



THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

TO: Rodney D. Bennett, President

FROM: Steven R. Moser, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

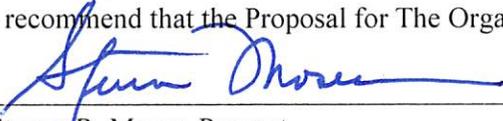
DATE: October 2, 2018

SUBJECT: Proposal for The Organization and Function of University Committees

As reported and verified by Academic Reorganization Implementation Committee (ARIC) chair, Jeffrey Wiggins, this initiative has been revised through broad engagement, communication, and feedback from stakeholders, administrators and governing bodies since your initial approval of the proposal framework in February of 2018. ASSC and ARIC have collated, discussed, reviewed and modified the document to achieve compromise between stakeholder responses while preserving the aspirational merits of the original proposal.

As Provost, I have engaged Deans and Academic Leaders in a final review process and adjustments were made to the proposal based on that feedback and my input. The document also reflects revisions from the Office of the President related to the Committee on Committees and as such, the document is ready for your approval.

I recommend that the Proposal for The Organization and Function of University Committees be approved.



Steven R. Moser, Provost
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approval:



Rodney D. Bennett, President
The University of Southern Mississippi



Date

The Organization and Function of University Committees

INITIATIVE #5 Faculty Governance and Representation

May 1, 2018

Faculty Governance and Representation Committee Members

Chair – Kelly Lester

Complete List of Committee Members: Cindy Blackwell, David Cochran, Sabine Heinhorst, Susan Hrostowski, Joyce Inman, Mary Lux, Scott Milroy, Sarah Morgan, Jerry Purvis, Alan Thompson, Melissa Thompson

Statement of Objectives

I. Aspirational Aims

Committees play an integral part in University decisions, direction, and operations. Their structures, membership, and bylaws determine the quality of their contributions to the University as a whole. The first objective of this proposal is to establish definitions of the multiple types of committees that exist on campus. Further, this proposal aims to institute guiding principles for the organization and function of University committees through bylaws, committee maintenance, and evaluation.

1. Adopt a new, clear and definitive definition of the multiple types of committees that exist. We propose the following:

University Standing Committees. University Standing Committees are permanent and continuously active bodies that conduct the broad, University-wide work. These committees are typically charged with guiding functional processes of the University, generating and disseminating University policies, and providing innovative solutions for pressing issues. The following criteria should be used to determine a committee's designation as a standing committee:

- 1) The work of the committee impacts the broad scope of the University's major functions.
- 2) The committee reports directly to one of the University's executive officers.
- 3) Committee membership includes members from the corps of instruction or other stakeholders to ensure shared governance and transparency in the given purview of the committee.
- 4) The committee membership is appropriately representative of the University community.

The Faculty Governance and Representation Committee has reviewed the current list of University Standing Committees and has determined, according to the new definition, which of those currently listed should be deleted from the list and which existing or new committees not on the list should be added. More input from other stakeholders will be solicited as part of the implementation timeline.

University Governing Bodies. Governing bodies are elected bodies that represent the voices of the entire faculty. These bodies advise their respective executive officers, and their primary functions involve driving academic excellence and promoting scholarly and creative activity. Further, the executive officer with oversight of a governing body will oversee the organization and function of that body, including distribution/archival of minutes, maintenance of bylaws, and charge.

University Representative Groups. There are three designated University groups charged with representing the interests of faculty, staff and students in the shared governance of the University. These officially recognized groups are advisory to the President through their respective executive officer, and each of these bodies may submit policy proposals or recommend policy changes through their executive officers for consideration by the Executive Cabinet. Therefore, the executive officers have oversight of the organization and function of these groups, including distribution/archival of minutes, maintenance of bylaws, and charge.

University Procedural Committees. There are a number of University-level, Procedural Committees that govern functions of the University in a specified branch, but that do not meet the criteria for designation as a University Standing Committee. These committees are, however, ongoing committees of the University and, thus, fall under the oversight of the Committee on Committees.

Ad hoc Committees. At times, executive officers deem it necessary to establish a short-term committee for a specific task or topic. Ad hoc committees fall under the purview of the direct executive officer but should adhere to the general ad hoc committee bylaws established by the Committee on Committees. It is the responsibility of the executive officer, however, to oversee the organization and function of the committee, including distribution/archival of minutes, maintenance of bylaws, and charge.

The Committee on Committees. The charge to the Committee on Committees should be clarified to oversee the structures of University Standing and Procedural Committees more effectively within a system of shared governance. Work should focus on the following areas:

- 1) Maintenance of committee operating processes for each of the University Standing Committees
- 2) Maintenance of committee operating processes for each of the University Procedural Committees
- 3) Provision of an annual orientation for chairs of Standing and Procedural Committees and others as necessary for the function of the Standing or Procedural Committee
- 4) Supervision of Standing and Procedural Committees to ensure that committees meet as scheduled, fulfill the committee's charge, *and report as required*
- 5) Selection of coordinators from the membership of the Committee on Committees to monitor specific assigned Standing and Procedural Committees. Coordinators should assist the assigned committees with respect to:
 - a. Development of bylaws for committees
 - b. Membership according to the bylaws
 - c. Election of chairs according to the bylaws
 - d. Confirmation of regularly scheduled meetings
 - e. Confirmation that minutes are recorded and archived
 - f. Receipt of annual reports and confirmation that reports are forwarded to the appropriate executive officer

The same definitions should be used at the college, school, and departmental levels with the appropriate changes in terminology and representation.

The Committee on Committees reports to the Office of the President. Given the clarified charge recommended above, the membership composition and bylaws of the Committee on Committees will be revised by the Office of the President, and a call for nominations will be issued.

2. Develop a new bylaws template for University Standing Committees to be adopted by all Standing and Procedural Committees.

All University committees and governing bodies will undergo a revision of mission and bylaws during the 2018-2019 academic year to ensure alignment with the academic reorganization. This initiative highlights the need for a template for those bylaws to ensure consistency in breadth and depth across University committees.

3. A template for the bylaws should include the following:

- a. Purpose or charge
- b. Criteria for membership
- c. Election of a chairperson
- d. Duties and responsibilities of members
- e. Guidelines for proxies
- f. Absentee policies
- g. Identification of the executive officer to whom the annual report is ultimately submitted
- h. Procedure to report deliberations to executive officer if necessary prior to annual report
- i. Record of meeting minutes
- j. Procedures for the dissemination and archiving of minutes
- k. Policy on open meetings
- l. Submission of annual report at the end of the academic year

The template should ensure consistency while providing the needed flexibility for the differences in committee purpose and membership. In the first year post-reorganization, the chair of each committee should lead their committee in the task of rewriting their bylaws accordingly and present them to the respective executive officer for approval. The bylaws template should also be used at the college and school levels.

4. Maintain consistency in membership and terms of service across University Standing Committees.

The Committee on Committees, with input from the respective University executive officer, should determine the means by which each University Standing Committee's membership is created and maintained, either by appointment (and who makes the appointments) or election by faculty and/or staff.

At the college level, the dean should make these determinations, and likewise directors and coordinators at the school level.

5. Maintain membership and update the status of each Standing and Procedural Committee on a regular basis.

Again, this should be the responsibility of the Committee on Committees. Each Standing and Procedural Committee's status should be reviewed once a year to determine if the committee continues to function and its purpose is still relevant to the University at large.

At the college and school levels, this function should be performed by the deans and directors respectively.

These objectives are aspirational in that they seek to establish consistency and uniformity across all University committees. It is also aspirational in that it will result in increased effectiveness and efficiency of Standing and Procedural Committees and provide greater clarity of purpose for each. Clearly defined types of committees will result in a more effective use of University resources and ensure the equitable participation of faculty, staff, and students. Finally, a clear definition of types of committees and uniformly structured bylaws will assist anyone in the University community in identifying the appropriate group to address a particular issue.

II. Description of Projected Outcomes and Impacts

Once a definitive definition of the multiple types of committees is adopted, a reorganization of committees and bodies will take place. As bylaws are written or re-structured to fit the new templates, the purpose, membership, terms of service, and procedures of each committee will be refined and adjusted so that all committees function similarly. Some amount of flexibility must be allowed, however, to accommodate the different missions and purposes in specific committees.

III. Differentiate Proposed Activities from Current Processes

Currently, the list of University Standing Committees includes a variety of committees in various states and stages. Some are "on hiatus," some have more vacant positions than filled positions, some have by-laws, and some have no bylaws. Selection for membership and terms of membership vary widely. The result is a hodge-podge of confusion and inefficiency. This initiative rectifies these issues and establishes uniformity and clarity. The goals of Vision 2020 are furthered in that the objectives of this initiative enhance the effective use of University resources and ensures greater participation of faculty, staff, and students.

Appendix A: Current list of University Standing Committees

Appendix B: Committee Table

Appendix C: Proposed organization of committees

IV. Discuss Future-oriented Opportunities for Consideration

Once the effectiveness and vitality of each type of committee is established, there will be an opportunity to involve more faculty and staff in serving on these committees. Currently, committee service is perceived by many as drudgery and futile. When committees demonstrate that they are well organized and impactful, service will attract a wider range of participation. Therefore, there will be an opportunity to recruit membership.

Credit for committee service deserves more emphasis in faculty and staff evaluations and tenure and promotion considerations. There is an opportunity to encourage and support those who

serve by recognizing the time, effort, and dedication that faculty and staff devote to the well-being of The University of Southern Mississippi.

V. Implementation Strategy

The strategy for implementation is included in the objectives.

VI. Implementation Methods and Procedures

Implementation methods and procedures are included in the objectives.

VII. Estimate Time Requirements for Proposed Implementation

We estimate that the new definition and the development of the bylaws template should take no longer than three months. The rewriting of each committee's bylaws should then take another three months (during academic year 2018-2019). The maintenance of committee membership and status are on-going functions of the Committee on Committees and executive officers.

VIII. Personnel Involved in Implementation

The members of the Committee on Committees will oversee the implementation of the changes at the University level. Executive officers will provide feedback and approve the final products. Deans and directors will oversee the implementation of changes at the college and school levels. Committee members will work to write new bylaws.

IX. Discuss Short- and Long-term Financial Impacts (if applicable)

Financial impacts are difficult to quantify for this proposal. Efficiency and effectiveness will be enhanced, but it is not possible to put a dollar figure on the resulting savings.

X. Recommend Evaluation Strategies for the Proposal

A short survey should be developed to measure committee members' perspectives on the effectiveness of each Standing and Procedural Committee. This survey should be administered annually and the results reported to the Committee on Committees and the respective executive officer. Committees deemed less than effective should be modified or dissolved.

APPENDIX A—Current Organization of Committees

List downloaded 12.10.17 from <https://www.usm.edu/university-committees/university-standing-committees>

Several of the committees listed below are on hiatus. While some committees may exist because of requirements of other entities (such as NCAA, NIH, etc.), the new expectation is that standing committees should meet regularly and obviously this is not true for committees that have been on hiatus for a period of time or have not filed reports.

Director of Athletics

- [Athletic Compliance Committee](#) 2015 2 vacancies
- [Athletic Council](#) 2017 4 vacancies
- [Committee on Athletic Minority Equity](#) (on hiatus)
- [Gender Equity in Athletics Committee](#) (on hiatus) 2017

President

- [Committee on Committees](#) 2017 4 vacancies
- [Institutional Diversity Committee](#) 2017 membership complete
- [Section 504/ADA Compliance Committee](#) 2017 Membership complete. Minutes of twice yearly meeting through April posted on website as are bylaws
- [Strategic Planning Council](#) (on hiatus since 2015)

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

- [Academic Calendar Committee](#) 2017 Membership complete. Bylaws available
- [Academic Council](#)* 2017 **Governance body**
- [Academic Scholarship Appeals Committee](#) (Undergraduate) 2017 Bylaws posted. Membership is not publicized
- [Committee on Services and Resources for Women](#) 2016
- [Council of Chairs](#)* 2016 **Soon to be Council of Directors. Governance body**
- [Faculty Handbook Committee](#) 2016
- [Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act \(FERPA\) Committee](#) 2017 Membership complete. Bylaws posted
- [Grade Review Council](#) 2016
- [Graduate Council](#)* 2017 **Governance body**
- [Libraries Advisory Committee](#) 2017 Membership complete. Bylaws posted
- [Online Learning Steering Committee](#) 2017 Two student vacancies. Bylaws posted
- [Strategic Enrollment Planning Council](#) (in transition)
- [Undergraduate Admissions and Credits](#) (in transition)

Vice President for Finance and Administration

- [Design Review and Space Utilization Committee](#) 2016
- [Master Planning Committee](#) 2016
- [Merchant Services/PCI Compliance Committee](#) (on hiatus) 2017
- [Parking Management Committee - Gulf Coast Research Laboratory](#) 2017 Member listed
- [Parking Management Committee - Gulf Park](#) Membership complete. Bylaws posted
- [Parking Management Committee - Hattiesburg](#) Membership complete. Bylaws posted
- [Signage and Wayfinding Committee](#) 2016-17 Chair listed
- [Staff Excellence Awards Committee](#) Chair listed. Membership not publicized. Bylaws listed
- [Tuition Appeals Committee](#) 2017 Membership complete. Bylaws listed

Vice President for Research

- [Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee](#) 2017 Membership complete. Bylaws published
- [Institutional Biosafety Committee](#) 2017 Membership complete. Bylaws posted
- [Institutional Review Board](#) (no date) Membership complete
- [University Research Council](#)* 2016 Membership complete. 2017 report submitted

Vice President for Student Affairs and Vice Provost

- [Student Judicial Appeals Committee](#) Chair listed

*As outlined in the Faculty Handbook (2.11)

APPENDIX B —Committee table

Representative	Governing	Standing Committees	Procedural Committees	In transition/on Hiatus
Faculty Senate	Undergraduate Council	Committee on Committees	Academic Scholarship Appeals Committee (undergraduate)	Committee on Athletic Minority Equity
Student Government Association	Graduate Council	Institutional Diversity Committee	Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Committee	Gender Equity in Athletics Committee
Staff Council	Grade Review Council	Section 504/ADA Compliance Committee	Design Review and Space Utilization Committee	Strategic Planning Council
	University Research Council	Academic Calendar Committee	Merchant Services/PCI Compliance Committee	Online Learning Steering Committee
		Committee on Services and Resources for Women	Parking Management Committee – Gulf Coast Research Lab	Strategic Enrollment Planning Council
		Faculty Handbook Committee?	Parking Management Committee – Gulf Park	Undergraduate Admissions and Credits
		Libraries Advisory Committee	Parking Management Committee – Hattiesburg	Master Planning Committee
		Online Learning Steering Committee	Signage and Wayfinding Committee	
		Institutional Review Board	Staff Excellence Awards Committee	
		University Assessment Committee	Tuition Appeals Committee	
			Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee	
			Institutional Biosafety Committee	
			Student Judicial Appeals Committee	

- **Highlighted in yellow indicates that it does not meet all four categories for standing committee definitions. Suggested revision of bylaws to remain in this category.**

APPENDIX C—Proposed Organization of Committees

COMMITTEES

