature and circumstances of hardship

□ Current unofficial USM Transcript and Degree Progress Report (DPR)

□ Signed statement from each course instructor (or email from instructor’s USM email account) indicating the student’s progress and participation (i.e., grades, attendance, assignment submission, etc.) prior to the date of hardship. Instructors may provide their statement directly to the chair of the student’s major department.

□ Signed statement or email from the advisor’s USM email account regarding potential impact of withdrawal on the student’s academic progression.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

□ By signing, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the instructions on this form and I agree to comply with the procedures therein. I have provided documentation that is accurate, relevant, and complete and I understand that failure to do so voids/nullifies this request. If this request is approved, I understand that I am still responsible for any tuition/fees incurred for the semester in question. I also understand that it is my responsibility to discuss with the Financial Aid Office the impact that an Academic Withdrawal may have on my financial aid.

Student Signature __________________________ Date ________________

OFFICIAL SIGNATURES

Chair and/or Dean may attach a statement with additional information on the student’s petition if desired.

Department Chair of Student’s Major __________________________ Date ________________ □ SUPPORT □ DENY

College Dean of Student’s Major __________________________ Date ________________ □ SUPPORT □ DENY
PETITION TO DROP A COURSE WITH A W AFTER THE DEADLINE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. First, read the entire University policy for Withdrawal After the Deadline, available at usm.edu/registrar/xxxxxxxx-xxxxxxx.

2. You will need a separate signed form for each class from which you are petitioning to withdraw. You may attach all forms together with your statement and documentation. If you are attempting withdraw from the university after the deadline (i.e., W in all your classes), do not use this form; use the form called Petition for University Withdrawal After the Deadline.

3. Complete all parts of the petition described below. (a) If you are a Hattiesburg student, deliver the entire petition package to the department chair of the class from which you wish to withdraw. Leave the package with the chair to review, after which the chair will forward it to the dean. (b) If you are a Gulf Park student, deliver the entire package to the Associate Provost for the Gulf Park campus, who will forward the package to the appropriate administrator. (c) For all students, the Registrar’s office will notify you by email when your petition has been decided.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name ___________________________ Student ID ___________ Email ___________________________

Cell Phone ___________ College ___________ Major ___________________________

COURSE INFORMATION

Course ___________________________ Instructor ___________________________ Term ___________ Year ___________

HARDSHIP

☐ Death of immediate family member Date(s) of Hardship ___________________________

☐ Accident/Illness/hospitalization

☐ Other ___________________________

DOCUMENTATION

All requested documentation MUST be attached to this form in order for it to be valid. Forms sent to the Dean without proper documentation will be returned to the department.

☐ Written personal statement detailing nature and circumstances of hardship

☐ Third-party evidence which supports nature and circumstances of hardship

☐ Current unofficial USM Transcript and Degree Progress Report (DPR)

☐ Signed statement or email from the instructor’s USM email account indicating the student’s progress and participation (i.e., grades, attendance, assignment submission, etc.) prior to the date of hardship. Instructors may provide their statement directly to the chair of the department for the course.

☐ Signed statement or email from the advisor’s USM email account regarding potential impact of W on the student’s academic progression.

STUDENT SIGNATURE

☐ By signing, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the instructions on this form and I agree to comply with the procedures therein. I have provided documentation that is accurate, relevant, and complete and I understand that failure to do so voids/nullifies this request. If this request is approved, I understand that I am still responsible for any tuition/fees incurred for the semester in question. I also understand that it is my responsibility to discuss with the Financial Aid Office the impact that an Academic Withdrawal may have on my financial aid.

Student Signature ___________________________ Date ___________

OFFICIAL SIGNATURES

Chair and/or Dean may attach a statement with additional information on the student’s petition if desired.

Course Department Chair ___________________________ Date ___________ ☐ SUPPORT ☐ DENY

Course College Dean ___________________________ Date ___________ ☐ SUPPORT ☐ DENY
Soaring to New Heights: Graduate Education at Southern Miss

Graduate Dean’s Report (September 2016)

Student Spotlight

International Development Doctoral Student Named U.S. Navy Legislative Fellow

Tony Gonzales, senior chief petty officer for the United States Navy and doctoral student in International Development (IDV), is one of 15 servicemen selected by the Navy’s Office of Legislative Affairs as a 2017 Navy Legislative Fellow. Beginning November 1, Gonzales and other fellows will spend 14 months in Washington D.C. participating in a variety of projects, including drafting legislation and organizing committee hearings and serving on the staff of a senator or congressman who sits on one of the various Armed Services committees in Congress. Dr. Joseph St. Marie, graduate program coordinator said, “The IDV Program is very happy that Tony Gonzales has been chosen as a Navy Legislative Fellow. Tony’s selection highlights the quality and drive IDV students have to excel in their regular jobs and in their courses at Southern Miss.” Gonzales, currently stationed in Pensacola, Fla., is an adjunct faculty member at Pensacola State College where he teaches U.S. government. “The Navy has made a fine choice and we are fortunate to have such a fine student representing Southern Miss and our nation,” said St. Marie. For full story see: http://news.usm.edu/article/southern-miss-student-selected-navy-legislative-fellow.

Doctoral Students Attend Teaching Institute

Doctoral students from Communication Studies Victoria L. Brown, Kevin Bryant, and Carley Young were selected competitively to attend the Teaching Institute for Graduate Assistants in Communication (TIGTAC) held in early August at The University of Maine. TIGTAC was sponsored by the National Communication Association with a theme of social justice in the classroom. The trio enjoyed networking and attending various events, such as a panel on facilitating difficult conversations in the classroom, a discussion about performing critical pedagogy, and a workshop on designing syllabi and assignments with a social justice focus.

Carley Young, Kevin Bryant, and Victoria Brown on the UMaine campus
Faculty Kudos

$4 Million National Science Foundation Award will Develop Sensing Technologies to Detect and Analyze Pollutants in Gulf Coast Ecosystems

Dr. Jason Azoulay, assistant professor in Polymer Science and Engineering, was awarded a $4 million grant through the National Science Foundation’s Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) program. The award supports research aimed at developing sensing technologies to detect and analyze pollutants in ecosystems along the Gulf Coast. During the four-year project period Dr. Azoulay will lead a team of 10 researchers across six institutions in Mississippi and Alabama on the project that combines approaches from chemistry, biochemistry, geochemistry, marine science, computational science, polymer science, and engineering. A broader impact of this project is support for graduate education. The grant provides research training opportunities, assistantships, and other financial resources for 10 graduate students, 10 high school students, and 10 Research Experiences for Undergraduate (REU) participants across all jurisdictions. For full story see http://news.usm.edu/article/southern-miss-receives-4-million-nsf-award-gulf-water-research.

New Initiative to Create Defense Community Specialization in the Master of Science in Economic Development Program Funded by a Federal Grant

Dr. Chad Miller, associate professor in the Department of Economic Development, Tourism, and Sport Management and graduate program coordinator for the M.S. in Economic Development program (MSED), is principal investigator on a $3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense’s Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) to develop three pilot programs for technology transfer and economic development “to aid regions dependent upon defense initiatives.” Miller, an Army veteran who spent three years on active duty stated, “As a veteran myself, I think this is an exciting opportunity to apply USM’s economic development expertise to assist the defense community and the State of Mississippi as it adjusts to federal funding changes.” Dr. Miller will partner with co-principal investigator Dr. Shannon Campbell, director of the Trent Lott National Center for Excellence in Economic Development and Entrepreneurship, and Dr. Chase Kasper, assistant vice president for Research, Technology Transfer and Corporate Relations to focus on three pilot initiatives: 1) provide economic diversification technical assistance for communities; 2) create a defense community specialization for the Master of Science in Economic Development program; and 3) create a platform for technology transfer related to defense intellectual property into new economic opportunities. The defense community specialization in the MSED program will allow military personnel
and working professionals an online option and also include a new emphasis in “defense sector economic diversification.” For full story see: http://news.usm.edu/article/southern-miss-receives-3-million-federal-grant-develop-pilot-programs-technology-transfer-ec.

Graduate News from Colleges

College of Arts and Letters

Students in the Master of Arts in the Teaching of Languages program in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures were selected to present papers at the South Central Modern Languages Association in Dallas, Texas in November.

- María Lago-González will present work entitled “Hello, We are Linda,” and Anabel González García, will present “Like Water for Chocolate: Matriarchy and Gender Roles from a Feminist Point of View.” Both students are in the Film Studies Pathway. Cristina Heras Ramírez, who is studying Applied Linguistics, will present “Incorporating TV Series in the Teaching of L2 Pragmatics.”

College of Education and Psychology

The master’s degree in Library and Information Science was ranked number six among the “Top 30 Affordable Online Master’s in Library Science Degree Programs 2016” by Grad School Hub. To view the article see http://www.gradschoolhub.com/best/affordable-online-masters-in-library-science/.

Congratulations to Dr. Donald Sacco, Nina Bell Suggs Endowed Professor in the Department of Psychology, who was awarded an $89,000 National Institutes of Health award for a project entitled “Misconduct Framing and Questionable Research Practices.” Dr. Sacco will serve as co-principal investigator on this year long project which began Sept. 1.

Mitch Brown, Ph.D. student in the Department of Psychology, received a $500 travel award to present his research at the 18th Meeting of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology in San Antonio, Texas in January 2017. The poster entitled “Affiliative and Pathogen-avoidance Motives Differentially Shift Preferences for Facially Committed Extraversion” is coauthored by Christopher Lustgraaf. Both Mitch and Christopher are mentored by Dr. Donald Sacco.

Dr. Elena Stepanova, assistant professor in the Department of Psychology, received a $2,600 Travel and Mentoring Program Award to attend the 31st International Congress of Psychology (ICP2016) in Yokohama, Japan this past July. She served as chair of the symposium “Facial Processing, Categorization, and Social Biases: Novel Approaches in Theory and Methodology” during the conference.

College of Health

Dean Mike Forster was selected to serve on the board of directors of the Mississippi Public Health Institute (MSPHI). A non-profit organization, MSPHI promotes the health and well-being of Mississippians. See full article at http://news.usm.edu/article/college-health-dean-forster-selected-state-board.
Faculty in the **Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences** received numerous awards and honors:

- **Dr. Kim Ward** was elected chair of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association’s Medicaid Committee for 2016-2017.
- **Dr. Steve Oshrin** will serve a four-year term on the Council of Academic Accreditation (CAA) of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association. The 20 member CAA is the accrediting body for 322 graduate programs in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology.
- **Mary Schaub**, M.S., will receive the Outstanding Alumnus award from The University of Wyoming in early October.

**College of Science and Technology**

**James Thompson**, master’s student in the **Department of Geography and Geology**, will present the paper “Hydrological responses of a coastal marsh along a salinity gradient: a case study in Grand Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve, Mississippi” at the Geological Society of America annual meeting in Denver, Colo. later this month. **Dr. Frank Heitmuller**, associate professor, and **Dr. Mark Puckett**, professor and chair will attend and present their research as well.

Graduate students and faculty in the **Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry** received honors:

- **Frederick McFarland** was selected to attend the 2016 National School on Neutron & X-ray Scattering at Argonne National Laboratory.
- **Tamanna Shanta** received a travel grant to the 229th Electrochemical Society Meeting (summer 2016) in San Diego, where she gave the research presentation entitled "Influence of Nanostructured Carbon Supports on Nanocatalysts towards Electrooxidation of Formic Acid for Direct Formic Acid Fuel Cells".
- **Dr. Johnathan Hugh Broome** attended the Gardner Institute G2C Conference in Atlanta, the Biennial Conference on Chemical Education (BCCE) in Greeley, Colo., and was accepted to participate in the ACUE Faculty Development Institute here at USM.
- Following selection by the Beijing Overseas Talent Center, **Dr. Wujian Miao** was awarded a Distinguished Visiting Professorship by Beijing University of Technology (BJUT). Dr. Miao will work in BJUT during the summer of 2016-2018 on research and educational projects with the possibility of a short-term exchange program for graduate students from BJUT to USM.

**Professional Development Opportunities for Graduate Students**

**Professionals in Preparation Engages It’s Second Cohort.** Students participating in Professionals in Preparation (PIP) kicked off the fall schedule with a luncheon and orientation on Friday, Sept. 9. This fall 19 Ph.D. and master’s students from a broad array of disciplines will participate in professional development activities approximately twice monthly. Upcoming fall activities will include workshops and seminars on communication, job...
interview skills, assessing strengths, and effective teaching. They will also participate in the Three-Minute Thesis.

**National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program (NSF GRFP) Workshop Scheduled.** All senior-level undergraduate and first and second year graduate students in STEM disciplines (including chemistry, computer/information sciences and engineering, engineering, geosciences, life sciences, materials research, mathematical sciences, physics and astronomy, psychology, social sciences, and STEM education and learning research) are invited to a GRFP workshop. This event will increase awareness of this generous funding opportunity which provides three years of full support to attend graduate school. Attendees will receive valuable advice from professors who have served as grant reviewers, current GRFP fellows, and the university’s fellowships advisor with the goal of helping them prepare competitive applications. The eligibility rules have changed for this competition cycle so it is especially important that students have the information to determine their eligibility and make a strategic decision about whether this is the appropriate cycle to apply. USM has a strong success rate in the GRFP competition, and attendance of this workshop has contributed to more competitive applications and awards.

When: Tuesday, Sept. 20 at 12:15 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Where: Hattiesburg: McCain Library, Room 203; Gulf Park: Hardy Hall Conference Room 346 via IVN Stennis: Building 1022, Room 112 via IVN; CRL: Caylor Auditorium via IVN

**The Third Annual Three Minute Thesis Competition is coming in November.** Students will be challenged to describe the importance of their research to a general audience in less than three minutes using only a single slide as a visual aid. Master’s/specialist and doctoral students will be selected as finalists in four categories: 1) Arts and Humanities; 2) Life, Health, and Environmental Sciences; 3) Physical Sciences and Mathematics; and 4) Social and Educational Sciences and Business during preliminary rounds on November 2 and 3 from 2 to 5 p.m. in the Trent Lott Center A-D. Grand Champion, Runner Up, and People’s Choice will be selected during the finals competition on Nov. 4 from 2 to 4 p.m. in the same location. Excellent cash prizes will be awarded. More information and the registration form will be available soon.

**Graduate School Operations Updates**

**Hobson’s Radius Update:** Hobson’s Radius, Southern Miss’ new application portal and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software, went live in early August. All applications for spring 2017 and later admission are currently submitted through this portal with many already in progress or submitted with payment. Departmental communication plans are under development. These communications will allow departments to tailor outreach to prospects and applicants with the goal of improving our application, admission, and enrollment funnel. Thanks to Tracy Barnhill and Elisabeth McBride for their outstanding efforts in developing Graduate School applications for Radius to meet departmental requirements. Faculty and staff should be trained to use Radius software as soon as possible. Please contact Tracy Barnhill (tracy.barnhill@usm.edu) to request training sessions.
Recruiting and Enrollment:
The Graduate School and individual departments engaged prospective students through strategic recruiting efforts during 2015-16 academic year, including attending on-campus, state, and regional graduate recruiting fairs; hosting campus visits by groups or individual students; recruiting at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) and other discipline-specific conferences; outreach to students groups and prospects. The result of strategic recruiting efforts was an overall increase in fall 2016 graduate student enrollment by 1.69% (Figure 1). Colleges adding graduate enrollment included College of Business (7.11%), College of Health (7.48%), and College of Nursing (22.77%). Non-degree enrollment also increased (12.20%).

Graduate School Progress to Degree Forms:
Most forms required by the Graduate School have been updated as fillable documents. When submitting these to the Graduate School, please complete electronically, print, obtain original signatures when needed, and deliver to the Graduate School. Handwritten forms will not be accepted. Please discontinue use of previous versions of forms that may be saved or bookmarked. Clean up of the Graduate School website is ongoing, so please inform Vanessa Molden (Vanessa.molden@usm.edu) of any links to outdated forms so they can be disabled.

Guidelines and Instructions for Thesis, Dissertation, and Capstone Templates:
Thesis, dissertation, and capstone templates and updated guidelines and instructions for these templates are available on Aquila at http://aquila.usm.edu/graduateschooldocs/. Students must prepare documents using the latest guidelines. Additional video tutorials will be added to the Aquila website soon. Students needing LaTeX should contact Jeanne Stewart (Jeanne.Stewart@usm.edu) for additional instructions before using a template. Ms. Stewart is available by appointment for group or individual template training sessions.

Graduate School Policy Updates

Summer 2017 Tuition Waivers:
The Graduate School is concerned that the current 2017 summer tuition waiver budget is inadequate to support a guarantee of six hours tuition waiver as has been available in the past. This shortfall is based on a much larger than usual number of graduate assistants enrolling in courses during summer 2016 that required us to use funds from the first-term summer 2017 budget to meet those requests. The three hour limit has the potential to impact students in programs that require enrollment in six summer hours. We are attempting to address this issue through Academic Affairs, but we ask that graduate assistants be informed of their guaranteed allowance based on Table 1 below by including the addendum letter provided to departments in offer letters. Departments will be informed if any positive developments arise that lessen the impact of the restricted budget.

![Graduate Student Census Day Headcount Comparison](image)
Table 1. Summer Tuition Waiver Eligibility for Graduate Assistants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester(s) as GA</th>
<th>Student received a full or partial Assistantship during fall/spring</th>
<th>Eligible Summer Tuition Waiver (h)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016 and Spring 2017</td>
<td>Full – 20 hours per week worked</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2016 and Spring 2017</td>
<td>Partial – 10 hours per week worked</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2017 only</td>
<td>Full – 20 hours per week worked</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2017 only</td>
<td>Partial – 10 hours per week worked</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in Grading Structure for Thesis, Specialist, and Dissertation Research Courses (698, 798, and 898, respectively):

Beginning fall 2016 the assignment of the E grade will no longer be an option for 698, 798, and 898 courses. The grading system will be satisfactory (S), unsatisfactory (U), or pass (P). The S/U/P grading system will impact the transcript the same as P/F currently does. This policy applies to the grading structure for these courses beginning fall 2016. E grades awarded prior to fall 2016 will not be changed.

- Satisfactory (S)
  - Satisfactory research progress.
  - The major professor/committee chair directing the research must develop a set of expectations for research progress in writing, discuss these expectations with the student no later than the first week of the semester, and collect the signature of the student acknowledging that he/she understands the expectations. These signed documents should be maintained by the faculty member in case of an appeal.
  - The major professor/committee chair will assess student progress throughout the semester or minimally at the end of the semester to determine whether satisfactory progress was made.

- Unsatisfactory (U)
  - Unsatisfactory research progress.
  - If after assessment of student progress the faculty member determines the student did not meet the minimal expectations of satisfactory performance articulated in the research expectations document, the U should be assigned.
  - A student who earns a U will be placed on probation the next semester enrolled.
  - The student will return to good academic standing if an S in 698, 798, or 898 (as appropriate) is earned during the probationary semester.
  - One U grade can be removed from the transcript by petition for a grade change by the faculty member if the student earns two consecutive S grades.
  - A second U grade in these courses at any point in the degree program will result in dismissal from the program.

- Pass (P)
  - P indicates a student passed his/her thesis or dissertation defense and submitted the final document to the Graduate School.
  - Typically, P will be assigned the semester a student passes the thesis or dissertation defense, but in cases where a student passes the defense but defers graduation, P will be assigned the final semester of enrollment. (This is current practice for E/P).

Faculty mentors will be required to set standards for research productivity for individual students and to assess student progress each semester before assigning grades. Department chairs may choose to help faculty consider reasonable expectations and provide advice to faculty about assessment. Criteria should identify realistic goals for the student and ways to assess or measure performance. Neither an S nor a U should be assigned arbitrarily. The change in the grading system for thesis/dissertation research
courses is intended to motivate students to make progress, to document progress or lack thereof, and to foster timely degree completion. The current E/P grading system requires no accountability on the part of the student toward progress to degree. This change should produce a positive impact on student success long term.

**Continuous Enrollment Policy Update:**
The following change to the Continuous Enrollment Policy was reviewed by Graduate Council officers and approved by Provost Moser. This language is included in the 2016-2017 Graduate Bulletin in the section General Academic Information for all Graduate Students, Section II. Continuous Enrollment, Item C. The italicized sentence is newly inserted.

“Failure to enroll for at least one hour during the fall and spring semesters will result in discontinuation from the university. A student who has been discontinued and seeks readmission must apply for readmission, pay an application fee, and remit payment for one hour of tuition, at the current tuition rate, for each fall and spring semester not enrolled.”

Continuous enrollment is required after the student successfully completes required coursework and passes the comprehensive examination. A need for a one year break in continuous enrollment based on extreme circumstances (chronic illness, family crisis, extreme hardship, military deployment, etc.) may be accommodated by the Leave of Absence for Graduate Students policy. Reinstating the “back tuition” payment policy, which existed in the Graduate Bulletin through the 2009-10 edition, will affect students who are newly enrolled fall 2016 and later. However, departments should make their continuing students aware of the continuous enrollment policy.

**Graduate Certificate Program Coursework:**
The following excerpt from the 2016-2017 Graduate Bulletin details clarifications in certificate program coursework allowances. This text was reviewed by Graduate Council leadership and Academic Deans and approved by Provost Moser. Items in italics are new language in the current policy.

A. A minimum of twelve semester hour credits of prescribed coursework is required for a graduate certificate. Many certificate programs require more than 12 hours of coursework. To determine specific program requirements, the department should be consulted.

B. A student enrolled in a degree program may earn a certificate while pursuing the degree, and all certificate coursework credit earned as a degree-seeking student may apply to the degree if approved by the graduate committee. A certificate-seeking student who is already enrolled in a degree program is required to apply for admission to a certificate program and pay the application fee.

C. Up to 12 hours from a certificate program, earned while the student is a certificate-seeking, non-degree student, may be applied to a degree program if approved by the graduate committee whether the certificate is awarded or not.

D. Courses used to complete a degree cannot be used toward a certificate after the degree is awarded.