CODE OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

Policy Statement

Statement of Ethical Conduct
The University of Southern Mississippi expects all employees, students, contractors, vendors and volunteers to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct.

The University of Southern Mississippi is an important center of research and at the same time a distinctive and distinguished learning environment for undergraduate and graduate students in many scholarly and professional fields. The University recognizes the importance of its geographic location in the Gulf South and seeks to link its research and teaching to the vast resources of a great state and nation. It seeks to attract a diverse faculty and student body, to support research and teaching on local, national and global issues, and to create academic relationships with other institutions, countries and regions. It expects all areas of the University to advance knowledge and learning at the highest level and to share the products of its efforts with the State of Mississippi, the nation and the world. That commitment upholds the reputation of the University, both locally and globally, and encourages compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Principles

The basic principles of Ethical Conduct are:

1. Be honest, ethical and truthful.
2. Obey the law. If you are uncertain about what the law or applicable regulations require, seek assistance from your supervisor.
3. Follow University policies and procedures. Make sure you understand your responsibilities. If you have questions about specific issues, you should ask your supervisor.

Select University policies and resources are listed in Appendix A, “Where should I go with a concern?” and Appendix B, “To learn more” at the end of this document.
Reason for Policy/Purpose

The University of Southern Mississippi is a state institution of higher learning devoted to excellence in teaching, research and service to the people of the State of Mississippi, the United States of America and the world. A part of that mission is fulfilled by the University's commitment to the development of students through academic and co-curricular activities. In addition to all of the students and faculty who compose the Southern Miss community, hundreds of staff members are also members of that community as well as contractors, vendors and volunteers. Southern Miss is not only a place where students, faculty and researchers come to achieve their best, but also a place where hundreds of staff members come to do their best work to advance the various missions of the University supported by contractors, vendors and volunteers.

It is therefore essential to promote an environment that allows everyone who is a part of the Southern Miss community to do his or her best work, be respected for demonstrating ethical behavior, and have as positive an experience as possible at the University. These expectations are in alignment with the University’s high ethical standards and with its goal to continually improve, maintain its status as a world-class university and be an employer of choice.

This policy has been developed to promote an environment of respect demonstrated by high ethical standards that is central to the success of the University and the individuals who work here. The policy articulates the principles that govern interactions at the University and some of the basic expectations that flow from those principles. There are a number of policies that cover specific interactions and situations. This policy does not replace those policies; it provides a framework for them. While this policy does articulate a basic set of expectations and provides examples to articulate some of these expectations, neither is meant to be comprehensive.

Who Needs to Know This Policy

As a statement of principles based on the values of the University, this document can certainly provide sound advice and direction for interactions between all members of the Southern Miss community. This code specifically applies to the following members of the University community: (a) individuals who are paid by Southern Miss when they are working for the University—this category includes faculty, staff and student employees; (b) consultants, vendors, and contractors when they are doing business with the University; and (c) individuals who perform services for the University as volunteers. The Code of Ethical Conduct refers to all these persons collectively as "members of the University community" or "community members."

The guiding principle in this document is respect for high ethical standards and behavior, and the primary goal is the promotion of a positive learning and working environment. Both of these are community values and, therefore, are the responsibility of everyone. Regardless of the role someone plays at the University, or the level he or she has in an organizational hierarchy, each person has a responsibility to adhere to these principles and promote a positive learning and working environment. Whether someone is working or attending full time, part time, on a temporary basis or as a contractor working on campus for part of a day, each person is expected to adhere to these values and promote a positive learning and working environment.
The University of Southern Mississippi is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct as an integral part of its mission, the promotion of learning. To achieve this goal, the University relies on each community member's ethical behavior, honesty, integrity, and good judgment. Each community member should demonstrate respect for the rights of others. Each community member is accountable for his/her actions.

Website Address for this Policy

www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-pres-gc-003

Policy/Procedures

1.0. Statement of Principles to Guide and Govern Interactions

There are four basic principles that guide and govern interactions at the University and promote a positive learning and working environment: respect for governance; respect for others; respect for information; respect for property.

2.0 Respect for Governance

2.1 Respect for governance is the expectation that members of the Southern Miss community will act in compliance with the laws, regulations and policies that are in effect and govern behavior at the University and the conduct of University business.

2.2 Whether physically on campus or conducting University business in another city, state or country, members of the University community are expected to comply with all city, state, federal and other relevant laws.

2.3 Southern Miss conducts a significant amount of research that is funded by government agencies and private foundations. As a result, a number of rules and regulations govern activities—both for people working directly under grants and contracts and, often, for everyone conducting research and research-related activities. Members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with these rules and regulations to maintain the highest standards of compliance and fulfill their roles as stewards of these important relationships and resources.

2.4 The University of Southern Mississippi is a state institution of higher education and is therefore subject to state as well as federal rules that govern such institutions. The University’s status as a state institution is central to its mission and financial well-being. Members of the University community are expected to comply with all rules and regulations pertaining to state institutions that apply to the University and to act as stewards of the trust entailed in the state institution designation.

2.5 There are a significant number of laws, regulations, and policies that govern business at the University. Members of the University community are expected to become familiar with these laws, regulations and policies relevant to their activities. They are also expected to seek out clarifications when they are not certain about the presence of a governing law, regulation or policy, or have a question about one or more of them.
2.6 A respect for governance guides one’s own behavior. It is also essential for a community and for a positive working environment. It is, therefore, the responsibility of everyone not to tolerate disregard for or noncompliance with laws, regulations, and policies. Members of the University community are expected to seek clarifications about possible noncompliance and to report actual and possible violations of laws, regulations and policies. The University has set up a number of mechanisms for inquiry and reporting, is committed to protecting confidentiality, and prohibits any form of retribution against people for reporting violations in good faith.

Attached as appendices are lists of references and policies that can help people understand some of the resources at their disposal.

3.0 Respect for Others

3.1 Respect for others is the central principle that governs interactions among people at Southern Miss. Two primary expectations that flow from this principle are to act with civility and to refrain from abuse of power. Respect for others is expected in peer-to-peer relationships, between service providers and people within and outside the Southern Miss community, between people who are clients or customers and service providers at the University, and within a supervisory context (e.g., manager-to-employee and employee-to-manager).

3.2 Respect extends to those people who are contractors doing work on behalf of the University. Respect also extends to the University’s neighbors in interactions that members of the University community have with Southern Miss’ neighbors.

3.3 Respect should be present in verbal and written communications. Respect should be shown at meetings, on the telephone and in electronic exchanges. People have the right to disagree, even strongly disagree; however, there is also a responsibility to be civil and to maintain respect even while disagreeing. Problems, mistakes, and miscommunications can all arise from time to time in the course of business, and could even call for the escalation of seriousness of attention to a situation. However, there still remains the expectation of respect and civility in interactions.

3.4 Respect for others includes a respect for those who are different from you. A positive working environment where everyone can receive respect and do their best work requires a respect and tolerance for difference and diversity.

4.0 Respect for Information

4.1 University administrators, faculty and other employees, by the nature of their positions and responsibilities, often have access to information that is confidential, sensitive, and/or personal. In addition to adhering to the rules and regulations that govern the proper handling of such information, everyone is expected to respect the privacy of others by respecting the information that pertains to others.

4.2 Business at the University can involve sensitive matters, livelihoods, professional reputations and, of course, the reputation of the University itself. People are expected to manage their access to information responsibly and in a manner that respects all of these things. People also are expected to seek clarification and confirmation of
information that comes to them, particularly if it seems inconsistent or questionable, so as not to misrepresent a situation or contribute to a misrepresentation or misunderstanding.

5.0 Respect for Property

5.1 All University employees act as stewards of University property. Property includes physical assets, intellectual property, the University name, and other resources.

5.2 As a state institution, it is essential to maintain the highest standards of stewardship for the property and resources entrusted to us. Respect for property therefore entails both the efficient and appropriate use of University assets and resources.

5.3 Members of the University community are expected to do nothing that would jeopardize the University’s reputation or standing with the taxpayers of the State of Mississippi, donors, grantors, or the many people who provide hard-earned resources to the University in order to educate members of their family or themselves.

5.4 As a University community, we strive for continuous improvement in our performance of public duties for the University, mindful of the public cost to our activities which must be reasonable and appropriately authorized.

6.0 Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment

6.1 While in the service of the University, employees must conduct themselves free of personal conflicts or appearances of impropriety, mindful that the exercise of authority on behalf of the University has been delegated fundamentally for the public good. Conflicting interests or influences must be promptly disclosed to superiors and appropriate steps are to be undertaken to promote the integrity of University business and other transactions.

6.2 Community members who are Southern Miss faculty and staff owe their primary professional allegiance to the University and its mission to engage in the highest level of education, research and scholarship. Outside professional activities, private financial interests or the receipt of benefits from third parties can cause an actual or perceived divergence between the University mission and an individual's private interests. In order to protect our primary mission, community members with other professional or financial interests shall disclose them in compliance with applicable conflict of interest/conflict of commitment policies, which are available on the following website: http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-rsch-vp-003.

6.3 Employees must not accept anything of value offered in consideration of performing their public duties, other than the compensation, benefits and reimbursement of expenses duly authorized by the University or otherwise permitted by law.

6.4 Employees must not accept any favor, loan, service, business or professional opportunity from anyone knowing (or when it should be known) that it is offered in order to improperly influence the performance of their public duties, or when
acceptance thereof may reasonably be perceived as an impropriety in violation of University policy or state law.

6.5 University procurements of goods or services must be undertaken only by authorized personnel and, when competitive principles apply, decisions are made impartially and objectively in accordance with established policy and state law.

7.0 Procedures

7.1 Report conduct that concerns you. If you believe that an activity may be illegal, unethical or otherwise troubling, you should report it to your supervisor. If your supervisor is involved in the questioned conduct, you should discuss it with the person at the next supervisory level. You could also report the conduct to the University’s Compliance Hotline, 877-310-0424, the anonymous compliance website https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/31502/index.html, the Director of the Office of Compliance and Ethics at 601-266-4346, email, paul.walters@usm.edu or other responsible administrative officer. Reports may be made anonymously. Attached as Appendix C is a reporting form that may also be used.

7.2 The University will not tolerate retaliation against you for any good faith report of improper conduct or activity. Any allegation of retaliation by a University employee will be dealt with swiftly and judiciously.

7.3 The University community is committed to the principles of federal and state law guaranteeing equal opportunity and nondiscrimination with respect to University services, programs, activities and employment, and we support an environment that respects the rights and opinions of all. Complaints of discrimination, harassment and retaliation are investigated and when warranted, appropriate corrective action is taken and discipline imposed in accordance with University policy and applicable law.

7.4 All employees must, at least once a year, review the Code and acknowledge that the employee has read the Code and agrees to abide by its principles. The Code will be available online in a training module with appropriate acknowledgment features attached. For those employees who do not have access to online resources, the Office of Compliance and Ethics will provide appropriate training and acknowledgment forms.

7.5 An individual’s failure to live up to these principles may result in disciplinary action, including suspension, termination, and monetary fines consistent with University policy. For violations of applicable laws, individuals may also face criminal and civil penalties, including monetary penalties.
8.0 Additional Administrative Policies/Issues

Additional and more detailed and explicit policies may govern particular areas of administration such as human resources, finance, information technology or facilities. It is the responsibility of each person working in those areas to learn and adhere to those policies.

Review

The Director of the Office of Compliance and Ethics is responsible for the review of this policy every three years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

Forms/Instructions

Appendix C - Reporting Form for Compliance Violation or Concern

Appendices

Appendix A – “Where should I go with a concern?”

Related Information

Appendix B – Resources for policies, laws and regulations which govern the University.

History

Amendments: N/A
Authorization

RECOMMENDED BY:

[Signature]
Responsible University Administrator

3.9.15

REVIEWED BY:

[Signature]
Director of Compliance and Ethics

3/4/15

[Signature]
Office of General Counsel

3/4/15

APPROVED:

[Signature]
President

3.9.15
Appendix “A”

Where should I go with a concern?

The first recommended resource for clarification on a policy, regulation, or law is one’s direct supervisor. If a direct supervisor cannot serve as the resource, below are other suggested resources to assist you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your Supervisor</td>
<td>The first recommended resource for clarification on a policy, regulation, or law is one’s direct supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>This office provides guidance and support for all faculty and staff on policies and procedures that govern employment at the University, including benefits, pay practices, rules &amp; discipline, and grievance procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Miss Hotline</td>
<td>This hotline is a confidential channel for employees to report possible issues. Callers have the option to report anonymously. The secure website may also be used. The University does not tolerate retaliation against those who report a concern in good faith.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of Internal Audit</td>
<td>This office furnishes independent appraisals, counseling recommendations, and applicable information concerning activities reviewed. The Southern Miss Hotline provides an easy way to discreetly and confidentially report activities that may involve fraudulent, unethical, or otherwise inappropriate violations of University policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office of General Counsel</td>
<td>The Office of General Counsel is responsible for providing a full range of legal services to the University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athletics Office of Compliance</td>
<td>The Athletics website serves as an information resource for all constituents of University of Southern Mississippi Athletics-including its prospective and current student-athletes, coaches, faculty and staff, alumni, donors, boosters and friends-to ensure that the Department and University remain in full compliance with NCAA and Conference USA rules and guidelines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Police Department</td>
<td>Any threat against a person, property, or the environment should be directed immediately to the University Police Department.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Misconduct, Violence or Harassment</td>
<td>Sexual harassment complaints involving University students, employees and third parties engaged in University business as well as involving gender-based misconduct, including sexual assault, sexual violence, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment and stalking are processed through the Title IX Coordinator pursuant to the University’s Sexual Misconduct Policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Non-discrimination Policy</td>
<td>The Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Employment is responsible for supporting the University’s efforts in fostering a nondiscriminatory work environment, developing and monitoring the University’s Affirmative Action Plan as well as assisting employees who wish to request a disability accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scholarly Misconduct and Research Integrity</td>
<td>This office manages the Research and Scholarly Integrity Assurance Program, sponsors various educational activities and workshops, reviews relevant University policies, and oversees both the Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix “B”

To Learn more

A number of resources are available regarding policies, laws and regulations that govern the University. A sampling of those available are listed below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</table>
| Employee Handbook  
https://www.usm.edu/employment-hr/facultystaff-policy | The Employee Handbook provides essential information about policies and procedures affecting employment of all faculty and staff including benefits, pay practices, rules, discipline and grievance procedures. |
| Faculty Handbook  
https://www.usm.edu/sites/default/files/groups/office-provost/pdf/2016_facultyhandbook2016final2-2-17mod.pdf | The Faculty Handbook is a supplement to the Employee Handbook providing essential information about the organization, the governance of the University, the appointment of faculty and research officers, and the obligations and responsibilities of academic personnel. |
| Office of the Provost  
www.usm.edu/provost | The Office of the Provost’s website serves as an important resource for faculty and staff by providing documentation on policies and procedures, information on the academic reorganization, awards, endowments, promotion, and tenure review. In addition, the site allows students to review guidelines on academic appeals and grievances along with instructions on the proper procedures. |
| Information Technology Services (iTech)  
www.usm.edu/itech | The iTech website is the starting point to obtain IT help. It contains the current status of IT systems, descriptions of services offered, links to training material, and policies and procedures regarding the use and security of computer systems, networks and information resources. |
| Office of the Vice President for Research  
www.usm.edu/research | This site provides various research resources including links to relevant University policies and government guidelines that govern the research enterprise as well as educational and training resources. |
| Office of Research Administration  
https://www.usm.edu/research/office-research-administration | This site gives practical guidance to faculty and administrative staff of the University of Southern Mississippi in the management of sponsored projects funded by both the government and private organizations. |
| Animal Resource Links  
https://www.usm.edu/research/animal-resource-links | This site gives practical guidance in the management of animal-based research. |
| Office of University Compliance and Ethics  
www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics | The Office of University Compliance and Ethics website serves as a centralized location for links to select policies, compliance training, and other resources that assist the University in achieving and maintaining compliance with applicable laws, regulations, policies and rules. |
| Vice President for Student Affairs  
http://www.usm.edu/student-affairs/contact-vp-student-affairs | The VP of Student Affairs hold supervisory responsibility for a wide range of activities, programs and services including, residence life, health services, Greek Life, disability accommodations, student conduct, multicultural programs counseling service, recreational sports, union complex, university police department, dean of students, community engagement, leadership, student involvement, and programs and services that promote student welfare and development. |
| Vice President for Finance & Administration  
http://www.usm.edu/about/administration/vice-president-finance-administration | The duties of the VP of Finance & Administration include management of the University’s financial operations, facilities planning and management, human resources, iTech, parking management, procurement, bookstore and dining services operations. |
Appendix “C”

Reporting Form for Suspected Compliance Violation or Concern

You may report anonymously or elect to furnish contact information below. Please furnish as much detail as possible so the situation can be thoroughly reviewed and investigated. All information will be held in strict confidence.

Describe the suspected violation or concerns (use additional sheets if necessary and provide copies of any documents that help explain the situation).

Name(s) of Person(s), Department(s) and/or Location(s) involved:

Your name and contact information (optional): May we contact you if we have questions? Yes ____ No ____

Name(s):________________________________________________________________________________________

Contact Phone Numbers:__________________________________________________________________________

Address:________________________________________ Email:__________________________________________

Completed form can be mailed (inter-office or U.S. Mail), faxed or emailed to: The University of Southern Mississippi Compliance and Ethics, 118 College Drive #5079, Hattiesburg, MS 39406; FAX: (601) 266-4440; Email: paul.walters@usm.edu. You can also report suspected violations on the University’s anonymous hotline at 877-310-0424, or website https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/31502/index.html.